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Explicitation in English Translations of the Bustan of Sa'di: A Case Study

A Research Thesis Submitted to the School of Graduate Studies in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Master of Arts in Translation Studies:

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Dedicated to my dear parents,

Ali and Faezeh,

For

Their Love, Support

&

Inspiration

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Abstract

The present study aimed at comparing two English translations of the Bustan of Sa'di translated by native-Persian and non-native Persian translators to find out whether one is more explicit than the other or not. The researcher selected chapter seven 'On Education' (باب هفتم: عالم تربیت) from the Bustan along with its two English translations. In order to choose quite randomly, the researcher chose the first two couplets of each 'Tale' (حکایت) according to Wickens' categorization of 'Tales'. This brought the researcher 36 couplets along with their two English translations. The results indicated that the native-Persian translator made use of explicitation strategy more frequently than the non-native Persian translator. However, since the number of explicitation strategies obtained from the analysis of the translations of the 36 couplets of the Bustan of Sa'di show small difference between the native-Persian and non-native Persian translators' use of explicitation strategy, it cannot be concluded that the English translation of the Bustan done by the native-Persian translator is more explicit than the translation done by the non-native Persian one.

Keywords: Explicitation strategy, obligatory explicitation, optional explicitation, pragmatic explicitation.

Chapter One:

Introduction

1.1 Introduction

Languages differ from one another in their linguistic forms. A translator should not attempt to reproduce the linguistic characteristics of the source language in the receptor language; rather he/she must try to reproduce the message in the linguistic features of the receptor language. Meaning should not be sacrificed for the sake of style. To keep the meaning undistorted and also to make the translation natural in the receptor language, sometimes the translators need to spell out in the target text the information which is only implicit in a source text (Explicitation) or to do the opposite (Implicitation). But do native and non-native translators of a particular text make use of Explicitation/Implicitation in the same way? This is the question the researcher tried to find an answer to.

1.2. Statement of the Problem

Explicitation is a translation universal and some may believe that native and non-native (here native Persian and non-native Persian) translators of a certain text make use of explicitation in the same way while translating from SL to TL and that the TTs produced by them have the same degree of explicitation, i.e. no translation of the same text is more explicit than the other. This study aims at comparing two English translations of the Bustan of Sa'di translated by Iranian and a non-Iranian translator to find out whether one is more explicit than the other or not.

1.3. Significance of the Study

Since some may believe that native and non-native translators of a certain text make use of explicitation in the same way and one translation is not more explicit than the other one, this study shows that such a belief is not true, at least not true for the English translation of the Bustan of Sa'di which is the corpus of the present study.

1.4. Research Question

- Is the Wickins' translation of the Bustan of Sa'di more explicit than Pazargadi's?

1.5. Theoretical Framework

Klaudy (1998) considers four types of explicitation as:

1) Obligatory explicitation

As a result of some differences in the semantic and syntactic structures of two languages, explicitation becomes obligatory and without such explicitation the sentences in the target language will be ungrammatical.

2) Optional explicitation

According to Klaudy (1998:83), "Optional explicitations are dictated by differences in text-building strategies and stylistic preferences between languages."

3) Pragmatic explicitation

The differences between cultures lead to pragmatic explicitation. People around the world, see the world differently and one thing which is familiar to SL community may mean nothing to TL community. Therefore the need for explicitation arises.

4) Translation-inherent explicitation

The nature of the translation process itself leads to explicitation.

1.6. Delimitation of the Study

The present research was restricted in terms of the number of available English translations of the Bustan of Sa'di. Since during the time the researcher was working on her study there was only one English translation of the Bustan of Sa'di done by a native-Persian translator available, the opportunity to compare at least four English translations of the Bustan consisting of two translations done by native-Persian translators and two translations done by non-native Persian translators was lost.

1.7. Definition of Key Terms

Explicitation

According to Klaudy (1998), the concept of explicitation was first described by Vinay and Darbelnet in 1958 as " the process of introducing information into the target language which is present only implicitly in the source language, but which can be derived from the context or the situation"(1958:8, cited in Klaudy 1998:80).

Obligatory Explicitation

According to Klaudy (1998:83) this type of explicitation is "dictated by differences in the syntactic and semantic structure of languages […] without them target language sentences would be ungrammatical."

Optional Explicitation

"Optional explicitations are dictated by differences in text-building strategies […] and stylistic preferences between languages." (Klaudy 1998:83)

Pragmatic Explicitation

As Klaudy (1998) states, pragmatic explicitations are dictated by differences between cultures.

Chapter Two:

Review of the Related Literature

2.1. Explicitation

Explicitation is a translation process when implied, initially missing or intentionally hidden (by an author) source language units are brought to the surface of the target-language message. Basically, it looks like an iceberg where the explicit parts are on its top and the implicit parts (the iceberg's bottom) depend on the translator's skills to be de-camouflaged and rendered. (Liashchenko: 2008)

According to Klaudy (1998), the concept of explicitation was first described by Vinay and Darbelnet in 1958 as " the process of introducing information into the target language which is present only implicitly in the source language, but which can be derived from the context or the situation"(1958:8, cited in Klaudy 1998:80). As Klaudy (1998) points out, a few years later in 1964, Nida develops the concept of explicitation. However, Nida does not use the term 'explicitation'. What Nida does is dealing with 'additions', 'subtractions' and 'alterations' as the main techniques of

adjustments which are used in the process of translation. Nida (1964:227) considers the most common and important types of 'additions' as:

a) filling out elliptical expressions

b) obligatory specification

c) additions required because of grammatical restructuring

d) amplification from implicit to explicit status

e) answers to rhetorical questions

f) classifiers

g) connectives

h) categories of the receptor language which do not exist in the source language

i) doublets

Filling out elliptical expressions: In describing *the filling out elliptical expressions*, Nida (1964:227) suggests that "in an expression almost obligatory elliptical in one language, an ellipsis may not be permitted in another". He gives the example of a clause which when translated into another language may require expansion.

Obligatory specification: Nida (1964:228) considers two reasons for the specification required in some translations. The two reasons are "ambiguity in the receptor language formations and the fact that greater specificity may be required so as to avoid misleading references."

Additions required because of grammatical restructuring: Nida (1964:228) holds that although any type of restructuring of a source-language expression can result in lexical additions, the most common instances which require amplification are 1) shifts of voice, e.g. when a passive expression is changed to an active one 2) modification from indirect to direct discourse, e.g. when indirect discourse, whether it is explicit or implicit, is changed into direct discourse and 3) alteration of word classes, e.g. a change from nouns to verbs.

Amplification from implicit to explicit status: Here Nida (1964:228) refers to the important semantic elements which are implicit in the source text and may need explicit identification in the receptor language. Nida gives some examples to the range and variety of many types of such additions. As Nida says, a phrase like 'queen of the south', can be very misleading in the receptor languages where neither 'queen' nor 'south' is familiar.

However, some scholars such as Englund Dimitrova (cited in Klaudy 1998:3) believe that 'explicitation' and 'addition' are two synonymous terms and use the term 'addition-explicitation'.

Shuttleworth and Cowie (1997) define explicitation as "the phenomenon which frequently leads to TT stating ST information in a more explicit form than the original, in the form of additional of the explanatory phrases and connectives and the spelling out of implicatures." (Cited in Dimitrova 2005:34)

Explicitation is claimed to be a translation universal. This is the basis for a hypothesis originally proposed by Blum-Kulka. According to Pym(2005),Blum-Kulka in 1986, formulated a hypothesis known as the " explicitation hypothesis".

Blum-Kulka (1986:19, cited in Klaudy 1998:9) defines this hypothesis as follows:

The process of interpretation performed by the translator on the source text might lead to a TL text which is more redundant than the SL text. This redundancy can be expressed by a rise in the level of cohesive explicitness in the TL text. This argument may be stated as "*the explicitation hypothesis*", which postulates an observed cohesive explicitness from SL to TL texts regardless of the increase

traceable to differences between the two linguistic and textual systems involved. It follows that explicitation is viewed here an inherent in the process of translation.

As we see, within this definition explicitation is considered as synonymous with redundancy. However, these are some scholars who are against such a narrow view of explicitation, among them is Seguinot, who as is referred to in Klaudy (1998) believes that the greater number of words in a translation can be explained by stylistic differences between two languages (SL and TL) and that the term 'explicitation' must only be used when dealing with additions which cannot be explained by structural, stylistic or rhetorical differences between SL and TL.

As it is referred to in Klaudy (1998), Blum-Kulka deals with discourse level explicitation, i.e. explicitation which is connected with shifts of cohesion and coherence.

Concerning Blum-Kulka's definition of "Explicitation Hypothesis", Pym (2005) points out some of its deficiencies. Pym states that according to Blum-Kulka's definition, explicitation is "the process of interpretation performed by the translator"; however, actual research has referred to the linguistic qualities of the source texts and target texts. Pym (2005:31) believes that what we have

to do is "to work out the cognitive churnings of interpretation, not just the statistics of textual occurrence." Another criticism Pym makes is the restriction of Blum-Kulka's definition only to the 'cohesive explicitness'. As Pym puts it, the hypothesis does not concern all the uses of language referring to things beyond the text.

Papai (2004:145) discusses explicitation in terms of 1) process 2) product.

In terms of process, explicitation is a translation technique involving a shift from the source text (ST) concerning structure or content. It is a technique of resolving ambiguity, improving and increasing cohesiveness of the ST and also of adding linguistic and extra-linguistic information. the ultimate motivation is the translator's conscious or subconscious effort to meet the target reader's expectations. *In terms of product*, explicitation is a text feature contributing to a higher level of explicitness in comparison with non-translated texts. It can be manifested in linguistic features used at higher frequency than in non-translated texts or in added linguistic and extra-linguistic information.

Klaudy (1998:83) considers four types of explicitation as:

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Another scholar who deals with the issue of 'explicitation' is Pal Heltai. In a paper named "Explicitation, Redundancy, Ellipsis and Translation", Heltai