



**Allameh Tabataba'i University**

**Faculty of Persian Literature and Foreign Languages**

**Department of English Translation Studies**

**Strategies Adopted in the English Translations  
of Khayyam's Ruba'iyat**

**Thesis Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements  
for the Degree of Master of Art in Translation Studies**

**Advisor: Dr. Salar Manafi Anari**

**Reader: Dr. Farzaneh Farahzad**

**By: Kaveh Ghadery**

**February 2010**



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**February 2010**

**فرم گردآوری اطلاعات پایان نامه ها**  
**کتابخانه مرکزی دانشگاه علامه طباطبائی**

<b>عنوان:</b> راهبردهای ترجمانی در ترجمه های انگلیسی رباعیات خیام
<b>نویسنده/محقق:</b> کاوه قادری
<b>مترجم:</b> -
<b>استاد راهنما:</b> جناب آقای دکتر سالار منافی اناری <b>استاد مشاور/استاد داور:</b> سرکار خانم دکتر فرزانه فرحزاد/ جناب آقای دکتر احمد صدیقی
<b>کتابنامه:</b> دارد <b>واژه نامه:</b> دارد
<b>نوع پایان نامه:</b> <input type="checkbox"/> بنیادی <input type="checkbox"/> توسعه ای <input type="checkbox"/> کاربردی
<b>مقطع تحصیلی:</b> کارشناسی ارشد <b>سال تحصیلی:</b> ۸۸-۸۹
<b>محل تحصیل:</b> تهران <b>نام دانشگاه:</b> علامه طباطبائی <b>دانشکده:</b> ادبیات فارسی و زبانهای خارجه
<b>تعداد صفحات:</b> I-X، ۱-۱۰۵ <b>گروه آموزشی:</b> مترجمی زبان انگلیسی
<b>کلید واژه به زبان فارسی:</b> ترجمه ادبی، رباعی، خیام، ترجمه تحت اللفظی، ترجمه تقریبی، اقتباس، تقلید
<b>کلید واژه به زبان انگلیسی:</b> <b>Literary Translation, Ruba'i, Khayyam, Literal translation, Approximation, Adaptation, Imitation</b>

## چکیده

### الف. موضوع و طرح مسئله (اهمیت موضوع و هدف):

در حوزه ترجمه ادبی بیشترین مباحث و تحلیل‌ها به حوزه ترجمه شعر مربوط می‌شود. بحث و تحلیل راهبردهای مترجمان انگلیسی رباعیات می‌تواند برای آنهایی که به نحوی با مباحث ترجمه ادبی به طور اعم و ترجمه شعر به طور اخص سروکار دارند مفید باشد. این تحقیق در پی شناسایی، توصیف و مقایسه‌ی راهبردهای ترجمانی است که مترجمان انگلیسی رباعیات خیام در ترجمه‌هایشان اتخاذ کرده‌اند.

### ب. مبانی نظری شامل مرور مختصری از منابع، چارچوب نظری، پرسشها و فرضیه‌ها:

چارچوب نظری این تحقیق مدل نظری جونز (۱۹۹۷) می‌باشد که در آن شیوه‌های ترجمه شعر به چهار نوع یعنی؛ ۱. تحت اللفظی، ۲. ترجمه تقریبی، ۳. اقتباس و ۴. تقلید تقسیم شده است. پرسشهای این تحقیق عبارتند از؛ ۱. کدامیک از راهبردهای ترجمانی جونز بیشتر توسط مترجمان به کار رفته‌اند؟ ۲. راهبردهای اتخاذ شده اختیاری هستند یا اجباری؟ ۳. آیا هیچ نوع قاعده‌مندی در اتخاذ این راهبردها دیده می‌شود؟ دو فرضیه‌ی این تحقیق عبارتند از: ۱. راهبردهای اتخاذ شده توسط مترجمان اجباری هستند. ۲. نوعی قاعده‌مندی در راهبردهای اتخاذ شده مترجمان دیده می‌شود.

پ. روش تحقیق شامل تعریف مفاهیم، روش تحقیق، جامعه مورد تحقیق، نمونه‌گیری و روشهای نمونه‌گیری، ابزار اندازه‌گیری، نحوه اجرای آن، شیوه گردآوری و تجزیه و تحلیل داده‌ها: این تحقیق توصیفی است. در این تحقیق ۵ ترجمه انگلیسی از رباعیات خیام (ترجمه‌های آریبری، آریانپور، بوون، فیتزجرالد و تیرتا) انتخاب شد و از میان ای ۵ ترجمه ۱۸ رباعی مشترک انتخاب شدند که پیکره این تحقیق را شکل می‌دهند. پس از ارائه هر رباعی فارسی و ۵ ترجمه انگلیسی آن، مختصری در مورد ترجمه‌ها و سپس راهبردهای انتخاب شده توسط مترجم ارائه گردید.

### ت. یافته‌های تحقیق:

در ارتباط با پرسش اول تحقیق، بسامد راهبردهای اتخاذ شده در ارتباط با رویکردهای تحت اللفظی، ترجمه تقریبی، اقتباس و تقلید به ترتیب ۲۲، ۳۰، ۲۷ و ۶ بودند. یافته‌های این تحقیق رای بر اثبات فرضیه اول و دوم دادند.

### ث. نتیجه‌گیری و پیشنهادات:

یافته‌های این تحقیق می‌تواند در کلاسهای ترجمه ادبی و نیز کلاسهای کارگاهی مورد استفاده قرار گیرد. نتایج این تحقیق می‌تواند در توسعه و تکوین نظریات و مدل‌های ترجمه ادبی و ترجمه شعر به کار گرفته شود. مینتوان ای پژوهش را در مورد ترجمه‌های دیگر شاهکارهای ادب فارسی در مغرب زمین انجام داد.

## صحت اطلاعات مندرج در این فرم بر اساس محتوای پایان نامه و ضوابط مندرج

### در فرم را گواهی مینماییم.

نام استاد راهنما:

رئیس کتابخانه:

سمت علمی:

نام دانشکده:

# **To My Kind Parents**

## **Acknowledgement**

I am eternally indebted to my advisor, Dr. Manafi, for his patience and careful guidance during the different phases of my work. Of course this research would not have been progressed if it were not for his kindness and considerations. My special thanks go to my thesis reader, Dr. Farahzad, for her valuable advices and positive readings not only throughout this thesis, but also throughout my M.A studies.

## **Abstract**

Translating literary texts in general and translating poetry in particular has often been a controversial issue among translators and translation scholars. Many of the studies done in this respect are either evaluations of different renderings of a literary work and or systematic works done for analyzing the problems and providing methods and suggestions for them. In the present study it was attempted to analyze the translational strategies adopted in the English translations of one of the masterpieces of Persian literature, i.e., Khayyam's Ruba'iyat. The theoretical framework for this study was that of Michael H. Jones (1997) in which he has discussed these strategies as: Literal translation; Approximation; Adaptation and; Imitation. For these five renderings of Khayyam's Ruba'iyat, i.e., those of Arberry, Aryanpurs, Bowen, FitzGeraald and, Tirtha were selected and their translational strategies were discussed. Three research questions were presented. 1. Which of Jones's four strategies of poetry translation are more frequently used by the English translators of Khayyam? 2. Are these strategies obligatory or optional? 3. Is there any regularity in employing these strategies? The first hypothesis was strongly confirmed as for three versions and it was not approved for both FitzGerald's and Bowen's translations. The second hypothesis was confirmed through the analytical studies of the versions. The Frequency for adopting the translational strategies is as follows: Arberry [ Literal: 17, Approximation: 1]; Aryanpurs [Literal: 4, Approximation: 11, Adaptation: 3]; Bowen [Approximation:6, Adaptation:12]; FitzGerald [Approximation: 3, Adaptation: 9, Imitation: 6] and; Tirtha [Literal:1, Approximation: 12 and, Adaptation: 3].

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# **Chapter One:**

# **Introduction**

# **1. Introduction**

## **1.1 Introductory Remarks**

In the history of Translation Studies, many scholars have studied the issues of “literary translation” and “poetry translation” and have expressed their views about the problems and toils of translating such texts. It has often been said that translating such texts which are considered as ‘sensitive’ and ‘form-focused’ are much more demanding than “non-literary” and “non-poetic” texts. According to Hanson "poetic language is regarded as the most creative of discourse, original in its ideas and inventive in its form" (1992: 28). Hanson (1992) then adds "it is rich in striking metaphors, unusual collocations and irregular word order" (p: 29). It is wrong to think of form and content in poetry as two separate entities; rather they are so intensely fused in an artistic entity that it is not possible to imagine one without the other. As Azabdaftari (1993) maintains "these two (form and content) constitute a compositional unity and any deformation of the material (content/ meaning) is at the same time a deformation of the form itself " (p: 14).

## **1.2 Background of the Problem**

Within the scope of literary translation, more time has been devoted to identifying and discussing the problems of translating poetry than other literary genres. According to Bassnett (1988: 81) "most of these studies are either evaluations of different translations of a single work or personal statements by individual translators on how they have set about solving problems". She then adds that "rarely do such studies of poetry and translation try to discuss methodological problems from a non-empirical position, and yet it is precisely that type of study that is most valuable and needed" (Bassnet, 1988: 82). Also poetry translation has a long history

(2000 years) for its practice, much of the discussions have been devoted to the very possibility of the task. According to Robert Frost "poetry is what is lost in translation and thus no translation of a poem can be equal to or substituted for the original" (Manafi, 2003: 11). Regarding the issue of possibility of poetry translation, there are two approaches; the first group who are the literalists such as Nabokov, Jacobson believe in the impossibility of the task and the second group are those scholars who believe in the possibility of the task (Manfi, 2003: 12). As Cannoly states the approaches to the problems of translation poetry fall into two basic categories: the pragmatic and the theoretical (Cited in Baker, 1998: 171).

### **1.3 Purpose of the Study**

This research aims at identifying, describing and comparing translation strategies that the English translators of Khayyam have adopted in their translations. Some quatrains of each translation (those that are strongly believed to be Khayyam's quatrains and are common among all the translators) were selected and the most frequent strategies of the translators were identified while comparing these quatrains to each other.

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

Discussing and analyzing the strategies of the English translators of Khayyam can be useful for those who are involved in translating poetry. The findings of this research can also be useful for developing principles and approaches to poetry translation. The findings of this research can also be of use for those who are involved in teaching 'literary translation' 'poetry translation' and also those who are interested in learning how to translate literary texts in general and poetry in specific.

## **1.5 Research Questions**

1. Which of Jones's four strategies of poetry translation are more frequently used by the English translators of Khayyam?
2. Are these strategies obligatory or optional?
3. Is there any regularity in employing these strategies?

## **1.6 Research Hypotheses**

1. There is a kind of regularity in adopting the strategies by the translators.
2. The translational strategies provided by the translators are obligatory.

## **1.7 Theoretical Framework**

The theoretical framework for this research is Michele H. Jones' four translational strategies for translating poetry; literal translation, approximation, adaptation and imitation (1997). It is to be noted that, although Jones provided this framework, but none of the definitions for any of the methods are his. Instead he has provided others' definitions for all of his methods.

Literal translation is that in which one attempts to be faithful to both form and content of the original. Newmark (1981: 39) maintains that "in communicative as in semantic translation, provided that equivalent effect is secured, the literal word-for-word translation is not only the best, but it is the only valid method of translation".

According to Manafi (2003) "Approximation is another level or type of poetry translation in which the translator is faithful to some aspects of the original poem, but he takes certain liberties so that a sensible translation may be produced" (p: 18). In adaptation, faithfulness to the original is

less than that in approximation. According to Munday (2000: 58) adaptation involves changing the cultural reference when a situation in the source culture does not exist in the target culture and for Vinay and Darbelnet (cited in Venuti, 2000: 90) it is used in those cases where the type of situation being referred to by the SL message is unknown to the TL readers (Manafi, 2003: 19).

Imitation is creation of a new poem in the TL with the theme of that in the SL. This type of poetry translation is mostly practiced by poet-translation.

According to Jackson (2001: 1) imitation, as Dryden states, is a kind of free translation and is more or less similar to adaptation. He (2001: 3) then adds that "in imitating a poem, the imitator learns from it in order to create a new poem of his own, retaining the theme of the first in the new one and thus, although the two poems are different in the wordings, they are similar to each other in having the same theme". A translator is better to be a poet to translate poetry. Manafi believes that "a poet-translator can better understand a poet from another culture and better imitate him or her, through adaptation, in his or her own language and culture, though he or she may impose his or her own poetic style upon the translated poem. It is such an adapted poem that should be called 'imitation' "(2003: 19).

## **1.8 Definition of Key Terms**

**Alliteration:** The repetition of consonant sounds within close proximity, usually in consecutive words within the same sentence or line.

**Figurative Language:** Any use of language where the intended meaning differs from the actual literal meaning of the words themselves. There are many techniques which can rightly be called figurative language,

including metaphor, simile, hyperbole, personification, onomatopoeia, verbal irony and oxymoron.

**Magian:** An adherent of the Zoroastrian faith. The word comes from the Old Persian *magav-*, Magus, the tribe from which the Zoroastrians priestly cast was drawn, or possibly from the Avestan word *maga-*, 'union'.

**Metaphor:** A direct relationship where one thing or idea substitutes for another.

**Rhyme:** Repetition of an identical or similarly accented sound or sounds in a work. Lyricists may find multiple ways to rhyme within a verse. End rhymes have words that rhyme at the end of a verse-line. Internal rhymes have words that rhyme within it.

**Rhythm:** The pattern of stressed and unstressed syllables in a line of verse or (less often) prose. Regular rhythm is called meter.



**Chapter Two:**  
**Review of the Related**  
**Literature**

## Chapter Two: Review of the Related Literature

### 2.1 The Nature of Poetry

Poetry is as old as language and has been important among the most civilized and the most primitive nations alike. It has such effects on the readers that for long time poetry was regarded as heavenly words coming from a supernatural world and thus the poets were considered as under the influence of the Muses, gods of poetry (Lazim, 2006:2).

As being discussed by Hariyanto (2001) "Poetry (from the Greek term "*poiesis*" which means "making" or "creating")" is a form of literary art in which language is used for its aesthetic and evocative qualities in addition to its apparent meaning. Poetry may be written independently, as discrete poems, or may occur in conjunction with other arts, as in poetic drama, hymns or lyrics.

Poetry, and discussions of it, has a long history. Hanson ( 1992) states that "early attempts to define poetry, such as Aristotle's *Poetics*, focused on the uses of speech in rhetoric, drama, song and comedy while, later attempts concentrated on features such as repetition and rhyme, and emphasized the aesthetics which distinguish poetry from prose" (p: 28). From the mid-20th century, poetry has sometimes been more loosely defined as a fundamental creative act that uses language.

Poetry often uses particular forms and conventions to expand the literal meaning of the words, or to evoke emotional or sensual responses. Devices such as assonance, alliteration, onomatopoeia and rhythm are sometimes used to achieve musical or incantatory effects. Poetry's use of ambiguity, symbolism, irony and other stylistic elements of poetic diction often leaves a poem open to multiple interpretations (Azabdaftari, 1993:14). Similarly, metaphor and simile create a resonance between

otherwise disparate images- a layering of meanings, forming connections previously not perceived. Kindred forms of resonance may exist, between individual verses, in their patterns of rhyme or rhythm (Malmkjaer, 2005: 71-74).

Some forms of poetry are specific to particular cultures and genres, responding to the characteristics of the language in which the poet writes. While readers accustomed to identifying poetry with Dante, Goethe, and Rumi may think of it as being written in rhyming lines and regular meter, there are traditions that use other approaches to achieve rhythm and euphony (Hariyanto, 2002: 1) . In today's globalized world, poets often borrow styles, techniques and forms from diverse cultures and languages. As Azabdafatri (1993) maintains “poetic language is regarded as the most creative of discourse, original in its ideas and inventive in its form. It is rich in striking metaphors, unusual collocations and irregular word order. The oddity of poetic expressions opens up vistas of both the beautiful and the ugly in relief, taking the reader's mind to realms hardly ever trodden by man's imagination” (p: 13). Then he adds that:

Often it is said that poetic language is self-referential and perceptible in a way that non-literary is not. The meaning of a poem comes as much from the form as the content, which in any case is created within the poem. Put in other words, it is wrong to think of form and content as two separate entities; rather they are so intensely fused in an artistic entity that it is not possible to imagine one without the other. These two constitute a compositional unity and any deformation of the material (content/ meaning) is at the same time a deformation of the form itself (1993: 14).

Newmark (1988) states that: “poetry is the most personal and concentrated of the four forms, no redundancy, no phatic language, where as a unit, the word has a greater importance than in any other type of text” (p: 163). And then he maintains that "again, if the word is the first unit of meaning, the second is not the sentence or the proposition, but the line, thereby again demonstrating a unique double concentration of units" (1988: 163).

Like the pure sciences, poetry is first and foremost a cognitive undertaking, one of the most stringent modes of knowing that exist. Everything about it is shaped by the search for insight, or even truth (. And the truth of a poem is, of course, something that goes far beyond paraphrasable propositional content. Poetry, then, is about *knowing* (Azabdaftari, 1993: 15:20). Poetry is not about being decorative: its language is anything but an ornamental overlay. Form is decorative only to the illiterate (Folkart, 1997: 31-34).

## **2.2 The Nature of Ruba'i**

The Ruba'i (Ruba'iyat is simply the plural form of the word) is one of the commonest and most characteristic of Persian verse forms. Every poet, great and small, has written some and it is the favorite choice of the poetaster who can not run to anything more extended (Dashti, 1971: 16). It is a four-line stanza, each line consisting of from ten to thirteen syllables of varying length arranged according to a set meter or pattern, all ruba'iyat are composed in this one meter, which is never used for any other type of poem. The rhyme scheme is either aaba or, slightly less frequently, aaaa. The theme of ruba'i is particularly the expression of pithy, epigrammatical thoughts and in this respect is not unlike the Greek epigram or the Japanese *haiku* (Dashti, 1971: 16). One striking characteristic is the final punch line, summing up the moral of the whole,