

From Paratext to Paratranslation: Understanding French Translations of Dolatabadi's Fiction According to the Theories of Gérard Genette

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Extended Abstract

1. Introduction

The critique of translation in Iran, as a country where translation is a long tradition, focuses primarily on content of the text (Kamali, 2017, pp. 21-32). Thus, several questions, all based on the content of the text arise: Are the equivalents correct? Do they have the correct terminology and counterparts? Does the translator understand the meaning of some complex expressions? Is the translator successful in translating the author's style? In other words, the criticism of a translation becomes a means of assessing the linguistic knowledge of a translator. What we have just said is valid for translations done from all languages (Kamali, 2017, pp. 21-32).

2. Methodology

From a methodological point of view, the main tool we used in this article was the traductology. We can say that the critique of translations in Iran is usually confined to the verbal aspect. Contemporary research in the field of translation studies also concerns metalinguistics, that is, anything beyond language (Genette, 1987). Translation studies or traductology, as a new scientific approach, teaches us that translators' activity is not limited to language translation, for the simple reason that translation is tinged with creativity. Contrary to popular belief, not everyone who speaks a second language is necessarily a good translator; one can very well master a foreign language without being able to translate from that second language. Language conveys a culture and not just a linguistic message; we must keep in mind that the translator translates the text, not the language. However, the book is not limited to a text that is exposed to the reader; the book is a compilation of text and everything around it, the title of the book, the cover design, the preface, the footnotes and descriptions of the text have a significant role in readers comprehension. The aforementioned elements, the paratext, are the ones that convert the text into a book. These are the elements that surround the text or, literally, those that lie on the margins of the text, those that accompany it, extend it, offer it and,

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finally, send the text to the market, so that the reader establishes a personal relationship with this whole that we call a book.

3. Discussion

G rard Genette (1930-2018), French literary theorist and critic proposed new approaches and strategies for reading literary texts. In the 1980s, he developed other concepts in two of his key works, *Palimpsestes* (1982) and *Seuils* (1987) and chose the concept of paratext for literary text, but he also reminded that his discussion on paratext is more of an introduction. After him, in 2004, a traductologist named Jos  Yuste Frias spoke of the concept of paratext in translation and he introduced a new approach and called it paratranslation, to show that the reader also had to pass a threshold to enter the world of translated text. Therefore, paratranslation means the translation of the paratext from the source language to the target language (Frias, 2010: p. 67). We believe that the loyalty of the translator to the author's text, which is one of the main criteria for a good translation, is different in paratranslation. Since the submission of a translated book into the market requires the development of a paratext adapted to the target culture, the translator should not and cannot translate the original paratext as it was and would rather create a new paratext for the sake of book's better presentation and reception. In 2002, a translator named Mich le Brognetti published a number of short stories by Mahmoud Dolatabadi in France which introduced this author for the first time to French readers. Dolatabadi (1940) is a well-known writer in Iran and Iranian readers have followed the evolution of his writing over the years. Brognetti (1962) chose from a set of novels, those that seemed to be the representative of a certain image of the Iranian culture. This image conformed to what the media in the West had constructed of contemporary Iran, a country of cruelty, violence and barbarities.

4. Conclusion

The significant changes made in the paratext of this new book have encouraged us to examine and analyze the magnitude and nature of these changes and, based on the ideas of G rard Genette and Jos  Yuste Frias (1972), see how these changes lead the new readers and inspire them with data that is not necessarily true, nor is it the same as the Persian reader's conception of the original paratext. By studying paratextual elements that are translated, we will find that the representation of the translated paratext is in accordance with the mentality fixed by the target culture. We will see that these strategies reflect the attitude of the target culture towards the original culture.

Keywords: Dolatabadi, Genette, Paratext, Paratranslation

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