

*In The Name Of God*



**SHAIKHBAHAE UNIVERSITY**

SCHOOL OF FOREIGN LANGUAGES

**THE ROLE OF THE QUALITY OF DISCOURSE  
TRANSLATION IN THE POPULARITY OF  
TRANSLATION PRODUCTS: A CASE STUDY OF  
GEORGE ORWELL'S *1984***

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

By  
MEHRNOUSH REZAIE

Supervisor  
DR. M. R. TALEBINEJAD

DECEMBER 2012

*To My Mother*

*&*

*To Nasim*

## Table of Contents

<b>Title</b>	<b>page</b>
Table of Contents .....	i
Acknowledgement .....	iv
List of Figures and Tables.....	v
Abstract .....	vi
<b>Chapter One: Introduction</b>	
1.1. Background .....	2
1.2. Statement of the Problem.....	5
1.3. Research Question.....	6
1.4. Significance of the Study.....	6
1.5. Definition of Key Terms.....	7
<b>Chapter Two: Literature Review</b>	
2.1. Overview.....	10
2.2. Discourse.....	10
2.3. Discourse Analysis.....	13
2.3.1. Data for Discourse Analysis.....	15
2.3.2. Methods of Discourse Analysis.....	18

2.3.2.1. Gee's (2005) Method of Discourse Analysis.....	18
2.4. Literary Translation.....	21
2.4.1. Literary Translation and Discourse Analysis.....	22
2.5. Summary.....	24

### **Chapter Three: Methodology**

3.1. Overview.....	26
3.2. Pilot Study.....	26
3.3. Materials.....	26
3.4. Instrument.....	27
3.5. Procedures.....	29

### **Chapter Four: Data Analysis and Results**

4.1. Overview.....	33
4.2. Data Analysis.....	33
4.2.1. The Analysis of the First Excerpt.....	33
4.2.2. The Analysis of the Second Excerpt.....	39
4.3. Results of Data Analysis.....	44
4.4. Summary.....	47

## **Chapter Five: Discussion and Conclusion**

5.1. Overview.....	50
5.2. Discussion.....	50
5.3. Conclusion.....	52
5.4. Implications of the Study.....	53
5.5. Limitations of the Study.....	54
5.6. Suggestions for Further Research.....	55
References.....	57
Appendix I: Analysis of the Excerpts.....	65
Appendix II: Results of Chi-squares.....	107

## **Acknowledgements**

This thesis is the result of a long-time work whereby I have been accompanied and supported by some people to whom I should express my appreciation.

My special thanks go to my supervisor, Dr. Mohammadreza Talebinejad, for his knowledgeable advice, his patience and his consideration. He was the first to teach me the meaning of insistence and brilliance. I see him as a model to be followed and a friend to be cherished.

Besides, I would also like to thank all my professors in Shaikhbahaee University who supported me during my studies. I am deeply indebted to them.

Last but not least, my sincerest appreciations are reserved for my dear family whose love and full support accompanied me through the vicissitudes in life and the academic years.

## List of Figures and Tables

Title	Page
<b>Figure 4.1.</b> Comparing the accordance of the two translations with the source text regarding seven building tasks proposed by Gee (2005).....	41
<b>Table 4.1.</b> The comparison between the two translations regarding each discourse feature.....	44
<b>Table 4.2.</b> The comparison between the two translations regarding the quality of discourse translation.....	45



## **Abstract**

This study aimed at investigating whether or not the quality of discourse translation plays a role in the difference between the two translations of Orwell's novel *1984* regarding their popularity among their readers. To this end, Saleh-Hosseini's (2001) translation which has been republished fourteen times and is claimed to be more popular compared to Bahreman's (1982) that has been republished only two times were chosen for analysis. Considering the fact that the original novel has a significant socio-political discourse, the researcher decided to compare the discourse of the source and target texts to see if the quality of discourse translation has played any role in the popularity of these translation products. To do so, out of thirty dialogues of the original text, ten dialogues were selected randomly. Then, the equivalents of them were identified in each work of translation. Next, using Gee's (2005) method of discourse analysis, the discourses of the source and target texts were analyzed. The researcher, afterward, compared the discourse of each translation with that of the source text to check their correspondence which was, subsequently, presented in numbers and percentages. Finally, Chi-square and Z tests were calculated the results of which demonstrated no statistically significant differences between the two translations concerning the quality of discourse translation. Consequently, the analyses revealed that this type of quality does not, necessarily, play any role in the differences between translations with regard to their popularity. The researcher, thus, concluded that other textual and/or extra-textual factors may have a part in this difference which can be recognized by future researchers through a closer look at the data or by means of other methods of research.

# **Chapter One**

## **Introduction**

## **Chapter One**

### **Introduction**

#### **1.1. Background**

People, as members of the world community, reflect their beliefs and ideologies in their way of talking and through language. A nation's culture flourishes by interacting with other cultures by means of language whose role is materialized through *translating* (Razmjou, 2004). In the present era, translation has a huge effect on everyday life in terms of intercultural communication, localization, globalization, internationalization, politics, news, and technology (Hatim & Munday, 2004; Pym, 2010). Including the act of transferring the meaning of the source language to the target language by, basically, changing the form, translation interfaces with a vast breadth of knowledge of languages, linguistics, communication studies, philosophy and cultural studies (Larson, 1998; Munday, 2001). Translation is a broad phenomenon which can be viewed differently, for example as a process or a product, and different sub-types can be identified, such as literary translation, technical translation, subtitling and machine translation (Shuttleworth & Cowie, 1997). Besides, though the term sometimes also includes interpreting, it typically refers to the rendering of written texts which, in this way, three types of written translation have been distinguished by Jakobson (1959 and 2000): (1) interlingual translation, (2) interlingual translation, and (3) intersemiotic translation. However, for Jakobson (1959 and 2000) only the second type, which refers to the translation of a text from one language to another, is considered to be the proper translation.

Translation Studies, the notion which was first proposed by Holmes (1988 and 2000), is considered to be an emerging, though perfect, interdiscipline that refers to the study of translation theories and phenomena. The field is an extremely wide one in which a considerable number of scholars and practitioners are active (Munday, 2001).

The authorities involved in Translation Studies have offered various definitions for translation, each of which indicates a specific basic theoretical model (Shuttleworth & Cowie, 1997). Considering textual aspects of translation process, Catford (1965) defined it as “the replacement of textual material in one language (SL) by equivalent textual material in another language (TL)” (p. 20). Approaching translation based on the notion of equivalent effect, Nida and Taber (1969 and 1982) described it as reproducing the closest natural equivalents in the target language in terms of both form and style to make the same effect on target-text readers as the source-text produces on source-text readers. Moreover, Lotfipour-Saedi (2008), with regard to discursal features of a text, considered translation as the act of reproducing the conditions under which the target-text readers can interact with the source-text producer. Therefore, the notion of translation is so vast that it can be viewed from many different angles from textual to socio-cultural and discursal.

There are different types and theories of translation such as semantic and communicative suggested by Newmark (1981), literal, free, and faithful by Steiner (1998), and overt and covert by House (1997), each of which are used on the basis of different texts; that is, different types of texts require different methods of translation (Newmark, 1988).

Translation of literary texts, to paraphrase Newmark (1988), is normally viewed as the most laborious type of translation as in literature the emphasis is on both form and meaning and there is a cultural gap between the source-language and target-language readers. Also Abbasi and Vahid (2005) consider literary texts as seemingly the most testing types of texts to be rendered. Observing the beauty, style, form, figurative language and discourse of the original literary texts- which are some of the main problematic features of such texts- has turned the task of literary translation difficult and a matter of concern to translators.

According to Lotfipour-Saedi (1992), in literature, the 'form' is so important that there is no border-line between 'form' and 'meaning'. To illustrate, 'indirectness' as a literary discursal feature may on the surface be presented by various 'forms' such as metaphor, rhythm, metric patterns, etc. Thus, in literature the border-line between discursal features and textual strategies disappears and the translator would seem to face a complex dilemma in translating literary texts: since, in literature, the 'form' contributes to the 'meaning', it cannot be disregarded. At the same time, it may not be possible to replicate the source-language form in the target language because of the unique nature of the structures of languages. Thus, works of literature, as they include special patternings imposed to them upon the ordinary patterns in non-literary texts, pose challenges to translators, though the degree of the challenge is not the same in all literary texts and across all languages (Lotfipour-Saedi, 2008).

## **1.2. Statement of the Problem**

Baker (2009) made a distinction between discourse, genre, and text. Though knowledge of the conventions dominating the proper use of a given genre or text format is indispensable in translation act, Baker (2009) stated "[...] it is awareness of what discourse implies that ultimately facilitates optimal transfer and renders the much sought-after translation EQUIVALENCE an attainable objective" (p.68).

However, despite this importance, one of the problems of translations and the studies carried out in this area, seemingly, is that the significance of reflecting on source-text discourse features and rendering them into the target language has, hitherto, been neglected and mere attention has been paid to textual elements.

The problem exists, particularly, in translation of literary texts. Comparing literary and non-literary texts, Lotfipour-Saedi (2008) stated, in literature, "the reader is exposed to further textual indices, i.e. special literary patterns, representing the literary effect or the foregrounding of the text" (p.92). These special literary patterns, textual factors, and their deviation from conventional language rules contribute to discourse process of literary texts. Thus, translating literary texts, considering their discourse, poses more problems which, seemingly, have received little scholarly attention.

Besides, one of the main goals of the translation act, especially literature translation, is to attract the readers knowing that the amount of re-publications of a translation product indicates its popularity among readers. However, even though a substantial amount of research has been carried out on translation studies and translatology, few of them have considered the causes for the popularity of some of the

translations. Therefore, it seems one of the shortcomings of the studies carried out thus far is that their findings usually prescribe some theoretical ways to make translations better, but these studies do not consider the reasons why some translations are, significantly, more popular among their readers.

### **1.3. Research Question**

This study seeks to answer the following question:

Does the quality of discourse translation of Orwell's novel, *1984*, play any role in the popularity of its translation products?

### **1.4. Significance of the Study**

The approaches employed in Contrastive Linguistics, to paraphrase Catford (1965), have long been used in Translation Studies. However, "these approaches have mostly been criticized to be form-oriented and incompatible with the true nature of language behavior" (de Beaugrande, 1980; Hartmann, 1980). Moreover, the researchers approaching Translation Studies through Contrastive Linguistics have generally dealt with linguistic features of both source and target texts only to reveal the similarities and differences of the two and "rarely have they gone beyond the sentence level in their analysis" (Lotfipour-Saedi, 2008, p. 1).

Therefore, it is deemed crucial to focus on the meaning and function of language when translating texts. Thus, a discourse-analysis approach towards language is used in the present study as one of the first attempts to study pieces of language-in-use in the source-English and target-Persian texts.

In addition, Gee's (2005) approach to discourse analysis, used in this study,

[...] is interested, beyond description, in two things: (a) illuminating and gaining evidence [...] to explain how and why language works the way it does [...]; and (b) contributing [...] to important issues and problems in some "applied" area [...] that interests and motivates the researcher (Gee, 2005, p.8).

Though this approach is a comprehensive one, the researcher has not found, thus far, any application of it in Translation Studies. Therefore, the present study seems to be a new one in this respect.

Since literature is defined to communicate life and experience and literary texts obtain many features that differ a lot from ordinary language, translating literature texts, though a laborious job, seems to be demanding. Moreover, as some kind of extra-textual analysis of the source text is, to paraphrase Schaffner (2002), a prerequisite for understanding it before the translation process, studying these texts beyond structural levels and isolated components may be the most momentous duty of any scholar. Hence, the present study is also significant in the way that it takes the meaning and function of literary texts into consideration and studies their translations to investigate whether or not the quality of discourse translation plays a role in their popularity.

### **1.5. Definition of Key Terms**

1. **Discourse:** "Language used on site to enact activities and identities", "language in use" (Gee, 2005, p. 7).



2. **Seven building tasks:** Seven areas of reality designed or built by language in use. Seven discourse analysis questions rised by any piece of language-in-use (Gee, 2005).
3. **Literary texts:** Texts distinguished from non-literary ones in terms of the special effect they have on their readers due to certain textual and extra-textual factors (Lotfipour-Saedi, 2008).
4. **Quality assessment:** assessing the degree of efficiency of the translation regarding the textual and extra-textual function of source text within the cultural frame and expressive potentials of both source and target languages (Al-Qinai, 2000).
5. **Social good:**“Anything that a group of people believes to be a source of power, status, value, or worth” (Gee, 2005, p. 2).

## **Chapter Two**

### **Literature Review**

## **Chapter Two**

### **Literature Review**

#### **2.1. Overview**

This chapter sets out with the elaboration on some interpretations of the notion of discourse, boundaries for, methods of, and approaches to discourse analysis and its role and application in translation of literary texts.

#### **2.2. Discourse**

The term ‘discourse’- Latin *discursus*: “running to and from; like a person who gives a speech and runs on about a topic” (Renkema, 2004, p. 48), has taken various and, even, broad meanings. For Stubbs (1983), discourse is “language above the sentence or above the clause, i.e., larger linguistic units such as conversations or written texts” (p. 1). To Fairclough (1993), it is language use, whether speech or writing, seen as a type of social practice. Cook (1989) believed that discourse may be composed of “one or more well-formed grammatical sentences- and indeed it often is- but it does not have to be” (p. 7). Discourse treats the grammatical conventions as a resource, “confirming to them when it needs, but departing from them when does not to” (Cook, 1989, p. 7). Discourse reaches out further than language itself. It is “multi-modal” (Jaworski & Coupland, 1999, p. 7), that is, it is the sequence of social applications which makes meaning and may include non-linguistic semiotic systems like a television commercial (Jaworski & Coupland, 1999).

There are as many functions and manifestations for discourse as its definitions. To illustrate, giving information, expressing emotions, persuasion, and arguments are some of the functions; telephone calls, sermons, lectures and dialogues are some of the forms of discourse. These manifestations in different situations are so different that one may wonder if “the term discourse is perhaps too vague to span all differences” (Renkema, 2004, p. 48). According to Alvesson (2004), the term discourse has become a “catch-all”, “covering too much and revealing too little” (p.327). Although few all-embracing classifications of discourse can be found, Gee’s (2005) D/discourse definition seems to be a comprehensive one. Gee (2005) defined discourse- with small d- as “language- in- use” (p. 7); however, he stated:

activities and identities are rarely enacted through language alone. [...] it is not enough to get just the words “right” [...]. It is also necessary to get one’s body, clothes, gestures, actions, interactions, symbols, tools, technologies [...], values, attitudes, beliefs, and emotions “right” as well [...]. When “little d” discourse (language- in- use) is melded integrally with non- language stuff to enact specific identities and activities, then I say that “big D” Discourses are involved (p. 7).

Many attempts have been made to classify different varieties of discourse. For instance, traditionally, some scholars (e.g., Chafe, 1982) divided it into two major categories, the spoken and the written. Spoken discourse is often regarded as being “less planned and orderly, more open to intervention by the receiver” (Cook, 1989, p. 57). These scholars also asserted that written discourse, as opposed to oral one, is produced in a larger sequence of sentences and the producer of this type of discourse is in direct contact with readers. Nonetheless, Renkema (2004) believed that “[...] there are a large number of