

Contrastive Analysis of the Omissions in Persian Translations of “One Thousand and One Nights”

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Extended Abstract

1. Introduction

since the early hegira centuries up to the contemporary era “One Thousand and One Nights” stories have been translated into Arabic. During this period we have been confronted with a great many of the translators doing translation jobs from various source languages into different target languages, thus we are bearing witness to the imposition of variegated tastes and styles into the translations presented of the book. This has resulted in full eradication of the original version, the numerosity of the copies and the substantial discrepancies in the equivalents offered of the story book. The similarity between the basic foundation of the translations put forth by Tesuji and Eghlidi and Mar’ashipur (published by Bulaq institution in Egypt) provides an appropriate and suitable grounding for the research into the way these three translators have made a connection with the original text. Omission is considered as one of the important indices by means of which one can deal with the criticism of a translation work based on the theory proposed by Jean Rene Ladmira, the French target language-oriented theorist. Such a process in the translation operation happens due to cultural, linguistic, stylistic, etc requirements. The current research paper is trying to evaluate the omission process in three subject matters of “the expressions of love”, “the translation of the poems” and “the translation of the Arabic-Islamic signs” in the Persian translations presented for the story book “ألف ليلة وليلة” meaning “One Thousand and One Nights”.

2. Theoretical Framework

One of the most important issues discussed by Jean Rene Ladmira, target language-oriented theorist, which is the second most significant topic dealt with in the book written by Ladmira, is “entropy” meaning “loss of information or compaction” and it is suggested to the translator as opposing redundancy by Ladmira. Quite contrary

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to redundancy, there are cases in which the semantic implied via the use of source wording is seen as less important or even unessential. Therefore, a translator can ignore or should ignore translating them in some of the cases. Not only redundancy but also entropy, defined as unavailable parts in a system, basically mean gradual loss of information which can also be traced in the signified level. In the signifier level, it is sometimes allowed to lighten the text which is recognized as being redundant and verbiage, if such a redundancy can be realized as unified with nonverbal language habits and gestures and it will be better if it can be made incongruent therewith (Mohseni, 2009: 244). Such an issue stems from the translator's target language-centeredness and it is noteworthy to say that the source language-oriented theorists disagree by all means with the entropy.

3. Study Methodology

The study methodology adopted by the current research paper is a descriptive-analytical one and the authors try to deal with the process of entropy (omissions) in the Persian translation of "One Thousand and One Nights" (translated by Tesuji, Eghlidi and Mar'ashipur) in three different areas (expressions of love, poem translation, Islamic and Arabic signs). The present study has been laid upon the formulations posited in Ladmiral's theory.

4. Study Findings and Discussion

Most of the omissions in "One Thousand and One Nights" translations pertain to the depiction of the expressions of love. Even there are cases in some of the Arabic versions which are found as being inconsistent with the nobility and decency and hence omitted due to substantial oppositions demonstrated by the jurists and the clergymen. Persian translators each have chosen to take on an independent route but very close to one another. The first translator, Tesuji, tries to express the meanings and semantics of the love expressions somehow in an ambiguous and unveiled manner and avoids transferring the details. Eghlidi as a result of choosing to adopt a source language-oriented translation in rendering of the story "One Thousand and One Nights" advances further inside the realm of transferring the details and providing in-depth descriptions of the original version. Mar'ashipur transfers such expressions of love out of staying loyal to the source language text and there are a few omissions observable in his rendering of the story.

Regarding the criticism of the translations presented for the poems recited in "ألف ليلة وليلة", an Arabic rendering of the title of the book "One Thousand and One Nights", it is worth mentioning that since the poems presented therein are not enumerated in general as active elements of advancing the narration and the plot of the story omitting them from the context does not expose the translation work to any suffering. But holding such a view regarding the poems cannot be generalized and applied to the entire book; since, occasionally, poems play a critical and effective part in the narration's evolution. Tesuji generally falls short of providing equivalent translations for the poems and whatever is left of the translation of the poems in his rendering of

the story book belongs to the literary works performed by his poet colleague, Soroush Isfahani. It is noteworthy that Soroush has not translated the poems, except for a few cases; rather poems from the Persian poets have been substituted for the Arabic poems of the story book through adhering to the contextual contents' commonalities. But Eghlidi, except for a few cases of taking advantage of the translations made by the other poets, has done about ninety percent of the extant poems' translations through offering a poetic and literal word-for-word Persian equivalent. Mar'ashipur has carried out a similar but a lot more difficult work the same as Tesuji has performed. While the task of translating and replacing the poems has been assigned to Soroush in Tesuji's rendering of the story book, Mar'ashipur himself has achieved this goal. It has to be stated that Mar'ashipur's performance in contrast to what has been carried out by Soroush lacks elegance and accuracy and many of the translations of the poems are found disproportionate to the narration.

Tesuji more than Eghlidi and Mar'ashipur more than Eghlidi has resorted to some entropies which are figured out as being resulted from cultural features and in some of the cases he has tried to mitigate the domination of elements such as Arabic environment and rituals which are inset as patches on the book.

5. Conclusion

A great many of the omissions in Persian translations are related to Tesuji's and Mar'ashipur's unduly free and target-oriented approach in their renderings, unlike Eghlidi who has been bound to the main text and has less resorted to omissions. Through taking advantage of the omission process in the translation, Tesuji has been able to reduce the redundancies and boring and weary repetitions and provide the reader with a text more compact than the main text and this is why his translations seem more attractive. Also, reducing and decreasing the mass of the poems have made the book pruned of the numerous poems which cause a slackness in the narration of the story and therefore would otherwise result in tiredness and distantness of the readers of the main course of the story. Of course, occasionally, the lack of correct understanding of the redundancies in the translation presented by Tesuji appears damaging the method of story-telling and style of the book. Being loyal to the main text, Eghlidi has imported repetitions and redundants which seem to have been derived out of the prescribers' false understanding of the main text and the oral style of the book and he is found falling short of dealing with garnishing the text. Also, the one hundred percent transfer of the poems to the target language without taking advantage of omission and even reducing the poems by Eghlidi has made such poems to every now and then appear weak and annoying and this has caused his translation to look less legible and coherently less beautiful.

Keywords: planting a thousand and one nights, Tasouji translation, translation Eghlid.

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