

IN THE NAME OF GOD

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Expertise and Explication in the Translation Product:

English to Persian

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Translation Studies

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Abstract

The present research is about “explicitation” as a feature of the translation process and product and its relationship with expertise in the English to Persian translation. In this study two pairs of translations of two English novels, each done by an experienced and non-experienced translator, were chosen. After the comparison of the original texts with the translations all of the instances of explicitation, based on Halliday's categorization of cohesion in English, were identified and categorized. The frequency of explicitation of each type of cohesive markers, that is to say, substitutions, ellipsis and conjunctions in the translations were compared and analyzed. This study could not fully support the explicitation hypothesis proposed by Blum Kulka (1986). The present study depicted that translators, no matter whether they are experienced or novice, do not make explicit every elliptical instances found in the source text unthinkingly. Explicitating the elliptical instances in the source text requires careful considerations of other salient factors such as communicative preferences across languages and other sociocultural factors, without considering them the translators won't choose to do any explicitations in the process of translation.

Key Terms:

Explicitation, Implication, Cohesion, Cohesive ties, Expertise in Translation, Substitution and Ellipsis, conjunctions

Dedication

This thesis is firmly dedicated to my dear parents, who with their sacrifices provided me with not only the wherewithal of studying, but also the awareness of the importance of study in life.

I would also like to thank my dear sister and brother whose support is beyond my expectations.

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My advisor and my reader have done every effort to enhance the quality of this thesis and correct my mistakes. I take the blame for all the errors in spellings, grammatical constructions and any mistakes left uncorrected.

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Chapter One

The Problem

1.1 Introduction

Explicitation is the technique of making explicit in the target text information that is implicit in the source text. According to Vinay and Darbelnet (1958:8), the first scholars who studied explicitation, explicitation is the process of introducing information into the target language which is present only implicitly in the source language but can be derived from the context or situation.

Explicitation has been touched upon in three types of study (Ahmad Sharifi, 2008: 1): 1- theoretical argumentative studies. In these studies they provide a model or framework for explaining explicitation and citing the reasons behind explicitation, but they lack enough empirical evidence (see Pym 2005). 2- Prescriptive pedagogical studies. These studies include what translators should do (see Vinay & Darbelnet and Nida). 3- Empirical descriptive studies. These studies consider what has been done by the translators based on a corpus (see Klaudy 1998).

In her study, Kinga Klaudy (1998: 83) proposes the most comprehensive types of explicitation. She distinguishes four types of explicitation: obligatory, optional, pragmatic and translation-inherent explicitation. Obligatory explicitation is dictated by the syntactic and semantic structure of languages. The most obvious cases of obligatory explicitation are caused by "missing categories". Optional explicitation is dictated by differences in the text-building strategies and stylistic preferences between languages. Pragmatic explicitation is dictated by differences between cultures. For example names of villages and rivers which are well known to SL community may mean nothing to the target language audience. And finally, translation inherent explicitation is caused by the nature of translation process itself.

There is no agreement among scholars about the reasons behind explicitation. Some scholars, like Blum Kulka 1986, believe that explicitation is due to the inherent process of interpretation performed by the translators. Others believe that explicitation is because of the constraints of the language systems and the differences between stylistic and text building strategies and cultural differences (Klaudy 1993). Other scholars, such as Laviosa Braithwaite (1996), maintain that explicitation is one of the universals of translation so they see no reason to provide explanations to it. Still, other scholars see explicitation as a norm-governed phenomenon, Overas (1998) and Weissbrod (1992) are among those scholars.

Translating is a communicative act and is influenced by a variety of factors. The translator's professional knowledge and personal experience are among those factors that influence the act of translating. Although very often other professional categories are also involved and influence the final shape of the text, the person who translates obviously plays an important role in the whole translation process. That is to say, the translator's competence and also his previous experience in translation shape the final outcome of the text (Dimitrova 2005:1).

It has been argued by Englund Dimitrova (2005) that there is a relationship between the translator's amount of experience and the frequency of explicitation in the translated texts. However, the results found from different studies go in opposing directions. Some researchers like Laviosa Braithwaite (1995) assume that explicitation is the characteristic of translations produced by translators with little experience. Blum Kulka (1986) believes that explicitation can be found in the translations of both novice and experienced translators. Overas (1998) and Weissbrod (1992) argue that explicitation is the result of translations made by experienced

translators. As can be seen there is no consensus in literature about the possible relation between expertise and explicitation in translation studies.

1.2 Background of the problem

The concept of explicitation was first introduced by Vinay and Darbelnet in 1958. It was further developed by Nida in 1964. In his endeavor to explain the techniques used in the process of translation, Nida came up with three main techniques of adjustment: addition, subtraction and alteration. By addition Nida (1964) means clarifying an elliptic expression, avoiding ambiguity in the target language, changing a grammatical category, amplify implicit elements and adding connectors. By subtraction he means using pronouns instead of nouns, avoiding unnecessary repetitions and using more specific references, conjunctions and adverbs. And by alteration he means changes due to semantic incompatibilities, transliteration and structural differences.

The first systematic study of explicitation, however, was done by Blum Kulka in 1986 which is also known as "explicitation hypothesis". According to Blum Kulka (1986), it is the process of translation that is responsible for the explicitation in translation:

The process of interpretation performed by the translator on the source text might lead to a target language text which is more redundant than the source text. This redundancy can be expressed by a rise in the level of cohesive explicitness in the target language text this argument may be stated as "*the explicitation hypothesis*". (1986: 19)

According to Seguinot (1988:108), however, this definition is too narrow: "explicitation does not necessarily express redundancy". Seguinot (1988) also states that the greater number of words in translation may be due to the well-documented differences in the stylistics of

languages. In Seguinot's view the term explicitation should be reserved for additions which cannot be explained by structural, stylistic or rhetorical differences between the two languages, and addition is not the only device for explicitation. Seguinot (1998) believes that the increase in explicitness can be also explained by editing strategies of the revisers.

The idea of greater explicitation is pervasive in translation studies. However, the translated text is not produced in a vacuum. Many factors influence the production of a text, translator's amount of experience is one of those factors. The translator's previous experience in translation will have a decisive influence on the translation process and product.

It has been suggested by Dimitrova (2005) that explicitation can be a function of the translator's amount of experience. However there is no consensus in the literature on whether explicitation is typical of the TTs of experienced professional translators or, on the contrary, of target texts produced by inexperienced or mediocre translators. The present study is an attempt to answer this question.

1.3 Statement of the problem

According to Blum Kulka's explicitation hypothesis (1986), translations are generally more explicit than texts originally written in one language. A lot of studies such as Baker (1996), Olohan (2004) and Papai (2004) have been done to support this hypothesis. According to Baker (2000), there are personal styles of translating. At the same time textual analysis reveals that there are similarities in the application of certain translation procedures, including explicitation, between different translations. However few studies have considered the role of the translator's amount of experience in the translation product. Studies that have been done on the issue of explicitation and expertise have produced very diverse outcomes. Some scholars such as Overas

(1998) and Weissbrod (1992) believe professional translators use explicitation more than novice translators and other scholars believe otherwise. Therefore, the issue of possible relationship between the translators' experience and the frequency of explicitation in the TT seems to be an interesting research question in its own right. In English – Persian translation there is no research done on the issue of expertise and explicitation. The present research will be the first study in this case.

1.4 Significance of the study

In the literature of explicitation there is an agreement that all translations are more explicit than non translations. This shows the importance of explicitation in the literature. The translator as a communicator has a decisive influence in the process of translation. However, there is no consensus among the scholars about the possible role of expertise in the frequency of explicitation in the translation product. The present study will be an attempt to investigate the role of expertise in translation between English and Persian. The findings of this study will also be useful for translator training programs.

1.5 Purpose of the study

The present study is an attempt to find the possible relations between the translators' amount of experience and the frequency and the level of explicitation in the translation of literary texts from English into Persian. By studying how varying amounts of experience in translations correlate with the ultimate product of translation, I also hope to be able to shed some light on the concept of explicitation and expertise in translation studies, especially between English and Persian.

1.6 Research Questions

The present study seeks to answer the following Questions:

1. Is there any difference between the Persian translations of English books by two different translators?
2. To what extent can the explicitation be related to the translator's level of experience?

1.7 Hypothesis

In this study, we assume that translated texts are more explicit than non-translated texts. In other words, the study took Blum Kulka's explicitation hypothesis which postulates that all translated texts exhibit a higher degree of explicitness than non-translated texts. Explicitation is a widely believed notion in translation studies which frequently leads to TT stating ST information in a more explicit form than the original. It is also assumed that experienced translators do more explicitation in the translation process and product than non-experienced translators do. Some scholars such as Overas (1998) and Weissbrod (1992) also regard explicitation as one of the characteristics of professional translators.

1.8 Framework

This study will take Blum Kulka's (1986) explicitation hypothesis as its theoretical framework. According to Blum Kulka all translated texts exhibit a higher degree of explicitness than non-translated target language texts of a comparable type. In order to find the instances of explicitation, this study will take into account Halliday and Hasan's (1976) categorization of cohesive markers in English. According to Halliday and Hasan, there are five cohesive markers in the English language: reference, substitution, ellipsis, conjunctions and lexical cohesion. The

present study will take three of the cohesive markers mentioned above: substitution, ellipsis and conjunction, in order to find instances of cohesive ties within the original texts.

1.9 Definition of Key Terms

Explicitation:

As Blum Kulka (1986) noted, 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 increase in 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 as inherent in the process of translation (Blum Kulka, 1986: 19).

Implication:

Implication occurs, for instance, when a SL unit of a more specific meaning is replaced by a TL unit of a more general meaning; translators draw together the meaning of several words, and thus SL units consisting from two or more words are replaced by a TL unit consisting of one word; meaningful lexical elements of the SL text are dropped; two or more sentences in the SL are conjoined into one sentence in the TL; or, when SL clauses are reduced to phrases in the target language (Klaudy and Karoly 2003, cited in Pym 2005:4).

Cohesion:

Cohesion is defined by Halliday and Hasan (1976) as the set of possibilities that exist in the language for making the text hang together. Cohesion is a potential for relating one element in the text to another, wherever they are and without any implication that everything in the text has some part in it. Cohesion distinguishes text from non-text by interrelating linguistic elements across sentences. Cohesion does not concern what a text means but "how the text is constructed as an edifice. Cohesion and register enable us to create a text. Register is concerned with what a text means. It is defined by Halliday and Hasan as the "set of semantic configuration that is typically associated with a particular class of context of situation, and defines the substance of the text". Cohesion, as contrasted with register, is not concerned with what a text means. Rather, it refers to a set of meaning relations that exist within the text. These relations are not of the kind that links the components of a sentence and they differ from sentential structure. The discovery of these meaning relations is crucial to its interpretation (Halliday and Hasan, 1976).

Cohesive ties:

Cohesive ties are semantic links that, according to Halliday and Hasan (1976), contribute to making a text coherent. A cohesive tie is a semantic relation defined by the dependence of one element on another, the two elements being separated by at least one sentence boundary. Cohesion distinguishes text from non-text by interrelating linguistic elements across sentences. Cohesion does not concern what a text means but "how the text is constructed as an edifice (Halliday and Hasan, 1976).

Expertise in translation:

According to Dimitrova (2005), expertise in the translation is the experience in paid translation for interlingual and intercultural communicative purposes. It is concomitant with translators' competence and in some individuals, potentially also expertise in translation. Expertise in translation is supposed to be a subcategory of translator competence, and not all who have translator competence are experts in translation. Expert performance is defined as "consistently superior performance on a specific set of representative tasks for the domain" (Ericsson and Charness 1997:7, cited in Dimitrova 2005). In conclusion, translator ability can develop into translator competence and translator competence can develop into translator expertise (Dimitrova, 2005).

Substitution and Ellipsis:

According to Halliday and Hasan (1976) substitution is the replacement of one item by another, and ellipsis is the omission of an item. Essentially the two are the same process; ellipsis can be interpreted as that form of substitution in which the item is replaced by nothing. Substitution is a relation between linguistic items, and it is a relation on lexicogrammatical level. Substitution is a relation within a text and it is a sort of counter that is used in place of the repetition of a particular item. Bloor and Bloor (1995:96, cited in Paul A. Crane: 130) maintain that substitution and ellipsis are used when a speaker or writer wishes to avoid the repetition of a lexical item and is able to draw on one of the grammatical resources of the language to replace the item. The three types of classification for substitution and ellipsis: nominal, verbal and clausal. In nominal substitution, the most typical substitution words are "one and ones" and they substitute nouns. In