
Translation of Philosophical Terms: Strategies Used by Male and Female Translators

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Abstract

This research sought to identify the translation strategies employed by male and female translators for the rendition of philosophical terms in two Persian translations of Explaining Post-modernism from Skepticism to Socialism from Rousseau to Foucault, based on Vinay and Darbelnet's model. To achieve this objective, a mixed-methods design was used. The corpus of the study consisted of 100 pages from the English book along with their Persian translations by Poursafir, Zohrabi, and Ehsani. The results obtained from the statistical analysis of the elicited data showed that Zohrabi and Ehsani have employed literal translation, translation by paraphrase, content transposition, form transposition, borrowing, and deletion strategies in translating philosophical terms into Persian. The most and the least frequent strategies applied by them were literal translation and deletion, respectively. The results also revealed that Poursafir has benefited from literal translation, translation by paraphrase, content transposition, form transposition, and borrowing strategies in his translation. The most and the least frequent strategies used by him were literal translation and borrowing, respectively. As for gender, while there were minor alterations between the frequencies of different strategies used by male and female translators, the differences were not significant. The findings of this study provide operational directions for future translators of philosophical works.

Keywords: Gender, Philosophical Terms, Translation Strategies

INTRODUCTION

The role of translation in today's globalized world is undeniable. The translation is rendering the meaning of a text into another language in the way that the author intended the text (Newmark, 1988). However, the fact is that translation is not an easy task but it is associated with many challenges, difficulties, and problems. According to Nida (1964), because full linguistic equivalence between any given pair of languages is unachievable, and given that various lexical and structural discrepancies exist between different languages, translators

should use appropriate strategies if they want to keep the structural, semantic, and pragmatic values of the original texts. Translation of philosophical texts as a category of technical texts is a demanding task for translators because a high-quality technical translation calls for translators' technical philosophical knowledge in addition to linguistic knowledge. Therefore, translators encounter many problems and challenges in translating them. What intensifies the problem is that translators' field of study is usually different branches of the English language and most of them do not have adequate knowledge of philosophy and philosophical terms. In compensating for this lack of technical

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knowledge, some translators resort to word-by-word translation the output of which, in most cases, is a text which does not convey the meaning of the original text correctly. This is while various strategies have been proposed in different models which can be used by translators in trying to convey the correct meaning of the source text.

In reviewing the existing literature (e.g., Babae Dugulsara & Sanaee, 2016; Kreinkutiile, 2003; Zekavati & Seddighi, 2012), the authors found that while various text genres including advertising, literary, medical, scientific ones have taken the attention of researchers in the field of translation studies, the literature on the translation of philosophical texts is not rich. In other words, few studies have been conducted in the realm of philosophical translation. In one of such studies, Swanson and Heisig (2005), presented their ideas and opinions on the principles of technical translation. They dealt with different issues including associations between target and source texts, translation errors and problems, the effect of audience on translation, and technical translation readability. They concluded that philosophical translation is associated with many complexities and it is more appropriate to read philosophical texts in their original format. In another descriptive study, Parks (2017) provided his own experience in the translation of the philosophical genre to clarify common difficulties of philosophical translation. He referred to two kinds of problems in this regard: using technical terminology, and translating figurative language.

To speak more specifically, in the extant literature, no study was found on the investigation of the translation strategies used in English to Persian translation of philosophical terms. Moreover, the authors found no study on the translation of philosophical texts wherein the role of gender of translators has been explored. The authors thus sought to fill the gap in the present study through exploring the translation strategies used for the rendition of philosophical terms in *Explaining Post-modernism from Skepticism to Socialism from Rousseau to Foucault* (Hicks, 2004), based on Vinay and Darbelnet's (2000) model, with a focus on the

gender of the translators. The following research questions were, therefore, addressed:

RQ1. *What strategies have been used in the Persian translation of the philosophical terms to Socialism from Rousseau to Foucault, based on Vinay and Darbelnet's (2000) model?*

RQ2. *Are there any significant differences between the strategies used by male and female translators in the Persian translation of the philosophical terms in Explaining Post-modernism from Skepticism to Socialism from Rousseau to Foucault?*

The significance of this study lies in the following: Firstly, philosophy and philosophical texts have a broad range of audiences. Therefore, any study on the translation of such texts is worth conducting. Secondly, due to the importance of ESP courses for students of different majors including the field of philosophy, and the significant role of translation in ESP courses, such a study is worth doing. Thirdly, this study informs translation students of the translation strategies used in the Persian translation of the English philosophical terms. Fourthly, translation teachers will get useful insights from this study that are applicable in their classes, because they will be informed of the frequent strategies. Fifthly, this study contributes to improvements in technical translation quality, with a view to the point that stakeholders of the philosophical translation area will become more aware of the strategies utilized for the translation of philosophical terms. Last but not least, given that no study was found on the translation strategies used for the rendition of philosophical terms in *Explaining Post-modernism from Skepticism to Socialism from Rousseau to Foucault*, and that the few studies have been done on philosophical translation (e.g., Parks, 2017; Swanson & Heisig, 2005) with focus on gender, the present study fills an identified gap in the existing literature

LITERATURE REVIEW

The philosophical translation history in the Western world has been started in the first century at the time of the appearance of the translation of Greek philosophy into Latin by Romans (Seele, 1995, as cited in Large, 2018). It has been argued that philosophical transla-

tion is different from other genres since philosophical texts are characterized by a kind of technical terminology that is too difficult and diverse to be classified under a common umbrella (Parks, 2017). Part of this can be attributed to philosophers coining new terms, giving new meanings to old words, changing the context of word uses, etc. "All of this means that the translator has to pay very close attention to the author's words, comparing and contrasting the different uses of the same word in different contexts" (Parks, 2017, p. 1).

Another issue concerning the translation of philosophical texts is that contrary to the public interest in reading the philosophical texts, they are not written to be read by the public. That is, they are written to be read by specific groups of audience including higher education students, teachers, researchers, etc. (Swanson & Heisig, 2005). Moreover, the belief is that philosophical texts are of more richness and aesthetics in their original intact form, and the philosophical texts should appear in their original form. In this way, the associations, connections, and reflections needed when reading the philosophical texts are preserved and kept (Swanson & Heisig, 2005). Furthermore, as put by Swanson and Heisig (2005), since many errors are observed in translations of Western philosophical texts due to translators' lack of knowledge of the philosophical terminology, linguistic knowledge, cultural knowledge, knowledge of figures of speech, etc., some people prefer to resort to the original texts. All these have turned the translation of philosophical texts into a task different and distinguished from other genre translations.

Mažeikienė (2018) sought to investigate academic works published on the use of translation in ESP teaching/learning. This was done to identify the common issues touched by researchers regarding the effectiveness of translation in ESP teaching in higher education. As revealed by the results of data analysis, using translation is effective in ESP teaching/learning when it is used with a normal volume, purposefully, and appropriately, taking learners' needs into account. Rushwan (2017) attempted to see whether using translation leads to significant improvements in technical texts and terminology

comprehension of medical students at Najran University. It was shown that medical students' comprehension of medical texts and terminology significantly was increased due to using translation activities. Interestingly, their motivation was improved as a result of translation activities.

Yazdani Moghadam and Delarami Far (2015) explored the most frequent strategies utilized by Persian translators in English into Persian translation of the law terms. According to the results, translators do not select the strategies by chance, but they do it based on terminology. Moreover, the equivalence strategy was the most frequent. Kavaliauskienė and Kaminskienė (2007) addressed students' perceptions of the use of mother tongue and mental translation in ESP learning. It was revealed that translation helps students grasp the full meaning of technical terms, memorize and retain technical terms, be aware of vocabulary, grammar, style, and language transfer, and use technical terms in future contexts. Kreinkutiile (2003) touched redefinition, reassessment, and reinstatement of equivalence as an important concept in ESP teaching/learning concerning specific text genres and types. The results showed that due to the complexity of most the technical terms some of which are compounds, teaching them in ESP courses requires the use of translation activities, otherwise students misunderstand.

Last but not least, the argument is that the concept of gender plays a key role in translation (Von Flotow, 2001). According to this view, male and female translators approach translation work in different ways. As stated by Chamberlain (1998), translator gender influences the practice of translation depending on the type of text, the language, cultural practices, etc. As mentioned by Moghaddas (2013, p. 227), "translator's gender has a vast considerable reflection on the translation process and production", and it has taken the attention of the researchers in the field.

METHOD

Corpus

The corpus of the present study included 100 pages from the English book *Explaining Post-*

modernism from Skepticism to Socialism from Rousseau to Foucault (Hicks, 2004) along with its Persian translations by Poursafir, Zohrabi, and Ehsani. It is worth noting that through consulting some experts in translation research, The pages were selected through simple random sampling. The reason for the selection of this book was that it is a popular book in the realm of postmodern philosophy and has a considerable number of philosophical terms. Another reason was that this book has been translated by male and female translators and thus, an appropriate choice for the present study. The Persian translations by Poursafir (2013) and Zohrabi and Ehsani (2013) were published simultaneously in Tehran.

Design

Since both qualitative and quantitative statistics were used in the present study, the design was a mixed-methods one. In the qualitative phase, the contents of the source and target texts were compared with each other and the employed strategies were identified. In the

quantitative phase, the frequency and percentage of different kinds of strategies were calculated.

Procedure

At the outset of the study, 120 philosophical terms including nouns, adjectives, and verbs were identified in the English corpus by the raters, that is the authors of this study and an experienced translator with more than ten published translations. Then, the identified terms were compared with their Persian equivalents, based on Vinay and Darbelnet's (2000) model. The reason behind asking for help from an experienced translator was to add to the reliability of the findings. The inter-rater reliability coefficient was .80. Finally, the collected data were entered into SPSS for quantitative data analysis.

RESULTS

Results for the First Research Question

Through content comparative analysis of the corpus, 120 English philosophical terms, and their Persian equivalents, the translation strategies used in rendering them were identified. Table 1 below presents 50 examples of the identified cases.

Table 1
Source and Target Texts and Translation Strategies

Column	English philosophical term	Persian translation by Zohrabi & Ehsani	Strategy	Persian translation by Poursafir	Strategy
1	philosophical premises	فرضیات فلسفی	Content transposition	قضایای فلسفی	Content transposition
2	philosophical naturalism	طبیعی‌گرایی فلسفی	Literal translation	طبیعت‌باوری فلسفی	Translation by paraphrase
3	Medieval philosophy	فلسفه قرون وسطایی	Literal translation	فلسفه قرون وسطی	Literal translation
4	Enlightenment	روشنگرایی	Literal translation	روشنگری	Literal translation
5	modernism's essentials	مبانی مدرنیسم	Literal translation	بنیان‌های مدرنیسم	Translation by paraphrase
6	individualism	فردگرایی	Literal translation	فردگرایی	Literal translation
7	supernatural	فرا طبیعی	Literal translation	فراطبیعی	Literal translation
8	perception	ادراک	Literal translation	ادراک	Literal translation
9	reason	خرد	Literal translation	خرد	Literal translation
10	tradition	سنت	Literal translation	سنت	Literal translation
11	faith	ایمان	Literal translation	ایمان	Literal translation
12	mysticism	عرفان	Literal translation	عرفان	Literal translation
13	original sin	گناهان ذاتی	Translation by paraphrase	گناه اولیه	Literal translation
14	philosophical themes	مبانی فلسفی	Translation by paraphrase	مضامین فلسفی	Literal translation
15	capitalism	نظام سرمایه‌داری	Literal translation	سرمایه‌داری	Literal translation
16	anti-realism	واقعیت‌سنیزی	Translation by paraphrase	ضد واقع‌گرایی	Literal translation
17	natural reality	واقعیت طبیعی	Literal translation	واقعیت طبیعی	Literal translation
18	linguistic social subjectivism	ذهن‌گرایی اجتماعی-زبانی	Literal translation	ذهنیت‌گرایی اجتماعی-زبانی	Literal translation

19	individual identity	هویت فردی	Literal translation	هویت فردی	Literal translation
20	class groupisms	عضویت در گروه های مختلف طبقاتی	Translation by paraphrase	گروه گرایی های گوناگون	Translation by paraphrase
21	conflict	تضاد	Literal translation	تضاد	Literal translation
22	oppression	ظلم	Literal translation	ستم	Literal translation
23	communalism	جمع گرایی	Literal translation	جمع گرایی	Literal translation
24	egalitarian restraints	محدودیت های مساوات طلبانه	Translation by paraphrase	قیدوبندهای برابری خواهانه	Translation by paraphrase
25	objective meanings	معانی عینی	Literal translation	معانی عینی	Literal translation
26	true interpretations	تفسیر واقعی	Translation by paraphrase	تفسیری صحیح	Translation by paraphrase
27	objectivity	عینیت	Literal translation	عینیت	Literal translation
28	truth	حقیقت	Literal translation	حقیقت	Literal translation
29	deconstruction	ساخت شکنی	Literal translation	واسازی	Literal translation
30	subjective play	بازی ذهنی	Literal translation	بازی ذهنی	Literal translation
31	subjective associations	برداشت های ذهنی	Translation by paraphrase	تداعی های ذهنی	Literal translation
32	ambivalence	تردید	Literal translation	تردید	Literal translation
33	universal themes	موضوعات کلی	Translation by paraphrase	مضامین عام	Literal translation
34	indeterminate	نامعین	Literal translation	نامتعین	Literal translation
35	ad hominem attacks	حملات متعصبانه	Content transposition	حملات شخصی	Content transposition
36	relativism	نسبیت گرایی	Literal translation	نسبی گرایی	Literal translation
37	egalitarianism	مساوات طلبی	Literal translation	برابری خواهی	Literal translation
38	epistemological	معرفت شناختی	Literal translation	شناخت شناسانه	Content transposition
39	cynicism	بدبینی	Literal translation	کلبی مسلکی	Content transposition
40	Counter-Enlightenment Attack	حمله ضد روشنگری	Literal translation	حمله ضد روشنگری	Literal translation
41	establish connection	.	deletion	مرتبط شوند	Literal translation
42	proof	.	deletion	دلیل	Literal translation
43	rational gnostics	پیروان فلسفه عرفانی - عقلانی گنوستیک	Literal translation	فانلان به شناخت	Content transposition
44	noumenal	نومنال	borrowing	فی نفسه	Content transposition
45	synthetic representations	بازنمایی های ترکیبی	Literal translation	بازنمایی های تالیفی	Content transposition
46	metaphysics	متافیزیک	borrowing	متافیزیک	borrowing
47	contingency	ممکن خاص	Form Transposition	امور ممکن	Form transposition
48	derivative	اقتباسی	Literal translation	امری فرعی	Content transposition
49	absurd	بیهودگی	Form transposition	مهمل	Literal translation
50	troubled emotion	هیجانات ناآرام	Form transposition	احساس اضطراب	Translation by paraphrase

As shown in Table 1, the translation strategies used in the Persian translations of the English philosophical terms were *literal translation*, *translation by paraphrase*, *content transposition*, *form transposition*, *borrowing*, and *deletion*. However, among the translation strategies used by the translators, just literal translation, borrowing, and form transposition were among the strategies proposed in Vinay

and Darbelnet's (2000) model. The descriptive details of the identified strategies are presented in the Tables below:

Literal Translation

The literal translation is “word for word translation and relies on the direct transfer of a text from SL into a grammatical and meaningful text in TL” (Vinay & Darbelnet, 1995, 38).

Table 2
Example 1

N	Source text	Persian translation by Zohrabi & Ehsani	Transposition type	Persian translation by Poursafir	Transposition type
30	subjective play	بازی ذهنی	Literal translation	بازی ذهنی	Literal translation

Table 3
Example 2

N	Source text	Persian translation by Zohrabi & Ehsani	Transposition type	Persian translation by Poursafir	Transposition type
40	Counter-Enlightenment Attack	حمله‌ی ضدروشننگری	Literal translation	حمله‌ی ضدروشننگری	Literal translation

Translation by Paraphrase
Paraphrasing involves translating quite freely.

The meaning of the ST is conveyed in the TT, but ST is re-written (Schjoldager, 2008).

Table 4
Example 1

N	Source text	Persian translation by Zohrabi & Ehsani	Transposition type	Persian translation by Poursafir	Transposition type
24	egalitarian restraints	محدودیت‌های مساوات طلبانه	Translation by paraphrase	قیدوبندهای برابری خواهانه	Translation by paraphrase

Table 1
Example 2

N	Source text	Persian translation by Zohrabi & Ehsani	Transposition type	Persian translation by Poursafir	Transposition type
33	universal themes	موضوعات کلی	Translation by paraphrase	مضامین عام	Literal translation

Form Transposition
Form transposition “involves replacing one-word

class with another without changing the meaning of the text” (Vinay & Darbelnet, 1995, p. 31).

Table 2
Example 1

N	Source text	Persian translation by Zohrabi & Ehsani	Transposition type	Persian translation by Poursafir	Transposition type
47	contingency	ممکن خاص	Form Transposition	امور ممکن	Form transposition

Table 7
Example 2

N	Source text	Persian translation by Zohrabi & Ehsani	Transposition type	Persian translation by Poursafir	Transposition type
49	absurd	بیهودگی	Form transposition	مهمل	Literal translation

Content Transposition mantic changes in the ST (Whittlesey, 2012).
Transposing the content occurs through se

Table 3
Example 1

N	Source text	Persian translation by Zohrabi & Ehsani	Transposition type	Persian translation by Poursafir	Transposition type
1	philosophical premises	فرضیات فلسفی	Content transposition	قضایای فلسفی	Content transposition

Table 4
Example 2

N	Source text	Persian translation by Zohrabi & Ehsani	Transposition type	Persian translation by Poursafir	Transposition type
35	ad hominem attacks	حملات متعصبانه	Content transposition	حملات شخصی	Content transposition

Deletion of meaning present in the ST completely from the TT (Schjoldager, 2008).
Deletion involves omitting one or more units

Table 50
Example 1

N	Source text	Persian translation by Zohrabi & Ehsani	Transposition type	Persian translation by Poursafir	Transposition type
41	establish connection		deletion	مرتبط شوند	Literal translation

Table 11
Example 2

N	Source text	Persian translation by Zohrabi & Ehsani	Transposition type	Persian translation by Poursafir	Transposition type
42	proof		deletion	دلیل	Literal translation

Borrowing methods” and involves using foreign phrasing in the target text (Vinay & Darbelnet, 1995, p. 31).
Borrowing “is the simplest of all translation

Table 6
Example 1

N	Source text	Persian translation by Zohrabi & Ehsani	Transposition type	Persian translation by Poursafir	Transposition type
46	metaphysics	متافیزیک	borrowing	متافیزیک	borrowing

Table 7
Example 2

N	Source text	Persian translation by Zohrabi & Ehsani	Transposition type	Persian translation by Poursafir	Transposition type
44	noumenal	نومنال	borrowing	فی نفسه	Content transposition

Results for the Second Research Question

To answer the second research question, 'Are there any significant differences between the strategies used by male and female translators in the Persian translation of the philosophical terms in *Explaining Post-modernism from Skepticism to Socialism from Rousseau to*

Foucault?, quantitative analysis was done using descriptive statistics of the results of the qualitative content analysis (i.e., frequency and percentage of the translation strategies as well as Chi-square test). Table 14 below shows the results for strategies used by the translators.

Table 14
Frequency and Percentage of the Translation Strategies in Zohrabi and Ehsani's Translation

Strategy type	Frequency	Percentage
Literal translation	71	%68.93
Translation by paraphrase	11	%10.67
Content transposition	11	%10.67
Form transposition	4	%3.83
Borrowing	4	%3.83
Deletion	2	%1.94
Total	103	%100

Table 15 shows the frequency and percentage of the translation strategies identified in

Poursafir's translation.

Table 8
Frequency and Percentage of the Translation Strategies in Poursafir's Translation

Strategy type	Frequency	Percentage
Literal translation	74	%71.84
Translation by paraphrase	12	%11.65
Content transposition	13	%12.62
Form transposition	2	%1.94
Borrowing	2	%1.94
Total	103	%100

To see whether there are any significant differences between the strategies used by male and female translators, a chi-square test was run which led to the following results.

Table 16
Results of Chi-square Test

	Zohrabi & Poursafir
Pearson Chi-Square	25.16
	.38

Table 16 shows that the chi-square test for goodness of fit is not significant ($\chi^2=25.16$, $p > .05$). Therefore, it can be said that there are no significant differences between the strategies used by male and female translators.

DISCUSSION

The first finding of the study was that Zohrabi and Ehsani have used *literal translation, trans-*

lation by paraphrase, content transposition, form transposition, borrowing, and deletion strategies in translating the philosophical terms in the book under study. The most and the least frequent strategy used by them were *literal translation and deletion*, respectively. The second finding was that Poursafir has used *literal translation, translation by paraphrase, content transposition, form transposition, and borrowing* strategies in translating the same terms. The most and the least frequent strategy used by them were *literal translation and borrowing*, respectively. As the third finding, the results revealed that there were no significant differences between the strategies used by male and female translators in rendering the corpus. In other words, although there were slight differences between the frequencies of different strategies use by male and female translators, the differences were not significant statistically.

A justification for the finding that the translators have used different strategies in translating the philosophical terms is that since philosophy is a complex genre, the translators have resorted to different translation strategies. The same argument has been stated by Varlan (2010), wherein it has been mentioned that since philosophical texts are placed somewhere between the scientific and literary genres, translating them is problematic, and delivering a perfect translation of philosophical texts is almost impossible. Ednárová-Gibová and Zákutná (2018) too meant the same thing when they stated that philosophical genre is a difficult one for translators because they are characterized by a specific style and complexity. Maharsi (2007), argues that using different strategies is an attempt on the part of translators to add to the translation quality. However, this does not mean that diversity is always a sign of quality. In line with the present study, Maharsi (2007) found that translators benefited from different strategies including *literal translation*, *paraphrasing*, *transposition*, and *borrowing in* the translation of philosophical texts. Similar to the present study, Ednárová-Gibová and Zákutná (2018) reported that *semantic shift* (content transposition) is commonly used by translators working on philosophical texts.

The fact that *literal translation* was the most frequent strategy in both translations can be justified by arguing that the translators have used denotative meanings of the terms in philosophical dictionaries. This is natural since translators' field of study was not philosophy. Consistent with the present study, Maharsi (2007) discovered that *literal translation* is the most frequent strategy used in philosophical texts translation.

Finally, the finding that there was no significant difference between the frequencies of the translation strategies used by male and female translators, can be attributed to the issue that probably the philosophical knowledge of male and female translators was not the same, and therefore, they mainly resorted to dictionary meaning of technical terms in their translation. This is possibly why literal translation was the most frequent strategy in the two translations

made by male and female translators. All in all, it can be discussed that the translators remained faithful to the source text and did not omit a considerable number of terms when translating the English text into the Persian language. It is also worth noting that the number of *semantic shifts* was not so high in the two translations, which is also a sign of the high quality of translations.

CONCLUSION

Technical translation is a complex task associated with many problems and difficulties for translators. To cope with translation difficulties and problems in translating, translators use different strategies (Christensen, 2014). This means that the strategies used are worth investigating. However, despite the mentioned importance of translation strategies in technical translation, through field observation in the Iranian context, it was found that not much attention is paid to the use of these strategies, specifically in the area of philosophical texts translation. Results of data analysis showed that Zohrabi and Ehsani employed *literal translation*. This confirms the results of previous research that the *word-by-word translation* strategy outnumbers other translation strategies used by different translators in different text genres. However, it was found in the present study that, using *literal translation* has not led to many mistranslations of the philosophical terms. This may be because there are many differences between English and Persian languages regarding the use of philosophical terms in terms of function.

All in all, it can be concluded on the basis of the obtained results that the translation of philosophical terms requires the translators to use different strategies due to their complexities and challenges. Moreover, it should be concluded that translators have to improve their philosophical knowledge in order not to resort to unaccepted strategies such as *deletion* when translating philosophical texts. It is worth mentioning that although the frequency of *deletion* strategy was low, it was better not to delete the ST items and remain faithful to the ST. Translation teachers should make

students aware of such pitfalls in the technical translation area.

One implication of the findings is that translators and translation students should be attentive to the strategies used in English to Persian translations of the philosophical terms. Another implication is that teachers of translation courses should teach different translation strategies to translation students as prospective translators so that they do not mainly limit themselves to the use of such strategies as *literal translation*, but benefit from a variety of strategies.

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