

The Investigation of Collocations in terms of Coherence and Fluency in Translation (The case of *Twenty Stories from Twenty Nobel Prize Winners of Literature* by Asadollah Amraei)

Masood Khoshsaligheh ¹

Associate Professor in Translation Studies, Ferdowsi University of Mashhad,
Mashhad, Iran

Elmira Soleymani Rad

MA in English Translation, Ferdowsi University of Mashhad, Mashhad, Iran

Received: 22 June 2018

Accepted: 4 July 2018

Extended Abstract

1. Introduction

Collocations are defined as syntagmatic and lexical structures that tend to go together repeatedly (Afshinpoor & Ibn al-Rasul, 2014). That is, they are a sequence of words whose occurrence with each other is statistically frequent, and this frequency is to a degree that cannot be considered accidental (Sharifi & Namvar Fargi, 2012). Collocations, which play a crucial role in the coherence of various types of texts, are regarded as one of the most important properties of each language. There are different ways of analyzing translated texts interlingually. One of them is examining translations as independent texts with regard to the elements involved in their production. The current study examined a corpus of translated texts as independent texts, regardless of the original source, from the perspective of examining collocations and explaining their role in the coherence and fluency of translations regarding the target language norms.

2. Methodology

In this study, the importance of collocations and their role in contributing to the coherence and fluency of the translated texts were investigated. To this end, the book *Twenty Stories from Twenty Nobel Prize Winners* by Asadollah Amraei, an Iranian literary translator, was analyzed. The book consists of twenty stories from twenty different authors. The stories are selected and translated into Persian by Asadollah Amraei. For the benefit of the study, a selection of samples are purposefully selected from each of the twenty stories. The data analysis was carried out in three stages: 1) quantitative analysis, 2) qualitative analysis and 3) descriptive analysis. In the quantitative analysis, the collocations were examined from the viewpoint of the audience. For this purpose, a questionnaire was designed and distributed among 150 participants. In the questionnaire, the participants were asked to evaluate the collocations from the two perspectives of understandability and commonality. In the

1. Corresponding Author: khoshsaligheh@um.ac.ir

qualitative phase, the data from interviews with five participants who studied Persian literature were analyzed. In the final phase, the criteria for the collocational combinations of lexical items from the key literature, based on which the selection of collocations in the study were evaluated, were reviewed and described.

3. Discussion

The results of the quantitative phase indicated that none of the selected collocations were rated either fully understandable or commonly used. The data from the interviews employed in the qualitative analysis indicated that the participants considered the translation of the book awkward. To them, there are ambiguities in some parts of the text. This means that the translator has failed to transfer the meaning or he has not had special skills in the target language. One reason is that the words did not collocate on a traditionally accepted basis, and this challenges the naturalness and the flow of the reading process, and the readers have to read and reread certain segments of the text to make sense of it. It was revealed that the selection of the combinations is relatively comprehensible but not common and prevalent in Persian language speech community. The choices of the translator cannot be attributed to the translator's creativity in the construction of new combinations, as they are prevalent neither in Persian original texts nor in Persian translated texts by established translators.

Words that are used in combination with each other have to aim at and consider coherence and consistency of the text (Afshinpoor & Ibn al-Rasul, 2014). Therefore, translation as an independent text should be fluid and comprehensible to the target language readers, rather than merely recreating the linguistic structures of the source text. That is why the use of appropriate words according to the way native speakers use a language is a very important issue in the clarity and fluency of the written text. Therefore, it is imperative that translators have sufficient knowledge of the features which support the coherence and consistency of the text in the target language and culture – features like collocations.

The findings pointed out that one of the most important factors for accepting and choosing a translation to read is the fluency of its text. The translation should be written in a natural language which conforms to the conventions of the target language. The translated text should avoid unfamiliar and unusual structures and should be literally rendered. The text should have a consistent style and the translator should transfer the author's ideas accurately. The results of the different phases of the study indicated that the translator had used combinations in the text that have a low frequency in everyday communications. As the frequency of these collocational structures is low in Persian language, the text does not enjoy coherence. The study of collocations and their relationship with translation can have a significant role in the production of natural combinations which can contribute to more acceptable original and translated texts.

4. Conclusion

According to the findings, the most important factor for choosing a translation as acceptable is the fluency of the target language. The translation is expected to have been written in a conventional and aesthetic language. The text should not be literally translated and should not be based on unusual syntactic structures. The text should be consistent in style and the original author's intended meaning and lexical choices should be respected. The results of the different phases of the study indicated that the translator in this study has used combinations in the text that have lower frequency in the contemporary Persian language. The study of collocations and their relationships with translation has a significant role in the production of normal collocations by helping to avoid abnormal combinations.

Keywords: Coherence, Collocation, Fluency, Frequency, Translation

References (in Persian)

- Afshinpoor, M., & Ibn al-Rasul, M. (2014). Barrasi khatahaye bahamaee dastouri Farsi amoozane Arabi zaban [The study of syntactic collocation's errors among Arab Persian language learners]. In M. Moghaddam (Ed.), *Proceedings of the 9th Iranian linguistic conference* (pp. 153-164). Tehran, Iran: Allameh Tabataba'i University.
- Amirifar, M., Roshanfekar, K., Parvini, K., & Kord Zaferanloo, A. (2017). Khatahaye tarjome dar bahamaeye ghorani ba tekye bar didgahaye Newmark, Baker va Larson [The study of translation errors in Quranic collocations based on Newmark, Baker, and Larson's views]. *Translation Studies in Arabic Language and Literature*, 7(16), 61-86.
- Anvari, H. (2002). *Farhange Sokhan* [Sokhan Dictionary]. Tehran, Iran: Sokhan.
- Batani, M. (2009). *Farhange Hamayandhaie Pooya* [Pooya Collocation Dictionary]. Tehran, Iran: Farhange Moaser.
- Batani, M. (2013). *Tosife sakhtemane dastourie zabane Farsi* [Description of the grammatical structure of Persian language]. Tehran, Iran: Amir Kabir.
- Behjoo, Z. (1998). Tarhe kodbandie abzarhaye ensejam dar zabane Farsi [Encoding coherence tools in Persian language]. *Culture*, 11(25), 189-212.
- Ghoreishi, M., Baqa'i, H., & Alizadeh, A. (2015). Mizane hamahangi dar tekrare barkhi vajegan va tarkibate hamayand Quran va tarjomeye anha [The degree of harmony in the repetition of some lexical collocations of Quran and their translations]. *Translation Studies*, 13(49), 69-84.
- Ibrahimi, Sh., & Pahlavannejad, M. (2013). Barrasiye zabanshenakhtie bahamaee vajgani dar Khamseh Nezami [Linguistic study of lexical collocations in Nezami's Khamseh]. *Literature and Language*, 16(34), 33-52.
- Imami, K. (2014). *Farhange moasere Kimia* [Kimia contemporary dictionary]. Tehran, Iran: Farhang Moaser.
- Khazaeefar, A. (2015). Naghde naghde naghde tarjome [The critique of critique of translation's critique]. *Translator*, 24(56), 3-21.
- Khazaeefar, A. (2018). Garte bardari [Calque]. *Translator*, 26(63), 25-30.

- Mirzaee, M. (2013). Motarjeme boomi, motarjeme bigane va nahveye barkhorde anha ba vajegane hamayand [Native translator, foreign translator, and the way they deal with collocations]. *Quarterly Journal of Literature and Human Sciences*, 8(28), 53-67.
- Panahi, S. (2002). Bahamaee va tarkibate bahamayand dar zabane Farsi [Collocations and word combinations in Persian Language]. *Letter of the Academy*, 3(19), 199-211.
- Rozegar, A. (2011). *Estrategihaye bekar rafte dar tarjomeie bahamaeye loghavi Qurane Karim* [The strategies used in translating the lexical collocations of the Holy Qur'an] (Unpublished master's thesis). Islamic Azad University of Tehran, Tehran, Iran.
- Safavi, K. (2000). *Daramadi bar mana shenasi* [An introduction to semantics]. Tehran, Iran: Islamic Art and Culture Institute.
- Safavi, K. (2003). Pajoheshi darbareye bahamaee vajegan dar zabane Farsi [Research on the lexical collocations in Persian Language]. *Language and Literature Magazine*, 7(18), 1-13.
- Shahriari, Z. (1999). *Mahdoudiate bahamaeye vajegani va tarjome va tahghigh* [Limitations of lexical collocation and translation and research] (Unpublished master's thesis). Islamic Azad University of Tehran, Tehran, Iran.
- Sharifi, Sh., & Namvar Fargi, M. (2012). Taghsimbandie jadide anvae bahamaee vajegani ba dar nazar gereftane vijegihaye faramatni dar sheklgiriye anvae bahamaee [A new division of types of lexical collocations with consideration of the hyper textual characteristics in the formation of different types of collocations]. *Linguistics and Dialects of Khorasan*, 4(7), 39-62.

References (in English)

- Benson, M., Benson, E., & Ilson, R. (1997). *The BBI dictionary of English word combinations*. Amsterdam, the Netherlands: John Benjamins.
- Bernardini, S. (2007, September). *Collocations in translated language: Combining parallel, comparable and reference corpora*. Paper presented at the 4th Corpus Linguistics Conferences, University of Birmingham, Birmingham, England.
- Firth, J. R. (1957). *Modes of meaning*. Oxford, England: Oxford University Press.
- Halliday, M. A. K., & Hasan, R. (1992). *Cohesion in English*. London, England: Longman.
- Hoey, M. (2000). A world beyond collocation: New perspectives on vocabulary teaching. In M. Lewis (Ed.), *Teaching collocation* (pp. 224-243). Hove, UK: Language Teaching Publications.
- Jelínková, K. (2009). *Translation equivalents of collocations in business English* (Unpublished bachelor's thesis). Masaryk University, Brno, Czech Republic.
- McCarthy, M. (1990). *Vocabulary*. Oxford, England: Oxford University Press.
- McKeown, K. & Dragomir, R. (2000). Collocations. In D. Moisl (Ed.), *Handbook of natural language processing* (pp. 507-523). New York, NY: CRC Press.

- Mollanazar, H. (1990). *The Role of collocation in translation* (Unpublished master's thesis). Tarbiat Modarres University, Tehran, Iran.
- Nowruzi Khiabani, M. (2000). Sources of collocational clashes. *Language and Literature*, 4(8), 1-11.
- Palmer, F. R. (1981). *Semantics*. Cambridge, England: Cambridge University Press.
- Rabeh, F. (2010). *Problems in translating collocations* (Unpublished master's thesis). Faculty of Letters and Languages, Mentouri University-Constantine, Algeria.
- Schäffner, C., & Adab, B. (2000). *Developing translation competence*. Amsterdam, the Netherland: John Benjamins.
- Sinclair, J. (1966). Beginning the study of lexis. In C. E. Bazell, J. C. Catford, M. A. K. Halliday, & R. H. Robins (Eds.), *In memory of J. R. Firth* (pp. 148-162). London: Longman.
- Toury, G. (2000). The nature and role of norms in translation. In L. Venuti (Ed.), *Translation studies reader* (pp. 198-211). London, England: Routledge.