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Translation of Ellipsis as a Stylistic Feature: Hemingway's *a Farewell to Arms* and its Persian Translation

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ABSTRACT

According to Merriam-Webster, the act of leaving out one or more words that are not necessary for a phrase to be understood is a sign used in printed text to show that words have been left out. Ellipsis as an index style of literary text is a challenge for literary translators since they are supposed to reveal the style of the original author in both form and meaning faithfully. In the article, the researcher investigated the strategies used by Persian translators to render elliptical patterns in Hemingway's *A Farewell to Arms* and their effectiveness regarding the target text's linguistic features. To this end, five categories out of Quirk's (1985) eight categories are considered for discussion. His strategy would be effective since both English and Persian have quite similarity in these features, besides this expansion would be helpful where the two languages are different. The results proved that keeping the original style as closely as feasible a few loyal translations have talked the two linguistic systems in terms of elliptical pattern. Although, Persian translators, careless to the style of the text, have tended to explain the pattern and expand the text, or simply deleted the elliptical element thereby bereaving the target reader from enjoying the author's actual art.

Keywords: Ellipsis, Literary translation, Style, Stylistic, *A Farewell to Arms*

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1. Introduction

As it is mentioned in Merriam-Webster Collegiate Dictionary (2006), translation composed of changing from one condition or form to another, to turn into one's own language. According to Newmark (1988a), we may think that this

changing must be simple, as one must be able to put a word in the source language with another one in the target language. However, translation is not simply replacement of lexical items in the two languages. The translator, in the process of



translation, is always looking for the source and the target language.

Hatim (2001) states that the study of translation is assuming a high profile, and what is remarkable is that this is happening not only in the traditional centers of west, but worldwide. Ellipsis as an index style of literary text is a challenge for literary translation since they supposed to reveal the style of original author in both form and meaning faithfully. According to Deny (1999), "Literary translation is a type of translation, which is distinguished from translation in general. A literary translation must reflect the imaginative rational and intuitive writing of the author. In fact, literature is distinguished by its aesthetics. Little concern has been devoted to the aesthetics of literary translations because these translations are understood as unoriginal" (p.183). In this article, the researcher investigates the strategies used by Persian translator to render elliptical patterns in Hemingway's *A Farewell to Arms* and their effectiveness regarding the target texts linguistic features.

Probably, when coping with literary texts, one of the major problems that a translator faces is the issue of rendering figures of speech, those terms that do not belong to the universal grammars of languages and are, indeed, metaphorical in nature.

2. Review of the Related Literature

Translation and Literature has long been indispensable. It is a large intelligence flitting among the languages, to connect and to sustain. Translation and Literature is an interdisciplinary scholarly journal focusing on English literature in its foreign relations. As Habib (2005) states, "it has become indisputably clear that the study of humanities in general is no longer a luxury but a necessity, vital to our very survival as an enlightened civilization" (p.1).

Literature plays an original role in discussion among civilizations that can be reborn through the intricate process known as translation. As Landers (2001) claims, "the *myriad* of other *fine pieces of literature appearing in hundreds* of the world's *languages*, are the *best argument* for doing literary translation" (p. 5). Literary translation, especially, plays an original role in creating a relationship among cultures. In addition, it is a means of enriching literatures and cultures. Jones (2000) states that to understand a translator as an ambassador, it is needed to know how he intersects between nations, shows the interests of his or her own country, but in a consonant manner with the understanding and perspective of the host country.

Literary translation has mostly presupposed a specified notion of 'literariness' within which it has been able to mark off its boundaries and to determine its sanctions, methods and approaches to its subjects. In this regard, textual constituent relations to make a dynamic environment that can alteration over time. Although, with different comments of an individual text, the resonance of the original and its translated versions are never very congruent; as a result, the concept of subtle translation seems to be a disputable one. "Since no two languages are identical, either in the meanings given to corresponding symbols or in the ways in which such symbols are arranged in phrases and sentences, it stands to reason that there can be no absolute correspondence between two languages. Hence, there can be no fully exact translation" (Nida, as cited in Venuti, 2004, p.153). Nabokov (as cited in Venuti, 2000) believes that "the person, who desires to turn a literary masterpiece into another language, has only one duty to perform, and this is to reproduce with absolute exactitude

the whole text and nothing but the text” (p. 121).

Hemingway’s fable is famous for its incomparable style. According to Adams (1939), no American writer of his generation has been more talked about than Ernest Hemingway. *A Farewell to Arms* is a novel by Ernest Hemingway set during the Italian campaign of World War. The book, published in 1929, is a first-person account of American Frederic Henry, serving as a Lieutenant (“Tenente”) in the ambulance corps of the Italian Army.

The objective of this study is to investigate the translation of ellipsis as stylistic features of the Persian translation of Ernest Hemingway’s *A Farewell to Arms* in comparison to the original story to find the answers of the following research questions.

2.1 Research Questions

This study tries to answer the following questions:

- RQ1. Does the translator choose suitable equivalents and concepts?
- RQ2. What extent have most appropriate expressions been used in the Persian translation in order to reflect the essence of the original book in translation?
- RQ3. How attentive have the Persian translators of a farewell to arms been to the stylistic features of the original text?

3. Methodology

3.1 Materials

In this research, Hemingway’s masterpiece, noble prize winning, the *Farewell to Arms* was selected to elucidate elliptically which was his main style. Its Persian translation, which was done by Najaf Darya Bandari, was selected too in order to analyze whether Hemingway’s style was revealed or not. The researcher’s all attempts were to

consider two parts of this novel. Hemingway’s novel, the *Farewell to Arms* as the original text and Najaf Darya Bandari’s translation were selected as this research corpus. The researcher selected Najaf Darya Bandari’s translation since it was the best translation in terms of the original author’s point of view and style.

3.1 Model

The speculative framework of this study was substantially based on the model postulated by Quirk et al (1985) illustrating different categories of ellipsis as something left untold, but intelligibility (Widdowson, 1978, p. 211). To complete this model, purely one of the cases proposed in Halliday and Hassan’s (1976) debate of ellipsis was included.

3.2 Procedure

In the study, the data was descriptively analyzed. First, the English and Persian elliptical structures of the source and target texts were recognized and sorted out according to the Model presented by Quirk et al (1985) in order to understand similarities and differences between the two languages. Next, one randomly selected example representing one of the seven main categories was brought forth to check how the elliptical samples were dealt with in the Persian translation. The target was to identify the employed strategies by the translators and their influence as well as to identify the concealment problems related to translation of ellipsis as a feature of style. It had to be noted that in the process of text and data selection different moderator variables such as, length, style, difficulty of texts, etc. were checked.

4. Data Analysis and Discussion

The whole text of *A Farewell to Arms* was read in details and the ellipses were identified. The found ellipses were analyzed according to the model suggested by Quirk et al (1985), supplemented by



Halliday and Hassan's. Accordingly, five out of eight main groups of frequently recurring elliptical patterns were presented. Following is an argument of some of the most typical examples of each category of ellipsis. It should be mentioned that predictably sometimes a sentence elliptical structure cuts across a number of these categories of ellipsis. Following are the categories and the related examples.

Anaphoric Ellipsis

As the appearance of textual ellipsis, anaphora can improve the elliptical structure.

(1. 1) "I was very glad the Austrians seemed to want to come back to the town some time, if the war should end, **because they did not bombard it to destroy it but only a little in a military way.**" (p. 4)

This example is produced according to the features of the anaphoric ellipsis, i.e. the precedent normally has 'precedence' over the ellipsis structure, by receiving an earlier or a higher situation in the sentence (Quirk, 1985: p.895).

من خوشحال بودم که به نظر میرسید اتریشیها خیال دارند اگر جنگ به پایان برسد به شهر برگردند چون شهر را نه به قصد نابودی بلکه فقط کمی در مناطق نظامی بمباران کردند.

(p. 14)

Darya-bandari has gone after the limitations of the sentence and not only translated the omission part, but also showed one of the possible explanations of the sentence.

Coordination

As one of the basic sub-categories of particular ellipsis, coordinate clauses are grafted by words such as "and", "but", and "or" (Quirk et al, 1985: p. 910).

(2.1). "it came very fast and the sun went a dull yellow and then everything was gray and the sky was covered and the cloud came on down the mountain and suddenly we were in it and it was snow". (p.27)

Young (1975) notes that "Hemingway's style is considerable uncomplicated. Events are described clearly and in the order in which they occurred, the author doesn't change the order to test the events" (p. 109). This example, the comparatively short sentence shows an uncanny directness by stringing together paratactic point, each creating a certain image, through ellipsis. Considering the order of paratactic phrases in the sentence and the account of ellipsis, Darya-Bandari has translated the sentence through literary translation.

ابر خیلی تند می آمد و خورشید برنگ زرد تیره در آمد و آن گاه همه چیز خاکستری شد و آسمان پوشیده شد و ابر از کوه سرزیر شد و ناگهان ما را فرا گرفت و برف بود.

It is careful to both form and content.

Elliptical clauses

Ellipsis of the clauses is contained as a subcategory of functional ellipsis, including ellipsis of the predicate, ellipsis of Wh-clauses, ellipsis of to-infinitive clauses, and ellipsis of an entire clause.

(3: 1). "The priest looked up." He saw us and smiled." "**My friend motioned for him to come in**". (p. 5) Consider the full form of richly colored sentence as "My friend motioned for him to come in". This example shows the ellipsis of to-infinitive clause. Translation of "to" as the indicative of the omitted can be a challenge for Persian translator.

دوستم با دست اشاره کرد که بیاید تو.

(p.16)

In his translation, Darya-Bandari has argued the word "با دست" (hand) which reflects the amicably tone of the speaker. Although, the style of the author has been distorted to some extent and the ellipses form, it is presented in the target sentence. Indeed, the translator has detailed the structure.

Noun Phrase

Ellipsis of noun phrase is the subcategory of functional ellipsis, "except in coordinate noun phrases, result from the final ellipsis" (Quirk et al, 1985, p. 900). It sections the similarity features with the nominal ellipsis in Halliday and Hassan's model (1976).

(4.1) People lived on in it and there were hospitals, cafes, artillery up side streets, and two bawdy houses, one for troops and one for officers. (p. 4) Keeping this difference between the two languages in mind, Darya-Bandari has transferred the noun phrases elliptically.

مردم شهر به زندگی خود ادامه می دادند و در شهر بیمارستان و کافه بود و سر خیابان ها توپ کار گذاشته بودند و دو خانه هم بود یکی برای سرباز ها و یکی برای افسرها.

Ellipsis of nonfinite and verbless clauses
(5.1) "A wisteria vine purple on the side of the house." (P.4)

Skipping the elliptical element, the following translation is stylistically wide of the mark.

دیوار خانه از شاخ و برگ مو پوشیده بود.
(Barya-Bandari, p. 14)

5. Conclusion

Ellipsis is a linguistic feature leaving out certain linguistic elements and yet reveals the meaning of the original text. Although some linguistic elements dropped out, their meanings will be understood by readers. By analyzing selected instances of the translation of ellipsis in this study from Persian translation of Hemingway's masterpiece *A Farewell to Arms*, it indicates that a great majority of examples of elliptical patterns acted similarly in both English and Persian. Therefore, we can say that there are not too many problems while Persian translators translate English text and they want to be faithful to the original text, but in some cases such as substitution, there are differences between English and Persian because of grammatical structure. It

was concluded that where the translators have heeded the author's style, they have mostly selected for literal translation in rendering ellipsis as a stylistic feature to let the deleted the elliptical element, hence deviating from the stylistic norms of the original. It seems that literal translation could be the most effective strategy for translating ellipsis as a feature of style in the case of English-into-Persian literary translation as it is exemplified in the translation of one of the most style-conscious of contemporaneous Persian literary translators, that is, Darya-Bandari.

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