

*In the name of Allah,  
the Most Gracious, the Most  
Merciful*



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**Faculty of Foreign Languages**  
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**M.A. Thesis**

**A Study of Translation of English Literary Terms into Persian**

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**Dedication**

*To My Beloved  
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Understanding Husband*

## **Abstract**

The present study aimed at investigating the Persian translation of technical terms in the domain of literature to examine their translatability and to explore the strategies applied by three Persian translators, Babaie (2007), Dad (1999) and Sabzian (2005). A further goal of the study was to enquire into the term formation methods employed in providing Persian equivalences for domain specific terms (literary terms, the focus of this study). To these aims, an eclectic framework consisting translation strategies given by Vinay and Darbelnet (1958) and term formation methods described by Picht and Draskau (1985) was adopted. Furthermore, 210 English literary terms were extracted from *The Glossary of Literary Terms* by Abrams (2004) and their equivalents proposed by the abovementioned translators were identified as the sources of data needed for this study. The analysis of the data indicated that equivalence, as a translation strategy, was employed most frequently in translation of English literary terms into Persian and compounding, as a term formation method, is of the highest frequency in Persian LSP.

**Keywords:** translation, term formation, literary terms, technical terminology

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## **List of Abbreviations**

LSP: Language for special purpose

LGP: Language for general purpose

SL: Source language

TL: Target language

T1: Translator one: Babaie

T2: Translator two: Dad

T3: Translator three: Sabzian

P1: Procedure one: borrowing

P2: Procedure two: calque

P3: Procedure three: literal translation

P4: Procedure four: equivalence

M1: Method one: Terminologisation

M2: Method two: Compounds

M3: Method three: Derivation

M4: Method four: Importation of loan words

# **Chapter One**

## **Introduction**

### **1.1. Introduction**

#### **1.1.1 Translation Process**

Different scholars define translation as a process differently. Catford (1965), for instance, defines translation as the act of replacing text material in the source language by an equivalent text in the target language. Pinchuck (1977) simply states that translation is "the transfer of meanings" (p.35).

Newmark (1981, p. 7) sees translation as "a craft consisting in the attempt to replace a written message and/or statement in one language by the same message and/or statement in another language". De Groot (1997) refers to translation as the activity of reformulating written source language text into written target language text. Regardless of the differences in the ways the scholars define translation, they agree on the basic principles of which focus on meaning is the most important consideration (Astika, 1993).

## 1. 2. Statement of the problem

Translation theory has not been a single unified field, but several fields concerned with different aspects and different types of translation, some of which have neglected issues beyond their purview, in particular the translation of technical terms.

Linguistic theory of translation has paid scant attention to the question of how to translate ‘technical terms’, and has tended to deal only with lexical translation in a wider sense. Eugene Nida has discussed the translation of biblical terms into a variety of languages. Although he recommends what he calls dynamic equivalence in preference to a source-oriented formal equivalence, his translation of terms, as distinct from that of text, is very much source-oriented. Newmark, who favors a more source-oriented approach, points out that when translating certain texts, such as highly idiosyncratic creative or ancient literature we cannot be sure of the intended effect on the reader, and that in such cases, the translation must be literal (1995, p.11). Mary Snell-Hornby’s integrated approach to translation barely gives terminology more than a mention (Snell-Hornby 1988/1995, p. 107).

Technical term translation represents one of the most difficult tasks for translators since 1) most translators are not familiar with terms and domain-specific terminology and 2) such terms are not adequately covered by printed dictionaries (Wiseman, 2000).

The technical terms of any discipline represent technical concepts. When different writers refer to concepts by different terms (or refer to different concepts by the same term), students reading the works of different writers are easily confused. This is true for all fields.

Variable terminology may well in many cases be due to chance differences in choices of expression by different writers. Logically, though,



when a given concept is referred to by two or more different terms, it is reasonable to ask whether one of these terms might be superior to any other, and, if so, by what criteria the best equivalent is chosen. Furthermore, if one term is better than another, the question also arises as to why translators have not engaged in a common effort to devise the most satisfactory terminology and encourage its general use. The only possible answer to the latter question is that either translators are unaware of any need for standardization or their insistence on different terms reflects differences in understanding either of the concept itself or of the means by which the concept can be best understood or interpreted by the target-language recipients (Wiseman, 2000).

### **1.3. Significance of the study**

Literary terms refer to those terms which bear meanings and concepts related to the specific field of literature such as terms used in literary criticism or those which distinguish different eras in literature. Many of the books written on technical context of literary studies are considered as main sources in universities of Iran. Consequently, some translators have undertaken the translation of such books. This study tries to shed some light on how domain-specific terms (technical literary terms) have been translated into Persian and what procedures translators have employed in the process of rendering these terms into Persian. This study will hopefully be of some help to those interested in translation of literature in general and literary theories and criticism in particular.

### **1.4. Objectives**

This study aims at surveying how specific terms in the field of literature have been translated into Persian. It also intends to compare and contrast equivalents chosen by three Persian translators included in this

study to see the degree of success each translator has had in conveying these domain specific terms. The objective is to have a better understanding of the translation of literary terms into Persian, the challenges in this domain and the strategies or procedures for tackling them. In addition, the present study attempts to investigate how terms, as equivalences for English literary terms, are formed in Persian language. To achieve this goal, Persian terms are analyzed under a reliable term formation method framework.

### **1.5. Research questions**

1. What are the possible translation problems in translating English literary terms into Persian?
2. Which translation procedures are utilized by translators more frequently?
3. Which term formation method is of the highest frequency in the Persian LSP?

### **1.6. Definition of key terms**

**1) Technical terminology** is the specialized vocabulary of any field, not just technical fields. The same is true for the synonyms *technical terms*, *terms of art*, and *words of art*, which do not necessarily refer to technology or art. Within one or more fields, these terms have one or more specific meanings that are not necessarily the same as those in common use.

**2) Translation:** "An activity 'which consists in reproducing in the receptor language the closest natural equivalent of the source language message, first in terms of meaning and secondly in terms of style'(Nida and Taber, 1974, p.12).

**3) Translation strategies:** translation strategies are potentially conscious procedures of translating a text or any segment of it (Baker, 1998, p.23).

**4) Word formation:** Nowadays, the terms 'word formation' does not have a clear cut, universally accepted usage. It is sometimes referred to all processes connected with changing the form of the word by, for example, affixation, which is a matter of morphology. In its wider sense word formation denotes the processes of creation of new lexical units.

## **Chapter Two**

### **Review of Literature**

#### **2.1. Terminology, an interdisciplinary field**

According to Cabré (1999), Terminology as well as all interdisciplinary fields in science, is a discipline that is defined in relation to other fields from which it takes "a specific set of concepts"(p.25). Nevertheless, we must pay attention to this fact that, an interdisciplinary subject does not define its field of study as the sum of the concepts from the discipline that comprises it, but rather that "firstly, it chooses from these fields only a specific set of concepts and elements and, secondly, that it elaborates from these concepts its own object and fields; only by doing so does it acquire the status of discipline"(p.25).

As Cabré states, the word terminology refers to at least three concepts:

"The discipline and conceptual bases that govern the study of terms "

"The guidelines used in terminological work"

"The set of terms of a particular special subject "(p.32)"