Pragmatic Adaptation as a Requirement in Translation: A Case of Persian and English Versions of *The Shah*

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ABSTRACT

Drawing on adaptive models of translation, the paper attempts to identify how a change in the readership of the text could result in changes in the target text. For this purpose, a well-known book on the history of Iran, written originally in English and later translated into Persian, by a well-versed scholar was selected. The corpus was then analyzed using Vehmas-Lehto's (2002) classification of pragmatic adaptation and Chesterman and Wagner's (2002) model of pragmatic strategies. Results indicated that from among the adaptation types 'addition' was employed with the highest frequency, followed by omission. In addition, 'explicitness' and 'information change' as pragmatic strategies showed to be often used by the translator. Further, in both categories of 'omission' and 'addition', 'information change' appeared to be the most frequently employed strategy. The findings are discussed focusing on how translation practice can be improved based on the survey of recent translation theories.

1. Introduction

The Skopos theory has been one of the prominent theory which has emphasized the communicative purpose in translation. This theory, developed by Vermeer in the 1970s, is a functionalist translation theory, according to which translation is no longer limited by conventional source-text oriented views. Skopos theory accounts for different strategies in different situations, in which the source text is not the only factor involved. Rather, the purpose of a text determines translation strategies.

Pragmatic adaptation is a techniques used to make sure that the purpose of the text is conveyed in the target language in the best acceptable natural manner. Generally, adaptation can be defined as "translative interventions which result in a text not generally accepted as a translation, but nevertheless recognized as representing a source text" (Baker& Saldanha, 2011, p. 41). Vinay and Darbelnet (1995) argue that "if a translator systematically refuses to adapt, it will eventually lead to a weakening of a target text" (p. 41). Sanders (2006), too, explains that adaptation aims to bring source and target texts to a "shorter cultural and temporal distance" (p. 19). This statement clearly reveals the communicative nature of adaptation and shows the motivation that pushes translators to apply it.

Despite the great emphasis on the influence of the target situation and the expectations of the target language readers in recent approaches to translation, the pragmatic aspect of the process is often neglected. Hence, this study was designed to find about common techniques to deal with pragmatic changes made to render the target text as acceptable and readable as possible. Specifically, the following questions were addressed.

1) When authored and translated by the same person for two readerships, what types of pragmatic adaptation occur in the translated text?
2) Does any recurrent pattern emerge from analyzing instances of pragmatic adaptation in the Persian translation of the English original?

2. Background

Skopos theory is one of the functionalist approaches to translation whose aim is to dethrone the source text (ST) (Newmark,

1991). This is done by emphasizing the role of the translator as a creator of the target text (TT) and giving priority to the purpose (Skopos) of producing TT. Functionalism is a major shift from a linguistic equivalence to functional appropriateness. Thus, translation is considered primarily as a process of intercultural communication whose end product is a text which has the ability to function appropriately in specific situations and context of use (Schaffner, 1998). Culture in the context of translation is to be regarded a broad concept including "history, politics, ideology, customs and tradition, involving political tradition, mentality and social values pertaining to a particular people" (Vozna, 2016, p. 111).

Different Skopoi are allowed in translation. Making a decision depends on the purpose for which the translation is intended. The translation task may require a 'free' or 'faithful' translation. Bernardoe (2010) explains that there are new considerations concerning target readers, the unavoidable translator subjectivity and the purpose and function of translations. For instance, as Xiaoshu and Dongming (2003) put it, literary translation has to reproduce the spirit and features of the original. Thus, the receiver is the main factor determining the target–text Skopos.

Pragmatic adaptation which is used to achieve the communicative goal of translation has been defined in different ways. Vehmas-Lehto (2002) defines pragmatic adaptation as modifying those source text elements "which, translated as such, would not work well in the target language" (p. 99) to make them meet the needs of the new cultural and linguistic environment. Klaudy (2007) defines pragmatic adaptation in terms of the needs of the target language audience. Zauberga (1994) defines pragmatic adaptation as the modification of the content or form of the source text in order to produce a target text that conforms to the needs of the new communicative situation. This communicative situation involves (at least) all the extratextual factors. Hence, the new situation may involve a different place and time, different participants–a different sender with a different motive and intention and a different audience with a different culture, world knowledge, language, etc.– and a target text that is transmitted through a different medium and has a different function.

Although the term 'pragmatic adaptation' is not necessarily used, there are many articles that in one way or another

refer to the kinds of changes that in the present study are called pragmatic adaptations. For example, Herting (1990) has studied what she calls "lexico-pragmatic transformations", which include, among others, the kinds of changes on which the present study focuses. Greere (2000) has studied semantic, grammatical and pragmatic shifts (*i.e*., changes or adaptations) concentrating on verbs and idioms in the language pair English–Romanian. Van Coillie (2008) has compared Andersen's *Kejsarens nya kläder* (*The emperor's new clothes*) with many translations in several different languages, studying how the translators have dealt with the original story's ambivalent audience (children and adults). Van Coillie's study is also largely about pragmatic adaptations since it presents many changes that translators have made to take children into account.

As related to pragmatic adaptation in translations from English into Persian, very few studies can be found. In a study by Abbasi and Masoumi (2013), it was found that in four Persian translations of the novel *One Hundred Years of Solitude* translators used pragmatic adaption simply to meet the readership's expectations. Studying cultural aspects of verbal metaphors from English into Persian, Fadaee and Hashemian (2015) examined translations of advertisements and found that the re-creation between text and image plays a significant role in transferring messages from one language and culture into another, hence emphasizing the crucial role of adaptation.

3. Method
3.1. Materials
This study is basically corpus-based research. The corpus of the study included two books, one written in English, which is the original text (SL), and the other translated into Persian (TL). The book titled *The Shah* in English and translated as the same into Persian is primarily a historical account of Iran just before the 1979 Revolution. The author has taken a foray into the life of the Iranian shah through a critical scrutiny of the events leading up to the revolution. The author of *The Shah*, a native speaker of Persian, is a historian as well as a well-known scholar and researcher at Stanford University in the US. He wrote the book primarily for the Western readership. Later, he decided to translate the book into Persian as a response to the demand from the Iranian readers. This made the selection unique for it could exactly demonstrate how the change of situation

might bring about certain changes in the text.

To analyze the corpus, 35% of the SL which amounts to 170 pages (87000 words) was selected as the sample. The chapters were selected in a consecutive manner to make sure the cohesion and coherence between different parts were preserved. Its translation into Persian formed the other portion of the corpus. This part consisted in the counterparts of the selected chapters of the original, which turned out to have a word count of about 98400. Thus, the corpus of the study including both English and Persian selected texts consisted of 185400 words.

3.2. Model of Analysis

The study was conducted within the framework of the Skopos theory as discussed before. In order to analyze the data, two models were used. First, Vehmas-Lehto's (2002) classification of pragmatic adaptation was employed to determine types of adaptation. According to this model, there are four types of adaptation: addition, omission, substitution, and change of order. Pragmatic strategies were identified according to Chesterman's model (cited in Chesterman & Wagner, 2002). This model provides nine strategies: cultural filtering, explicitness change, information change, interpersonal change, illocutionary change, coherence change, partial translation, visibility change, and trans-editing.

3.3. Procedure

In this study, a quantitative content-based research approach was followed. The analysis was done in order to identify instances of pragmatic shifts. As a first step, the English text was read to the end. Then, paragraphs were meticulously read one more time one by one to make sure there were no comprehension problems. The same approach was followed when reading the selected Persian text. Starting off with the SL (*i.e.*, the English text), each sentence of the text was aligned with its translated Persian counterpart. The sentences were then analyzed in light of the models outlined above. First, any obvious case of adaptation based on Vehmas-Lehto's model was identified. Then, the identified instances of each type of adaptation were labeled based on Chesterman's model to specifically decide the translation strategy used. In the selected texts, a total of 131 instances of pragmatic adaptation were identified.

In order for the researcher to get ensured that the categorization of the data was correctly conducted, 30% of the data was analyzed and categorized by a second rater, who was fully informed about the objectives of the research. Then, the inter-coder reliability of the data analysis was calculated through the percent agreement. It turned to be 95%, which is an acceptable index.

4. Results

The data obtained as outlined above was then analyzed. The results as related to the two research questions stated before are presented in the following paragraphs.

4.1. Types of Pragmatic Adaptation

The types of pragmatic adaptation used by the translator were identified according to Vehmas-Lehto's (2002) model. First, a few examples from the analysis of the data related to the types of pragmatic adaptation are provided below.

Addition

-amongst the other things, the 1936 decree to save Iranian Jews from the ovens of Auschwitz. Thousands of European Jews who received Persian passport were also saved.

در سال 1936 بسیاری از یهودیان از کوره های آدم سوزی نازیسم وارهیدند و به اعتبار همین تصویب نامه جان شمار قابل توجهی از یهودیان اروپا هم نجات پیدا کردند. هزاران یهودی اروپایی و گاه یهودیان دیگر کشورها توانستند با دریافت پاسپورت ایرانی ازچنگال نازیسم نجات پیدا کنند. برخی از این یهودیان پاسپورت های ایرانی خود را از دیپلماتهای ایرانی خریداری کردند و برخی هم این پاسپورتهای نجات بخش را صرفا به لحاظ شرافت و انسان دوستی دیپلماتهای ایرانی بدست آورده بودند. وقتی این سابقه را در نظر میگیریم و وقتی به یاد می آوردیم که در طول تاریخ یهودیان ایران در قیاس با ارویای مسیحی از امنیت بیشتری برخوردار بودند......

Observation:

The Underlined part includes information which is not in the original text.

Omission

-from the south come the desert winds, howling from flatlands that cover the geographic heart of the country……

اگر تهران از شمال به کوههای اساطیری دماوند محصور است.

Observation:

Information about "north of Iran" has been added in target text.

Change of Order

….false sense of security, and he developed a haughty disposition toward many Western leaders.

اطمینان کاذب و حتی خودبزرگ بینی سیاسی پدید آورده بود.

Observation

This part of the text has been translated and moved to the next paragraph in the target text.

Substitution

-when the young <u>Mohammad Reza was only two years</u> old, Iran was on the verge of disintegration.

<div dir="rtl">درسال 1921 <u>وقتی کودتای سیدضیا و رضاخان تحقق پیدا کرد</u> دولت مرکزی ایران عملا درآستانه فروپاشی بود.</div>

Observation

The underlined text in the SL has been replaced with the one underlined in the TL.

The quantitative analysis of the whole data in terms of the types of pragmatic adaptation is presented in Table 1.

Table 1: Distribution of Types of Pragmatic Adaptation

Type	f	%
Addition	77	58.77
Omission	24	18.32
Change of order	20	15.26
Substitution	10	7.65

As demonstrated in Table 1, 'addition' as a type of pragmatic adaptation turned out to be the most frequently employed one with a frequency of 77 (58.77 %). Following 'addition', 'omission' appeared in the second place (f= 25, 18.32 %). Furthermore, according to the table, 'substitution' was employed the least frequently (f =10, 7.65 %).

4.2. Pragmatic Strategies

Using Chesterman and Wagner's (2002) model, and in line with the objectives of the study, the two Persian and English texts were juxtaposed and analyzed in order to decide how pragmatic strategies were employed by the translator. A few example are provided below.

Cultural Filtering

-Also banned were *t`aziye*, a traditional form of Shiism passion play mourns the martyrdom of Shiism`s third imam, Hussein, in the Battle of Karbala.

<div dir="rtl">رضاخان دستورمنع بسیاری از مناسک سوگواری شیعیان به ویژه فمه زنی و زنجیر زدن را صادر کرده بود. تعزیه هم یکسره ممنوع اعلام شد.</div>

Observation

In TL, the description of taziye in the SL has been omitted on the assumption that the readers of the TL already are culturally familiar with it.

Information Change

-Reza Shah confrontation with the clergy reached its zenith in mid 1935, in the city of Mashhad, where the shrine of Shiism's eight Imam Reza, is located.

(Of the twelve Imams revered by the version of Shiism dominant in Iran-Esna Asha`ri, or Twelvers-only one, Reza, is buried in Iran. His sister is buried in the city of Qom. But the Iranian landscape is also strewn with an estimated hundred thousand imamzadeh, big and small shrines, all claiming to be the burial site of some descendent of an Imam. Though it is all but impossible to substantiate these claims of divinity, the shrines invariably satisfy the devotional needs of the truly devout).

<div dir="rtl">تعارض و دورویی رضا شاه با روحانیون در ماجرای 1936 به اوج تازه ای رسید. از چندماه پیش از واقعه مشهد.....</div>

Observation

All the information about Imam Reza, presented in TL, has been removed and changed in SL. In other words, the information load has been reduced.

Partial Translation

…by the secret police (known by its acronym of SAVAK) was one of the Shah`s main pillar of power. According to blueprint provided by the United State, SAVAK was meant to undertake functions performed, by both the CIA and the FBI in the United State. In the sixties as a leftist urban guerrilla threat appeared on the scene in Iran, SAVAK developed a notorious international reputation for using torture. At the same time, some in SAVAK had come to consider financial corruption a matter of national security and mentioned the activities of not just the political and economic elite, but also members of the royal family. The Shah was often angered by their reports-as much by their content as by the temerity of security agents to pry into matters he considered beyond their purview.

<div dir="rtl">در آن زمان حتی ساواک که به کمک آمریکا (وپس از چندی انگلیس و اسراییل) تاسیس شده و برگرفته ترکیبی از سیا و اف بی ای - که اولی دستگاه اطلاعاتی و جاسوسی و دومی پلیس امنیت داخلی امریکا است- شکل گرفته بود و قایدتا می بایست گزارش هایی از واقعیت و تهدیدهای امنیتی جدی برای شاه تدارک کند اغلب از بیان واقعیت به ویژه وقتی خاطر شاه را مکدر می ساخت احتراز کرد.</div>

Observation

The translation is actually a summary of the SL text.

Visibility Change

-For the Shah, character was destiny, and many of his weakness as a leader were his virtues as a human being.

<div dir="rtl">در زندگی شاه شخصیتش سرنوشت سیاسی اش را رقم می زد. چه بسا نکات مثبت شخصیتش در واقع نقطه ضعفش بسان یک رهبر بود. <u>مرغدلی بود که چون شیر می غرید.</u></div>

Observation

In the TL, the translator's impression can been seen through his comment underlined in the TL.

To obtain a clearer idea, the quantitative analysis of the whole data was performed, which is shown Table 2.

Table 2: Distribution of Pragmatic Strategies

Strategy	f	%
Cultural filtering	5	3.82
Explicitness change	36	27.48
Information change	47	35.88
Interpersonal change	2	1.53
Illocutionary change	1	0.76
Coherence change	18	13.74
Partial translation	5	3.82
Visibility change	16	12.21
Transediting	1	0.76

As it can be seen in Table 2, from among the strategies, information change appears to have been employed with the highest frequency ($f = 47$, 35.88 %). Fairly close to the 'information change' strategy, there appears to be 'explicitness change' as another adaptation strategy. As demonstrated in the table, it has a frequency of $f = 36$ (27.48 %). On the other hand, not so close to the above strategies, in the third place 'visibility change' appears with a frequency of $f = 16$ (12.21%). As the least frequently used strategy, we can refer to transediting ($f = 1$, 0.76%).

4.3. Distribution of Pragmatic Strategies in Adaptation Categories

The second research question was concerned with patterns of distribution of strategies often employed when making pragmatic adaptations. After analyzing the data with the general observations presented in the previous section, the pattern of distribution of strategies in each category of pragmatic adaptation is depicted in Table 3.

Table 3: Frequency of Pragmatic Strategies in Pragmatic Adaptation Types

Pragmatic strategies	Omission		Addition		Substitution		Change of order	
	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%
Cultural filtering	1	4.17	2	2.59	2	20	0	0
Explicitness change	12	50	20	25.98	2	20	2	10
Information change	5	20.83	41	53.25	1	10	0	0
Interpersonal change	0	0	0	0	2	20	0	0
Illocutionary change	0	0	0	0	1	10	0	0
Coherence change	0	0	0	0	0	0	18	90
Partial translation	5	20.83	0	0	0	0	0	0
Visibility change	1	4.17	13	16.88	2	20	0	0
Trans-editing	0		1	1.30	0	0	0	0

As can be seen in this table, in the omission category, most instances of omission were done through the strategy of explicitness change ($f = 12$, 50%). However, 'cultural filtering' and 'visibility change' were used with the lowest frequency ($f = 1$, 4.17%). Moreover, strategies such as interpersonal change, illocutionary change, trans-editing and coherence change were not used at all.

Furthermore, in the 'addition' category, the pragmatic strategy used with the highest frequency is 'information change' with a frequency of 40 ($f = 41$, 53.25%). In this category, similar to the omission category, transediting was used with the lowest frequency ($f = 1$, 1.30 %). Also, similar to the omission category, 'interpersonal change', 'illocutionary change' and 'coherence change 'as well as 'partial translation' were not used.

Furthermore, in the 'substitution' category, unlike the previous categories, the pragmatic strategies were not used so frequently. While the average strategy use

in the omission category is 2.55 ($M = 2.55$), and in the addition category, it is 8.55 ($M = 8.55$), in the substitution category the mean score appeared to be 1.22   ($M = 1.22$).

Finally, in the 'change of order' category, only two strategies showed to have been used by the translator. This category is, in fact, the one with fewest strategy types. The strategies used are explicitness change ($f = 2$, 10%) and coherence change ($f = 18$, 90%). The latter is obviously the one with the higher frequency.

5. Discussion

The first research question was concerned with types of pragmatic adaptations which occurred. According to the results, addition and omission, which can be translated into Newmark's (1981) loss and gain, appear to have been used frequently. This is believed to happen as a result of the requirements on the part of the TL readership (Newmark, 1988). Hoorickx-Raucq (cited in Kosonen, 2011 also concluded from his study that the translator has to function as a cultural mediator by acculturating the text according to the needs of the target culture. The author/translator of *The Shah,* knowing what the background knowledge of the Iranian readership is, has also controlled the information load by adding or omitting some information or moving some other information around in the text. Hatim and Mason (1990) emphasize this dynamic view of translation by arguing that the translator tries to create a new act of communication out of a previously existing one according to the societal norms through negotiating meaning between two sources which exist within their own different social frameworks.

The second research question was concerned with whether there was any recurrent pattern emerging from analyzing instances of pragmatic adaptation in the Persian translation of the English original text. As mentioned before, to answer this question, pragmatic strategies were identified according to Chesterman's model (cited in Chesterman & Wagner, 2002).The results revealed that from among nine pragmatic strategies 'information change', 'explicitness change', 'coherence change' and 'visibility' were fairly frequently used. The first two again show that the translator has manipulated the information load by knowingly adding or omitting. The other two strategies, however, are indicative of the fact that the translator has mediated in the communication process through

translation by managing the information structure as well as information distribution.

The findings of this study give further support to the idea that a change in the readership necessarily involves pragmatic adaptation. Similarly, Van Coillie (2008) compared Andersen's *Kejsarens nya kläder* (*The emperor's new clothes*) with its translations in different languages. He found that the translators have largely used pragmatic adaptations depending on the audience (children and adults).

The changes in the translation process are justifiable on the basis of the Skopos theory. Vermeer (cited in Munday, 2001) in his theory, argues that according to the action theory, every action has a purpose. The purpose of translation is communication. In the same line, Vehmas-Lehto (2002) points out that there are different expectations of translations in different cultures. She suggests that among other factors, communicativeness and connection to the extralinguistic world make a translation good. Communicativeness, according to her, refers to the fact that translation means delivering a message from one person to another, not just about switching the language of a text to another. As for the second factor, Vehmas-Lehto (2002) contends that translation does not take place in a vacuum, but is rather affected by various extralinguistic factors, one of which is the readership. For instance, the information given about Imam Reza or Tazieh in *The Shah* (SL), which addresses the Westerners, is simply omitted in the translation, which addresses the Iranian readers.

From these observations, it can be seen that whenever in the original there is a reference to the familiar, in the translation, the translator has reduced the information, omitted some information, or redistributed the information through a variety of pragmatic strategies in order to make the text readable to the TL readers.

6. Conclusion

The Skopos theory is a functional theory of translation which justifies changes made to the way and the amount of the information presented in the TT. As could be seen in the Persian translation of *The Shah,* the translator who happens to be the author of the original is well aware of his own intentions in the first place and the needs of the TT readers, too. As a consequence, he has made adjustments in presenting the information in the TT. In other words, to make a translation sound natural not only in terms of lexico-grammatical demands of the TT but also in relation to what or how information is to be presented, the translator needs to adapt the text in terms of situational demands. More specifically, it could be argued that naturalness in translation will be achieved if there is pragmatic adaptation.

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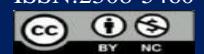
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