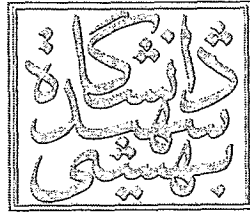


In the Name of God  
The Compassionate, the Merciful



**Shahid Beheshti University**  
**Faculty of Letters & Humanities**

**Department of English**

**Translation of Metaphors from Persian into English in**  
**Shahname of Firdawsi**

A Thesis submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements  
for the Master of Arts in English Translation (Translation Studies)

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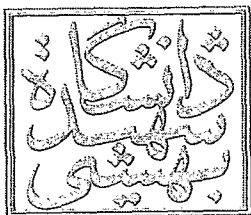
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## Abstract

The present thesis focused on the translation of metaphors. Through using the translational model proposed by Peter Newmark about the translation of metaphors, the present study analyzed the strategies the translators used for the translation of the metaphors, their functions, and the factors that the translators may have taken into account in the course of translation.

The methodology of this study as considered in third chapter is descriptive-text analysis based on two books. The first book is *Shahname* of Firdawsi in Persian language and the second one is the translation of it into English as done by both Arthur George Warner and Edmund Warner cooperatively. The corpus of this study was analyzed in two phases. They were quantitative and qualitative analysis.

According to the classification of Dr Shamisa of the metaphors of Persian language, which is based mainly on the *structure* of metaphor, rather than their use and the Newmark translational model of metaphors, the quantitative analysis identified two main groups of metaphors which are called *one-word* metaphors and *mixed* metaphors. The former had been divided into two main groups, which were basic (four subdivisions) and subordinated metaphors. All subdivisions taken into account the metaphors of the corpus include thirteen types of metaphors. The procedures identified for the translation of metaphors were seven procedures, which include *reproducing same image in TL*, *conversion of metaphor to sense*, *same metaphor combined with sense*, *replacing with a TL image*, *changing metaphor to simile*, *changing metaphor to a simile plus the sense*, and *the deletion of the metaphor*.

In qualitative analysis, the factors or the problems that might have been considered in translation process of metaphors and the effect of translators' decisions were discussed.

It was concluded the absolute majority of the metaphors of the corpus were one-word metaphors and the most frequently used procedures for translation of metaphors were *reproducing same image in TL* and *conversion of metaphor to the sense*. The former refers to the choice of translators who have tried to keep the taste of the source language and the second shows some kind of *simplification*, which shows that the translators have tried to delete the shock of the metaphor. The kind of translation of used in this translation is what which Newmark has called it *semantic translation*. Compared with other procedures the percentage of the procedures of *changing metaphor to simile* and *simile plus the sense* is very low and ignorable.

It can be concluded that the translators tend to transfer metaphors through the procedure of word-for-word translation. This goes back to the differences between the culture of the source language and target language and the fact that every piece of language is a piece of its culture. In these cases, it is better to transfer the metaphor to maintain its aesthetic aspects rather than creating something, which may cause losing some aspects of the meaning of the source text. Therefore, replacing metaphor with a TL image depends on the likenesses and differences of the two cultures and languages. Through using Venuti's *domestication* and *foreignization* techniques, it was also concluded that *reproducing same image in TL*, is something, which is toward the source language culture and, therefore, the technique, which is used most in the course of translation of *Shahname*, is *foreignization* technique.

It can be said that *the type of text*, *the readership of translation*, *cultural identity*, *translation norms*, and *cultural context* are effective on the choice of translators.

Keywords: metaphor, metaphorical expressions

*To:*

*My Father and Mother, who raised me, with kindness, warmth and affection*

*And:*

*My Wife and Daughters who always persuaded me and bore all the difficulties*

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## **Chapter One:**

### **Introduction**

## Chapter 1: introduction

### *1.1 Overview*

One of the most important features of literature, especially the works of poetry, is that they are figurative. This causes the language of literary works to be different from those of reports, which can be seen in newspapers and journals. In other words, in reports the feelings and the emotions of the writer is not shown, while in literature the emotions of the author are observable and compose one of the important features of them.

Authors of the literary works use many figures of speech in their work. Among the figures of speech, the most noticeable one is the metaphor. Metaphors have some aesthetic, cognitive, cultural, emotional, and individual aspects, which are different from one culture to another and even from one individual to another.

One of the reasons for the authors and the poets for using metaphors is that they want to avoid clichés. Wallace Stevens says that reality is a cliché from which we escape by metaphor (Stevens; 1976 in Shamisa, 1992: 142). This implies that humankind has an efficient tool by which he/she can look at the world around him/her from another point of view. Metaphor is the concrete expression of the ability to see resemblances or contrasted differences, which is one definition of intelligence as well as imagination, the normal sign of innovation and development in language and is invention of life.

Since the metaphors are effected by different factors, making sense of them is of prime importance for the understanding the content and the meaning of a piece of literature. This becomes more important when one wants to translate a literary work into another language.

Due to differences between languages, it is common that the languages use different metaphors for the same sense. A metaphor in one language may seem senseless in another language, especially if the metaphor has a sound effect. Sometimes the two languages have different images for the same sense. In occasions, due to cultural differences, the sense may be expressed indirectly, such as euphemism and swear words. So at the centre of the problems, which a translator may face, is the translation of metaphors. The translator should find and apply related strategies to carry out this task.

In Persian literature, *Shahname* of Firdawsi, which is a great work of epic, contains many metaphors. Some of these metaphors are idioms, others may be romantic and war metaphors.

A translator, who wants to translate this kind of poetry work, whether it is communicative or semantic, should find the sense of the metaphor and then decide how to translate the content and the form of poems. The form may be untranslatable because it is language-specific. However, with regard to the translation of the content there are three approaches, which range from total untranslatability by Nida, Dagut, Vinay, and Darblenet to word-for-word translation by Cleopfer and Reiss. There is an in-between approach suggested by Newmark, which is the framework for the translation of metaphors in this study.

This study is a descriptive one in which I have tried to choose a representative sample of *Shahname* of Firdawsi and its metaphors and then I have compared their corresponding translation into English to find the ways, which the translators used for the translation of them.

Since the metaphors have characteristics, which are specific to them in a language, and these characteristics may not be always alike in target language, translating them word-by-word may lead to the loss of meaning. Therefore, in some situations, some adjustment is needed on the side of the translator. The aim is to find how these metaphors have been translated into English in this case.

## 1.2. Statement of the problem

Larson distinguishes between two kinds of metaphors. He called them as "live" and "dead" metaphors. In his definition, dead metaphors are a part of the idiomatic constructions of the lexicon of the language. On the other hand, live metaphors are the ones, which are created on spot by the author or the speaker for teaching or illustrating. In written material, metaphors often consist of a number of images or a general image running through the text (Larson, 1984:246-254).

According to Larson, all of the metaphors are not easily understood or translated. If they are translated literally, word-for-word, into a second language, they will be completely misunderstood (*ibid*).

One of the problems in translating metaphors, including this study, is that the image used in the metaphor may be unknown and unfamiliar in the receptor language. For example, a metaphor containing the word of "snow" may be insensible for the people who live in some parts of the world that are hot and there is no snow in people's lifetime.

The second difficulty in translation of the metaphors is that the topic of the metaphor is not always clearly stated and this non-clarity may cause problems for the reader. In other words, the topic may be implicit.

Another source of problem is the point of similarity that is implicit, hidden and hard to identify. For example, in the metaphorical expression of "*he is a bear*" the point of similarity is not known. In a culture, "bear" may imply strength but in another culture, it may mean that he is glutton. When the point of similarity is not known the interpretation and the translation of metaphors is problematic (*ibid*).

Another area of difficulty in translation of metaphors, according to Larson, is that the point of similarity may be understood differently in the source language culture than the target culture. Example of this kind is that in a sentence like "*John is a rock*" may mean, in one culture, that he is still and does not move, while in the other it may mean he cannot talk (*ibid*).

There is also the possibility that the receptor language does not make comparisons of the type which will occur in the source text metaphor and also they may be different in how often the metaphors are used and how new metaphors are created in the source and target language and culture (*ibid*).

The problem of this study is examining the translation of the metaphors of *Shahname* of Firdawsi, their type according to the classification of the types of the metaphors of Persian language by Dr Shamisa (Shamisa, 1992: 152-185) and finding the strategies used by both Arthur George & Edmund Warner cooperatively to translate them from Persian into English.

### **1.3. Purpose of the study**

As it has been frequently mentioned, the works of epic contain a great deal of metaphors to describe the bravery of the heroes who take part in their work. Metaphorical expressions, which are used in these works of literature, may not be

universal. Therefore, their meaning differs across languages, communities and cultures (Newmark, 1988:114). *Shahname* is not an exception in this case. Firdawsi has used many metaphors in his work many of which are culture-specific (Shamisa, 1992:152) and their literal counterparts may not be found in the language into which the translation has been done. Therefore, finding the cultural load of these metaphorical expressions and correctly transferring them into the target language is of prime importance.

The purpose of the study is to find the kinds and types of the metaphors in Firdawsi's work, *Shahname*, according to the classification of Dr Shamisa in his book *elm-e bayan (rhetoric)*. I want to classify the metaphors of the present corpus from the viewpoint of the structure of the metaphor, and then to study their translation into English and to find the procedures through which these metaphors have been translated into English. I want to find out what strategies the translator has used in order to be able to translate them into English. In the end, I want to classify the strategies of the translation of the metaphors of *Shahname* into English and find out the procedures, which have been used most frequently in the course of translation and the make known the factors, which have been effective on the choice of translators for translation of metaphors.

#### **1.4. Significance of the study**

As it has been frequently, one of the most important features of the language of the literary works, especially the poetry works, and perhaps the most important of them is using figurative language (Newmark, 1998: 86; Shamisa, 1993:149). The most significant among the figures of speech are metaphors (*ibid*). By metaphors, the poet says what he wants to say in a manner, which is different from that of the ordinary



people. He/she uses nouns, attributes, and says something about the characters of his/her poem that are the attributes of the other things. These metaphorical expressions have their specific use, form and meaning across languages and cultures, especially if the cultures are different in their religious customs (*ibid*). Through using metaphors, the authors and poets escape clichés and redundant expressions, which may be boring for the readers of the literary works. Moreover, it helps the authors to create texts that are more pleasing and create new meanings through old words and expressions.

Another significance of this study is that it states that there is a noticeable difference between the metaphors of English and Persian. The metaphors of English are classified according to their use, that is, whether they old and dead metaphors or they are new and original, while the metaphors of Persian are mainly classified according to their structure. In other words, in English language the metaphors have been classified according to sense, in Persian they have been classified according to structure. Considering this difference in the mind, finding the procedures of translation of metaphors may be useful for other translators of literary works.

It is clear that in translating literary works, the translation of metaphors is of prime importance, because the sense of the literary works is hidden in those figures of speech, especially in metaphors that the authors have employed. These problems exist both in the type of the metaphors and their senses. Some of these sources of problems have been stated in Larson, 1982. Making sense of metaphors, finding their object and sense, finding where the poets and authors have used metaphors and finding proper strategies for properly translating them is an important task in interpretation and translation of poetry works, because languages are different from each other in this respect. In this study, the aim will be finding the types of the metaphors in the present corpus and classifying them, focusing on the strategies, comparing Persian metaphors of

*Shahname* and their translations in English, discovering the similarities and changes, which the metaphors of the source have gone through. This gives us a new vision and offers new strategies for the translation of works of art of literature from Persian into English.

### 1.5. Questions

1. What are the types of the metaphors of *Shahname* of Firdawsi?
2. What strategies have been adopted by both Arthur George & Edmond Warner in translating the metaphors of *Shahname* into English?
3. How have the translators translated the metaphors of *Shahname* into English?

### 1.6 Theoretical framework

With regard to the translation of poetry works and their elements, there are some viewpoints.

As to the translation of literary works, especially poetry works, there are some viewpoints. Nida (Nida, 1964 in Munday, 2001:42) believes that there are two ways for the translation: '*formal equivalence*' and '*dynamic equivalence*'. By dynamic equivalence, he means the creation an effect in the readers of the translated text similar to that which the source text created on the readers of the source text. Dynamic equivalence is based on the principle of the *equivalent effect*. To create such an effect on the readers of the translated text, the translator should do necessary adaptations of grammar, of lexicon and cultural references (*ibid*).

Reiss in her strategies, which she suggests for the translation according to the text type, says that works of poetry are the most expressive text type and the translator

should try to convey the aesthetic aspects of the source text (Reiss, 1976 in Munday, 2001: 75)

For the theoretical framework of this study, I will base my arguments on the theory of Newmark about the definition, classification and the strategies, which he suggests for the translation of metaphors. These strategies have been explained in his two books, *Approaches to Translation* and *The translator's Handbook*.

According to Newmark's definition of metaphor, any figure of speech is a metaphor. Therefore, in his view, the metaphorical expressions are abundant. In his view, the transferred sense of the physical word; personification of an abstraction; using words in their unconventional meaning and polysemous words, phrasal verbs and so on are metaphors (Newmark, 1988:104). Metaphors may also be *single* (one word) or *extended* which may be a collocation, an idiom, a sentence or proverb, an allegory and a completely imaginative text (*ibid*).

According to this theory, the purpose of the metaphors has two main senses: its referential purpose to describe a mental process, a state, a concept, an object etc more comprehensively and clearly than that is possible in literal and physical language. The pragmatic purpose of the metaphors, which is simultaneous to its referential purpose, is to appeal to the senses, to interest, to please, to delight and /or surprise. The first purpose is cognitive and the second one is aesthetic. In good metaphors, the purposes are combined and are parallel to the context and form (*ibid*).

One of the best ways for distinguishing metaphors from non-figurative sentences and expressions is that they are grammatically plausible, but do not appear to make sense (Newmark, 1988:106).

Further, Newmark distinguishes five types of metaphors, which are:

1. Dead metaphors are the ones, which people are hardly conscious of their image and they are usually related to universal terms of space, time, main parts of the body, and so on.

2. Clichés are metaphors that perhaps temporarily have lost their usefulness, that are used as a substitute for clear thought.

3. Stock metaphors are those, which are established in informal and/or mental situations.

4. Recent metaphors are those, which are metaphorical neologism, often anonymously coined.

5. Original metaphors are those ones, which the poets, authors, and ordinary people create and quote for the first time in the language (Newmark, 1988:106-113).

For the translation of the metaphors, Newmark suggests seven ways. They are:

1. reproducing the same image in TL when the image of the SL is understood by TL speakers
2. Replacing the image in the SL with a standard TL image when there is a TL image which means the same meaning of the SL
3. Translation of metaphor by simile to reduce the shock of metaphor
4. Translation of metaphor by a simile plus the sense to make sure that the sense of metaphor is understood
5. Conversion of the metaphor to the sense. This is suitable when the image of SL does not match the rules of TL culture
6. Deletion is used if the image is redundant and its deletion has no effect on the message