A Survey on Translation Techniques in Middle Persian Texts as Illustrated by Vandidad: 19th Fargard

Sheida Assadi
Shiraz University, Shiraz
Iran

Katayoun Namiranian
Department of Foreign Languages and Linguistics, Shiraz University, Shiraz
Iran

ABSTRACT

What are the translation principles and frameworks used for translating Avestan texts into middle-Persian language, which account for the oldest translation specimens in ancient Iran, also known as "Zand"? The main objective of the present study is to syntactically and semantically investigate chapter nineteen of Vandidad, which will ultimately allow us to reach a set of principles and rules followed by translators while translating Avestan texts into middle-Persian language. The study, which has been carried out based on a library method, has investigated chapter nineteen of Vandidad in Avestan language with regards to words and grammar. Then, its middle-Persian translation has been considered and the meaning of the words as well as their grammatical roles in the Avestan language have been compared to equivalents created by translator. Finally, principles and frameworks extracted from the text have been divided into two categories; namely lexical and grammatical principles. The results from this study can illuminate the translation rules in ancient texts, which can be used for deeper and broader scientific inquiry into Iranian ancient languages.

1. Introduction

The Iranian or Iranic languages are a branch of the Indo-Iranian languages in the Indo-European language family which have been spoken natively by inhabitants of Iranian Plateau. This linguistic term has been adopted from the name of "Iran", which is a very wide area without any kind of cultural borders, namely the region where Iranian languages have been used since ancient times (Schmitt, 2011, p. 23). Ancient Iranian languages have been used in a wide area from the northern borders of China in the east to the northern costs of the Black Sea and Sea of Azov[i] to the west and from the north western parts of the Iranian Plateau to the costs of Persian Gulf since the Iranian groups were separated from their Aryan siblings at the end of the second century BC until the collapse of the Achaemenid Empire in 330 BC (Jackson, 2014, p. 9). From a historical perspective, Iranian languages have been divided into three categories: Old Iranian, Middle Iranian, and New Iranian. The two directly attested Old Iranian languages are Old Persian and Old Avestan.

Old Persian as the ancestor of New Persian, is a language belongs to Achaemenid period (559 to 330 BC) in Pars and the only reliable evidences remained are the cuneiform inscriptions of Achaemenid kings. The language and the scripts however disappeared after the fall of Achaemenid Empire (Tafazoli, 1999, p. 23). Avestan is the language of Zoroastrian scripture and there is a long time interval between collection and compilation of the oldest part, namely Gathas. The middle-age languages are divided into two groups, namely "Western Middle Iranian" and "Eastern Middle Iranian". The Middle Iranian languages are linguistically classified into two main groups, Western and Eastern middle languages. The Western family includes Parthian (Arsacid Pahlavi or Pahlawānīg) and Middle Persian. The Parthian language was common in Parthian Period and they have written works in this language to the late Sassanid period. Middle Persian language or Pahlavi was the language of the south and south western parts of Iran as well as the official language
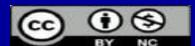
of the Sassanid dynasty (Tafazoli, 1999, p. 12).

Middle Persian known as Pārsīg which is a Western Middle Iranian language rooted in Old Persian continued to function as a prestige language even after the collapse of Sasanian Empire. The Middle Persian appeared after the demise of Achaemenid Empire and continued up to the present time. Accordingly, from third century BC until late eighth and ninth centuries, Middle Persian was a live language; however, it was used as a silent ritual language up to the ninth and tenth centuries by the Iranian Zoroastrians (Schmitt, 2011, p. 223). The modern period includes Persian language and a wide variety of Iranian dialects and languages which were common within or beyond the borders of Iran or the languages that have been lost or are still used. Vandidad is one of the late parts of Avesta which is accessible as a complete work. The term "Vandidad" (which was previously Vidodad [Vi.daēva.dāta]) means "someone whose rule is to evade and get away from demons (Div)". The term "Div" (demon) originally meant god, i.e. a set of Indo-Iranian gods rejected by Zoroaster[ii]. Later on, the meaning of Div changed from "god" and then "rejected god" to its modern meaning which is "demon, devil". When writing and dividing Avesta into various sections, this part of the book was called Vandidad since it talks about the purity, cleanliness and avoiding demons (Tafazoli, 1999, pp. 60-61). Vandidad is the nineteenth "Nask" or section of Avesta in the Sassanid period. It includes 22 "fargards" or chapters. In order to document materials which were not necessarily the thoughts and beliefs of Zoroaster, the questions presented in the book are asked by him and Ahura Mazda[iii] answers these questions. Unlike other parts of Sassanid Avesta, Vandidad is largely intact. It seems that due to the religious functionality of the book in nightly rituals which were held on midnights (Ushahin Gah), it had to be protected against demonic threats (Kreyenbroek, 2005, p. 237). Moreover, it was used for issues regarding cleanliness and impurities. As a literary and religious book, the content of Vandidad has often been misunderstood by many scholars to the extent that it sometimes is not in consonance with modern thoughts and insights. However, the book narrates various aspects of life in ancient Zoroastrian society which help readers to clarify their vision of ancient Iranian lives. The nineteenth chapter, which was selected for present study, includes 47 paragraphs on issues such as the efforts of Ahriman[iv] to deceive Zoroaster and kill him, the commands of Ahura Mazda to Zoroaster about asking gods to eliminate lies from the society, the usage of Barsom to praise the creation of plants, the cleanliness of Asho (clean) man which is polluted by touching Naso, preparing and passing Chinvat Bridge where they meet the "Din" god, praising the gods of Bahram, Tishtar, five Gahani songs, seven territories, Hirmand River, and the power of Zoroaster against demons and retreat of demons into darkness after the birth of Zoroaster.

During the Parthian and Sassanid Empire, Avestan was considered a silent language, which was only learned and practiced by Zoroastrian priests and was not understandable by general public. Therefore, it was translated into Middle Persian, the language spoken by the public during Sassanid era, to be well protected and preserved. The translated text was also accompanied by a number of interpretations. The translation and interpretations of the Avesta into Middle Persian, which is also known as "Zand", were prepared based on the written Avesta of the Sassanid era. Zand which originally means "explanation", is the translation of Avesta to Middle Persian including added interpretations. The collection of Zands texts available today includes Zand Yasna, Vispard, Vandidad, a part of the smaller Avesta such as five prayers, Panj Gah, large and small thirty days, Bahram Yasht, small and large Soroush Yashts, Neirangestan and Hirbodestan. Although the precise date of compiling Zand texts is not knowm, it is believed that Middle Persian Translation of Zand Vandidad prepared in two stages: (1) translating word-by-word from the original text which creates Zand, and (2) appending explanations and interpretations. However, deeper investigation suggest that these two stages are intermingled and are not completely separated from each other since translation requires adding comments and the translations provided by the Middle Persian translator is in fact his understanding of the meaning of the statement and expressions. Amouzegar has defined three stages for translation of Zand texts: (1) word-by-word translation of the Avestan text (in this stage, a Pahlavi word is selected for each Avestan word with similar roots with similar shape), (2) explanations (for accepting or rejecting an Avestan sentence;

some of these explanations have only one word which is a simpler Pahlavi word used for technical and difficult words), and (3) shorter or longer interpretations as footnotes or appendices to explain the concepts in each one of the chapters. These interpretations have a very wide range when it comes to everyday life and its various aspects. These interpretations are more prominent in Zand Vandidad, Neirangestan, and Hirbodestan (Amouzegar, 2007, p. 40). Regarding the linguistic value of Zand texts, Tafazoli believes that there was a word-by-word translation from Avesta into Pahlavi. The Avestan language is an inflected and Pahlavi is a non-inflected language. Therefore, word-by-word translation based on the grammatical structure of Avesta would in some cases lead to artificial structures in Pahlavi (Tafazoli, 1999, p. 126). Whether all these interpretations had been written by one individual, as in Medu Mah's Vandidad, or they are a set of notes collected during various generations, is not clear yet; however, the high level of observed dissimilarities and differences will prove the second theory (Encyclopedia Iranica, 2006). It is also probable that the scripting and translation of Avesta has been done simultaneously in the Sassanid period (Josephson, 1997, p. 10).

While investigation of the Zand texts is sometimes useful for better understanding of the original text, the majority of scholars believe they will not be much helpful in understanding the Avestan texts due to the inherent syntactic and semantic deficiencies in Middle Persian equivalents. The majority of translations have been done on a literal base resulted in creation of texts incongruent with the standard structure of Middle Persian language which are often difficult to understand. There are also multiple examples of awkward repetition of original Avestan sentences in the Middle Persian translations. Furthermore, the translator has sometimes added her understanding of the Avestan text to the Middle Persian translation and, in fact, has written commentaries on it. The present study aims to investigate, both linguistically and contextually, the nineteenth chapter of Vandidadand and compare it with recommended translations in order to discover the principles and techniques used or followed by the translators.

2. Literature Review

The studies on Avestan translations into Middle Persian has been progressing slowly because the scholars of ancient languages believe that Zand texts are not much efficient in understanding Avestan texts due to their special grammatical and semantic structure. The first Middle Persian translations of the Avesta were published by the German orientalist, Friedrich Spiegel[v], (1858). Then, the prominent German linguist Hübschmann[vi] (1872) presented her first critique of the features of Zand texts. Jamasp Asana[vii] (1907) has also studied the Avestan and Middle Persian texts of Vandidad. Few studies have been done on the principles and frameworks considered in the translation of Avestan texts into Middle Persian. The very few studies which have been specifically conducted in this area generally consider translation from Middle Persian into Sanskrit. Degener[viii] (1991) wrote an article on the analysis of translation of "Šak-ud-gumānīgīh-vizār" from Middle Persian to Sanskrit by Naryosang. He has studied grammatical and lexical translation methods too. Gropp[ix], the German archaeologist (1991), has investigated the interpretation of Ahuna Vairya by Zadasperm, the most sacred and revered text of the Gathic hymns of the Avesta. Several bilingual works have also been published recently. Some of these works also cover translations of Middle Persian to English. We can point to the book by Ankelsaria[x] (1949) which includes the translation of Vandidad into Middle Persian along with English version and the related dictionary. In addition, Josephson[xi] (1997) has studied the principles of translation into Middle Persian based on the text of Home Yasht.

Oktor Skjærvøxii (2006) has also provided an English translation of several chapters of Vandidad at Harvard University.

3. Methodology

The present study conducted on a library base aims to study the nineteenth chapter of Vandidad based on its lexical and grammatical structure. Then, its Middle Persian translation was investigated and ultimately the meaning of the words and their grammatical roles in the Avestan language were compared to the equivalents selected by the translator for each one of the selected words. Finally, the principles and frameworks used by the translator while translating the text were divided into two general categories, namely the lexical principles and the grammatical principles. The main sources for this study included Avestan dictionary, Middle Persian dictionary, as well as grammatical books on the strcuture of the Avestan and the Middle Persian language. Moreover, other sources
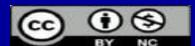
included the translations of Avesta into other languages including the Anklesaria translation from Middle Persian into English, Hashem Razi translation from Avestan language into Modern Persian language and the Darmesteter translation from Avestan into English, which was later translated into modern Persian by Dr. Mousa Javan. Moreover, the English translation of Vandidad provided by Mahnaz Moazami in her book was also considered by the author. In order to evaluate the context as well as the definitions and explanations of ritual, religious, and mythological lexicons, a number of books and papers were used.

The Avestan text of the nineteenth chapter of Vandidad was extracted from Goldner version. The transcription of Avestan paragraphs have been done based on Huffman's method. The Middle Persian text of the nineteenth chapter was extracted from Zand Vandidad by Bahramgor Tehmuras Anklesaria, which included the English translation along with the Persian text.

4. Analysis and Discussion

4.1 Lexical Principles

4.1.1   Etymological subscription

The translator usually prefers to select equivalents which have a similar root to the original word. This is probably because the equivalent word is in fact the most common one used by Middle Persian speakers at the time, however it is almost impossible to prove or disapprove this assumption since the Middle Persian language is a silent language at present time. The second reason may include the extreme loyalty of the translator to the original concepts to maintain the sanctity of the text. For instance, in 19:26, haxšāne (I guide) is a verb from hak (accompanying, directing) (Bartholomae, 1904, p. 1739). In the Middle Persian text the equivalent of hâchêni (I invite) from hâčitan (inviting, preaching) is used. The translator tries to choose the Middle Persian equivalence with a root similar to that of the Avestan word, and this is apparent throughout the text.

4.1.2   Transference of the original word

The other common principle followed by the translators is to use the original proper nouns and ritual words in the destination text. This type of translation involves words whose translation may reduce the value and significance of the text and the best way is to use the original words to maintain the sanctity and accuracy of the original text. For instance, in 19:13, vātō (wind) from vātay from the root vā (to blow) (Bartholomae, 1904, p. 1409) is the god of wind, this is considered as a proper noun in the Middle Persian translation and is translated as "vat". In 19:40, vāzištəm (Vazshiste) is a noun from vāzišta which is the name of one of the five sacred fires which moves among the clouds and eliminates the darkness of the air. In the Middle Persian translation, it is written as Vazist (Vazshit).

4.1.3   Incomplete transference of the word meaning

Sometimes the translator selects a word which includes only the semantic portion of a word. This is probably due to the limitations of the lexicons of the Middle Persian language or due to the fact that studying a word by comparing various languages and other linguistic and scientific investigations by the scholars, which are common practices in modern translation, were not available to the translator at that time. For instance in 19:17, yasna (praise, prayer) from the root yaz (praising) (Bartholomae, 1904, p. 1274) is translated in the destination language as gûbisn (speech) from the root gaob (saying). The term gûbisn doesn't transfer the meaning of the Avestan word correctly beucause the translator could have used a better word such as yasn which means praising in Middle Persian language (Mackenzie, 2011, p. 167).

4.1.4   Transference of the implicit meaning of word

Sometimes the translator selects an equivalence which communicates only the implied meaning of the word in Avestan. For instance in 19:3, the word kamərəδəm (head, demonic head) is a noun from kamərəδa and it is a demonic term. In order to communicate the semantic meaning and the correct usage of the word in Middle Persian, the translator used kamār (head) which is also a demonic term in Middle Persian. In 19: 46, the term aduuarəṇta (they ran away) is from the root dvar (demonic escape) which is translated as dôbâriṭ (they escaped) from dobaridan (demonic escape).

[Hast ke aêṭûn gûyêṭ, aê: Ôi dâst pa in zami chand pahanâ garṭ, dûrviṭara; vas ān jâk dâst, pa-Drejiya zbar, ander mân I Pôrûs-asp]

[There is someone who says that he hold in his hand on this earth the size of the horizon, far horizons; there he had darja (darjia) horizon in Pourwoshasb house].

4.1.5 Explanation and interpretation of words

In some cases, the translator adds a word or group of words to the Middle Persian text to further explain the subject. For instance in 19:14, mazištąm (the greatest) is a superlative adjective from mazišta (Bartholomae, 1904, p. 1158) and is translated in Middle Persian by mahest (the biggest) (Mackenzie, 2011, p. 103). The translator adds the explanatory term, patan, (in size and body) to emphasize that the size of the body is meant here. In 19:24, the translator adds the explanatory term vastra (dress, clothes) which is not present in the Avestan text. Moreover, in 19:14, sraēštąm (the most beautiful) is the superlative adjective of sraēšta from sri (being beautiful) (Bartholomae, 1904, p. 1632), which is apparent beauty. The translator selects nêvak – tom (the best) for this term (Mackenzie, 2011, p. 111) and adds the explanatory term "pa ditan" (for looking at) to show that the visual beauty is meant here. In 19:34, narō (man) is a noun from "nar" which is translated as "mart" in Middle Persian. The translator explains that this term refers to "Ushidar, Ushidarmah, and Saoshyant".

[Hast ke Aûsêṭar, Aûsêṭarmâh û SòsÎyasns gûyêṭ]:

[Which is Ushidar, Ushidarmah, and Saoshyant.]

4.1.6 Literal translation

Another characteristic of the text, which usually reduces the linguistic validity of the translation, is the word-by-word translation of the Avestan text into Middle Persian. The translator neglects the grammatical structure of Middle Persian language and puts words together based on the sentence structure of Avestan language. For instance, in 19:46, the term "ãn dêvãn snah" ([for] him, there [are] weapons [against] demons) which is a translation of the Avestan "hāu.daēuuanąm.snaθō" doesn't have a complete sentence structure. Moreover, the expression "ãn dêvãn pêtiyâra" (He [has] enmity [towards] demons) which is a translation of Avestan "hāu.daēuuanąm.paitiiārō" cannot correctly communicate the meaning of the Avestan sentence and it is only a word-by-word translation of the original text. However, sometimes the translator repeats the Avestan expression in order to maintain the sanctity of the text and the Middle Persian translation is followed by Avestan text. For example, the expression "nəmō.uruuaire.vaŋuhi.mazda ðāte.ašaone"

(praised be [you], the good plant created by holy Mazda) is repeated as original in the translation. This expression is a praise in Zoroastrianism and it is repeated in the translation; however, its Middle Persian translation follows the text as well:

(Praised be you, oh the holy noble plant created by Ahura Mazda"

Later on, the Ashem and Hu prayer, which is one of the three important Zoroastrian prayers, is repeated as the original Avestan text.

Avestan: "ašəm.vohū.vahištəm.astī.uštā.astī.uštā.ahmā i.hiiaṯ.ašāi.vahištāi.ašəm"

Middle Persian: "ashem vohû vahistem asti; ustâ asti: ustâ ahmâi hyaṭ ashâi vahistâi ashem"

In fact, the loyalty of the translator to quote ritual and sacred statements which have significant ritualistic meaning is one of the characteristics of the translation of Vandidad, which is seen throughout the text.

4.2 Grammatical Principles

4.2.1 Selection of different lexical groups in Avestan and Middle Persian languages

In the first and most common type of changes, the translator has to select a word which belongs to two different lexical groups in the two languages in order to provide the closest equivalence which communicates the original concept. In other words, the original word in Avestan may be a noun and the closest equivalence in Middle Persian may be a verb, and adjective, and so on. For instance, in 19: 3, the term paiti (verb prefix) + dauuata (answered) is a verb from root "dav" (demonic speaking) (Bartholomae, 1904, p. 688). This verb prefix which reverses the meaning of the verb (Jackson, 1892, p. 2010) is translated into Middle Persian as pasukh (answer), which is a singular noun. In other words, in Avestan, the word is a preposition and its equivalence in Middle Persian is a noun. Moreover, in 19: 21, yaoždāṯa (someone who is purified) is a participle from yaoždā (purifying and cleaning) (Bartholomae, 1904, p. 1235) which is an adjective for someone who is purified; in the Middle Persian translation, the used term is yōsdāsrīh (purification and cleanliness), which is an abstract noun. In 19: 22, frasrāuuaiiōiš (composing a poem) is a verb from root "srav" (to sing) (Bartholomae, 1904, p. 145) which is the second person singular transient of present tense (Jackson, 1892, p. 145); in the Middle Persian translation it is translated as frāz – srāysin
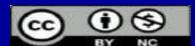
(composing a poem), which is a gerund. In 23: 19, the term uzgəuruuaiiāt̰ (rising) is a verb from grab (grabbing) + prefix "uz" (up) (Bartholomae, 1904, p. 526) in third person singular of present transient tense (Jackson, 1892, p. 163). In the Middle Persian translation, the selected equivalence was aūlā – girisn (rising upward), which is a gerund.

4.2.2 Non-transference of morphological features of original word to its Middle Persian equivalent

In this type of changes, the translator replaces a word from a grammatical group with a specific attribute by the same grammatical group with different attribute. For example, the three cases of masculine, feminine, and neutral and three counts of singular, dual, and plural in ancient Iranian languages including Avestan do not exist in Middle period languages. For instance, in 19: 2, the term āpō (waters) is a feminine noun from āp (water) (Bartholomae, 1904, p. 1394) and Vaŋhuiš (good) is a feminine adjective from vahehi (better) (Bartholomae, 1904, p. 1394). These two words together mean "good waters", which is translated in Middle Persian as "āw.vēh" (good waters). While in Avestan language, the case and inflection of these words indicate that they are dual in count, this characteristic cannot be seen in Middle Persian since Middle Persian lacks any genders for words. In 19:22, the term gaēϑanąm (the world) is a feminine noun from gaēϑā and the term astuuainti aŋhuuō (Astomand World, material world) is created from two words, namely aŋhuuō (world, being) a feminine noun from aŋhuuō and astuuainti (material), a feminine adjective from astuant, which are the names of two worlds in Zoroastrianism. In the Middle Persian translation, the translator didn't translate gaēϑanąm. The term aŋhuuō which is dual, is translated as ahvân (worlds), which is a plural noun (noun + the plural preposition of ān) since the Middle Persian language lacks the dual characteristic, the translator uses plural number to show the meaning.

4.2.3 Non-transference of syntactic structure of Avestan language to Middle Persian language

In this case, the translator changes the syntactic functionality of a linguistic structure. For instance, in 19: 4, frašusat (started going) is a verb from frašusa from the root "šū" (going, becoming) + the prefix "fra" (Bartholomae, 1904, p. 1707). The case of this verb is an inchoative case which means the start or beginning of an action which is not acted upon before until the verb (past, present, imperative) is accompanied by the present preposition of (a) and the inchoative prefix of (s), and then the action starts. In Ancient Iranian languages, the inchoative case is created by adding "s" to the root and then inflexing the thematic "a" after that "s" (Jackson, 1892, § 697, p. 192). This verb is translated into Middle Persian using prefix "fra" (starting to go) with the term frāz – rapt. While the translator accurately communicates the prefix and the inflection of the verb, there is no inchoative case in Middle Persian since this language doesn't consider such an attribute for verbs. In 19: 12, the term "yaoždaΘāni" (I will purify) from root "yaož" (purifying) (Bartholomae, 1904, p. 1231) is the first person singular transient subjunctive present verb (Jackson, 1892, p. 145); in the Middle Persian translation, the equivalent yōsdāsrīnēm (I purify) is a verb from the same root which is the first person singular declarative present tense (Guyova, 2000, p. 140) and the subjunctive property of this verb is neglected in the translation. While subjunctive present tense is used for verbs showing doubt, desire, and wish, the declarative present is used for verbs which are occurring in the present or continuously in the present. In 19:2, the term "frāiiazaēta" (high praising) is a verb in third person singular of declarative non-transient (middle) present tense (Jackson, 1892, p. 144). While there is no consensus regarding the usage of non-transient verbs in Avestan language, Moghadam believes that they are verbs with non-transient inflection suffix that are used when the action of the verb is not related to a person or something else and the receiver of the action is the same as the subject of the verb. In other words, these verbs do not have an opposite texture. Ritualistic verbs are one of the eight sets of verbs in Avesta which are conjugated as non-transient. The root "yaz" (praising) is an example of such verbs (Moghadam, Nematollahi, 2012, p. 103). In the Middle Persian translation, "frãz – yazit" is used which is the third person singular of transient past tense (Goyova, 2000, p. 146); however, it cannot be conjugated as non-transient since the Middle Persian language does not have a transient or non-transient attribute for verbs.

4.2.4   Selection of different grammatical groups in Avestan and Middle Persian languages

In this type of changes, the translator selects an equivalence for the word which is different regarding grammatical hierarchy in Avesta and Middle Persian. In other words, a word which is single lexicon in Avestan language, is turned into a prepositional phrase or a noun phrase. For instance, in 19:3, pouru.xv ărənaŋhō (full of glory) is created from two words, namely pouru (full) plus xvărənaŋhō (glory) which is from xvărənah (Bartholomae, 1904, p. 903) which is an adjective from zaraϑuštrō (highly-glorious Zoroaster). In the Middle Persian translation, it is translated as ez pōr-khărēhīh (due to having a lot of glory), which is a prepositional phrase. In 19: 18, the term "uruϑmiianaąm" (booming, growing) is an adjective from "uruϑmiia" from the root, "raoδ" (growing) (Bartholomae, 1904, p. 1492). In the Middle Persian translation, it is a prepositional phrase of "â-rȯyisn-aûmand" (having the capability of growing).

4.2.5   Conversion of syntactic features in Avestan language to morphological features in Middle Persian

In this type of changes, the relation between the words, which is shown in Avestan language through the syntax, is shown in Middle Persian using lexical relations. For instance, in 19:9, the term "zrūne" (time) is a noun from "zaurvan" (Bartholomae, 1904, p. 1684) which is a locative object. The term "akarane" (limitless, infinite) is an adjective from "karana" (limit, border) plus the negative prefix of "a" (without). In order to establish the relation between the adjective and the described noun, the translator uses the preposition "pad" and adds "ī": "pa zamãn i akanãra" (in an infinite time). In 19:23, "bāzuuō" (arm) is from bāzav and has an ablative case (Jackson, 1892, p. 77). The terms "hāuuōiia" (left) and "dašina" (right) are adjectives for bāzuuō and follow their noun. Because the Middle Persian is not an inflected language, the translator has used the preposition "pad": "pa – havē – bāzā" (with the left arm) and "pa (ān) das" (with the right one (arm)). In 19: 33, the term "yaoždāϑriiō" (purity, cleanliness) is a noun from "yaoždāϑra" and is an ablative object. In the Middle Persian translation, "ez – yȯsdâsrîh" (from purity and pureness) is used. The translator has used the preposition "ez" to show the conjugative case of the term in the Avestan language.

5. Conclusion

A review of nineteenth chapter of Vandidad leads us to the conclusion that the translator has been compelled to make inevitable changes in order to provide the closest equivalence for the Avestan text in the Middle Persian text. The changes could be divided into two groups, namely lexical and grammatical principles. It is probable, however, to discover other categories through further investigations. The grammatical evaluation of the text proves that the preference of the translator, due to his loyalty to the Avestan text and his effort to maintain the sanctity of content, is usually to select an equivalence which is closer to the grammar of the Middle Persian language. In other words, the translator has no choice but to change the structure of the text. Sometimes the characteristics of the Middle Persian language make the translator obliged to communicate certain aspect of word's meaning since Middle Persian had lost several attributes of ancient languages such as gender, number and dual characteristic of lexicons. However, in many cases, the translator selects a word which belongs to two different lexical groups in Avestan and Middle Persian which are grammatically inconsistent. Sometimes, the translator has no choice but to create some changes in the syntactic structure of Middle Persian language to communicate the meaning of the word more efficiently. In other cases, the translator selects an equivalence which belongs to two different syntactic hierarchies in Avestan and Middle Persian languages, which sometimes creates difficulty in transference of the word meaning. In many cases, the relation between words which is demonstrated through syntactic relations in Avestan language is shown using lexical relation in Middle Persian. Since Middle Persian language is a non-inflective language, the translator is often obliged to add other words to the text to communicate the original Avestan concept more efficiently. Regarding semantics, the translator selects words which have the highest subscriptions with the roots and religious considerations of the Avestan word. Sometimes, the translator would select an equivalent which contains only partial meaning of the original word and results in failure to convey the message correctly. This may be due to the limitation of the lexicons in Middle Persian or the fact that the concepts understood by modern linguists and scholars through scientific linguistic investigations and comparing various languages, were not known to translators at
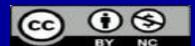
the time. Insufficient knowledge of translator about many ritual terms and proper geographical or religious nouns justifies the awkward repetition of words in their original form, even when an appropriate known equivalence is available in Middle Persian. Another characteristic of the Middle Persian texts which damages the validity of the translated volume is the literal translation which could be seen throughout the book. The translator neglects the grammatical structure of the Middle Persian language and puts words together based on the syntatctical structure of the Avestan language. Sometimes, the translator repeats the Avestan expression to maintain the sanctity of the text and then provides the Middle Persian phrases as explanatory notes. In some cases, the translator adds a word or a group of words to the Middle Persian text to achieve more precise explanation of concept. In fact, the loyalty of the translator to quote ritualistic and sacred statements, which have a specific ritual significance, is one of the characteristics of the translation of Vandidad which can be seen throughout the text.

While the studies carried out in this field often leads us to the conclusion that translations are mainly of literal nature which do not demonstrate the structure of Middle Persian and are not beneficial to understand the Avestan text, the current study tried to discover specific translation frameworks as well as limitations face by translators.

We hope the studies conducted in this area pave the way for further researches on this valuable book. To carry out deeper studies, it is essential to refer to other grammatical sources of Middle Persian language to investigate the structure of this language more accurately. Moreover, dictionaries on related ancient languages can provide us with comprehensive information regarding the roots, meanings, usage and historical meanings of the words which helps us achieve deeper, more precise comparison. Investigation of other chapters of Vandidad and precise comparison with the nineteenth chapter, which was studied here, could also be very effective.

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i The northern part of the Black Sea and it is linked by the narrow (about 4 km or 2.5 mi) Strait of Kerch to the Black Sea. The sea is bounded in the north by mainland Ukraine, in the east by Russia, and in the west by the Crimean Peninsula.

ii The prophet Zoroaster is regarded as the founder of Zoroastrianism, which is arguably the world's oldest monotheistic faith.

iii Ahura Mazda is the creator and highest deity of Zoroastrianism.

iv Ahriman is the evil, destructive spirit in the dualistic doctrine of Zoroastrianism.

v Friedrich Spiegel, Avesta, die heiligen Schriften der Parsen, I, der Vendidad, Wien, 1853; II, Vispered and Yaçna, Wien, 1858.

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viii Degener, A., "Neryosanghs Sanskrit-übersetzung von Škand gumānīk vicār" in Corolla Iranica, ed. by Emmerick, R. and Weber, D., Frankfurt am Main 1991, 49-58.

ix G. Gropp   "Zâdsprams Interpretation des ahunavaoiryo- Gebetes" in Corolla Iranica 1991, 79-89.

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xii Skjærvø, Prods Oktor, online in introduction to Zoroastrianism: Zoroastrian. http:// www. Fas. Harvard. Edu/ Iranian/ zoroastrainism/ index.html. University of Harvard, 2006.