

Translation and Contrastive Analysis of English and Persian Proper Nouns

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Abstract: Proper nouns also called proper names are names and denote unique entities. A proper noun is the special word that refers to a person, place or object such as John, London, Aspirin or Sony. A proper noun is the opposite of a common noun. A proper noun is capitalize in English and most other languages that use the Latin alphabet; this is an easy way to recognize them. Regarding the translation of proper nouns, it can not be stated that proper nouns are untranslatable. Some proper nouns should be translated, but some others should not or they should be transferred and still several others should be explained in parentheses or footnote. For example, fictitious proper names often have connotations, either literal meaning or implicature, so they should be translated. If the culture and nationality are as important as the connotation and context of names or they are more important, they should not be translated or they should be explained in the parentheses or footnote. Therefore, proper nouns belong to the realm of sociolinguistics and pragmatics, and if the proper nouns of English and Persian compared and contrasted, it can be said that they are studied under the domain of Contrastive Analysis which is a subdisipline of linguistics that brings two or more language system or subsystem together.

Key Words: Proper Nouns, Translation, Contrastive Analysis, English, Persian.

Introduction

Peter Newmark (1988) as cited by Mokhtari(1992) classified proper nouns into five categories. While Mokhtari (1992) divided them three categories with their own subcategories.

1) Persons name

- 1.1. Factual proper name
- 1.2. Fictitious proper name
- 1.3. Antonomasia

2) Places name

- 2.1. Factual place name
- 2.2. Fictitious place name

3) Objects name

- 3.1. Commercial eponym (Brand name)
- 3.2. Object eponym

The meaning of proper noun, outside of what it references, is frequently arbitrary or irrelevant. For example, someone might be named Tiger smith despite being neither a tiger nor a smith . Because of this they are often not translated between languages, although they may be transliterated. Mill as stated by Mokhtari (1992) believes that proper nouns do not have any meaning or connotation. so , they are not translated and must not be translated. Though, dealing with such a problem is not so straightforward.

In this study we will see that some proper nouns should be translated, but some others should not or they should be translated and still several others should be explained in parentheses or footnotes. For example, fictitious proper names often have connotation, either literal meaning or implicature, that they should be translated . So, proper nouns belong to the realm of sociolinguistics and pragmatics, we can say that they are studied under the domain of contrastive Analysis, (CA) which according to Yarmohammadi (1996:6)"is a subdiscipline of linguistics that brings two or more language systems or subsystems together..."

Methodology

Data: The data which are put into partice are Persian and English proper nouns.

Procedure: As it was mentioned before, Mokhtari (1992) divided proper nouns into three categories with their own subcategories.

1) Persons name

- 1.1. Factual proper name
- 1.2. Fictitious proper name
- 1.3. Antonomasia

2) Places name

- 2.1. Factual place name

2.2. Fictitious place name

3) Objects name

3.1. Commercial eponym (Brand name)

3.2. Object eponym

Data Analysis

This part of the study deals with the comparison and contrast of Persian and English proper names.

1. Name of people

1.1. Factual proper name

1.1.1. Titles of historical persons should be translated. Although, the names should not.

| English | Persian |
|----------------------------|---------------------------|
| Shan Abbas, The Great | / sah ?aebbas-e-kabir/ |
| Tahir, The Ambidextrous | /taher – e- zolyaemineyn/ |
| Richard, the lion- hearted | /ricard-e-sirdel/ |
| William, the conquerer | /viliyam- e fateh / |

1.1.2 Persian nicknames should not be translated. If the nationality, culture and local colour of text is not emphasized, English nicknames can be translated to Persian nicknames because they are easy to pronounce and also, Persian language is closer to English language.

| English | Persian |
|---------|---------|
| Lois | /lu?i/ |
| Richard | /riser/ |
| Michael | /misel/ |
| George | /zorz/ |
| Henry | /hanri/ |

1.1.3. Holy names and names of characters in the Bible should be translated.

| English | Persian |
|-----------|-------------|
| Elizabeth | /?elisabat/ |
| Joshua | /yus?e/ |
| Jonah | /yunes/ |

John, the Baptist /yaehyamo ?aemmed/

1.1.4. Names of the philosophers, scientists should not be changed.

| English | Persian |
|-----------|-------------|
| Aristotle | /?aeraestu/ |
| Plot | /?aeflatun/ |
| Socrates | /soqrat/ |
| Gallon | /jalinus/ |

| | |
|-----------------------|--------------------|
| Thales | /tales/ |
| Avempace | /ʔebn- e baje/ |
| Abenhzam | /ʔebn- e haezm/ |
| Averroes | /ʔebn- e- rosd/ |
| Avicenna | /ʔebn- e sina/ |
| Alhazem | /ʔebn- e heysaem/ |
| Abubacer | /ʔebn- e tofeyl/ |
| Abumasar | /ʔaebu m ʔ aesaer/ |
| Algazel | /qaezali |
| Alfarbiau (Avennasar) | /farabi/ |
| Rhazes | /razi/ |

1.1.5. Persian titles of factual proper names would not be changed, because some of them are known to the English speakers.

| English | Persian |
|-------------------|----------------------|
| Haji | /haji/ |
| Sheikh (Sheik) | /seyx/ |
| Shah | /sah/ |
| Sayyid | /saeyyed/ |
| Begum | /beygom/ |
| Mirza | /mirza/ |
| Khan | /xan/ |
| Beg | /beyg/ |
| Hojjat- Al- Islam | /hojjaet- ol ʔeslam/ |
| Ayat- Al- Allah | /ʔayaet – ollah/ |

Titles such as Hojjat- Al- Islam and Ayat – Al – Allah would not be changed or should be explained in the parentheses. Titles such as/ bibi/, /ʔaqa/ and /xanom/ in nicknames such as / bibisaekine/, / sad ʔ aqa/ , / ʔ aqareza/, mohaemmaed ʔaqa/ and/ ʔaekraemxanom/ should be unchanged or omitted completely . Persian titles such as/ ʔostad/ and/ mohaendes/ would be translated to Mr. in English.

| English | Persian |
|---------------------------|-------------------|
| SakineoeBibisakine | /bibisaekine/ |
| Shad or shad Agha | /sad ʔaqa/ |
| Reza or Agha reza | /ʔaqareza/ |
| Mohammad or Mohammad agha | /mohaemmaed ʔaqa/ |
| Akram or akramkhanom | / ʔaekraemxanom/ |
| Mr. Mohammad | /ʔostadmoammad/ |

Mr. zaare /mohaendeszar?e/

1.2. Fictitious proper name

Proper names in literature, often have connotation that should be explained in the parentheses or footnote. Peter Newmark(1988) as notes by Mokhtari (1992) suggests that when the connotations, either literal meaning or implicature are of great importance, fictitious proper names should be translated. According to him, first connotation of proper name in the source language would be translated into target language and then again, it would be changed into a new proper noun.

It is important to know that the names of characters in allegories, comedies, satires, fair tales have meaning and implicature in source language that need to be translated. If the transference of message and context of a literary work has preference over the culture and nationality of the source language, names must be translated. If the culture and nationality are as important as connotation and context of names or they are more important, proper nouns should not be translated or they should or they should be explained in parentheses or footnote.

1.2.1. Mokhtari (1992) point out that proper names in the novels and allegorical plays should be translated because the names of heroes are good and bad adjectives and are like archetypal or typical heroes.

They do not belong to a certain nationality or culture.

| English | Persian |
|----------------|----------------------------------------|
| Mr. Blindman | /?aqa-ye kur-baten/ |
| Mr. No-good | /?aqa-ye bi- saemaer/ |
| Mr. Malice | /?aqa-ye-kine-ju/ |
| Mr. Love-lust | /?aqa- ye saehvaetran/ |
| Mr. live-loose | /?aqa- ye la ? obali/ |
| Mr. Lair | /?aqa- ye kazeib/ |
| Mr. Cruelty | /?aqa-ye ja? Er/ /?aqa-ye setaem-pise/ |

1.2.2. Names of heroes in comedies and satires are often typical and can be rendered. They must be translated if time and message are preferred to the culture of the source language. Here are some examples stated by Raadi(1976) as quoted by Mokhtari(1992):

| English | Persian |
|------------------------|---------------------------------------|
| Lewis shepherdson | / lu? I-e cupan-zade/ |
| John Laughter (Guffaw) | /?aehmaedxaende/ |
| John Fleshy (Fleshly) | /?aehmaedgustini/ / ? aehmaedheykael/ |
| Old Johny Crestfallen | /xan baba?Oftade/ |
| Mr. begguar | /gedaxan/ |
| Dr. Mouse | /doctor mus/ |

| | |
|-----------------------|-----------------|
| Pegi Tall | /paeribolaende/ |
| The Venerable Whisker | /ʔaebolpaesm/ |
| Mr.Brainy (Mr.Eggead) | /daemaq/ |
| Honey | /jegaerguse/ |
| Mr.Stitich (Mr.snip) | /poxduz/ |

1.2.2.1. It is significant to know that translation of these proper names are very difficult and delicate, and before translating these names, related context and dialogues must be studied carefully. Translation of these names are sometimes based on the type of character and sometimes based on bodily feature, either in real or factual form such as /ʔaebol- paesm/, /paeribolaende/, /ʔaehmaedgustini/ or ironically such as / doctor mus/ , /aehmaedheykael/. Names can indicate the occupation of character such as /poxduz/, moral features such as /ʔaehmaedxaende/ , present state, /xan baba ʔ oftade/.

1.2.2.2. Connotations of some literary proper names are sometimes clear for the knowledgeable readers of source language but not for the readers of target language. For example, /ʔonsiye/ and /tuti/ are rural names but /rʔoya/ and /paeri/ are urban names.

There are difference between /maesbager/, /kaerbaela ʔqorban/ and /siyamaek / and /jaemsid/, also between /qorbanbeyg /, /fezzebaji/, yuzbasi/ and faeraengis/, mohaendesariya/ and /saertipnaderi/.

These nuances should be explained for the target language.

1.2.2.3 Comedies of Elizabeth time, Jacobian and Restoration, have specific names which can and should be translated because the transference of message is preferred to the culture. Mokhtari (1992) exemplifies some proper names in these plays and translate them.

| English | Persian |
|---------------|----------------------------------------|
| Foible | /zæʔife/ |
| Mr.Aimwell | /ʔaqa- ye xos- niyaet/ |
| Mr.sullen | /ʔaqa – yetoned- xuyan / / ʔaebusxan / |
| Mr.scrub | /ʔaqa- ye zaehmaet- kes/ |
| Mr.Pinchwife | /ʔaqa- ye nisguniyan/ |
| Lady | /xanom- e saexi/ |
| Mrs.Aqueamish | /xanom- e nazok- naraenji/ |
| Mr.Waitwell | /ʔaqa- ye xos- xedmaet/ |
| Lady Wishfort | /xanom- e ʔarezudariyan/ |
| Mincing | /xanom- e nazdarian / / gerixanom/ |
| Quack | /ʔaqa –ye raemalzade // raemaliyan/ |

1.2.3 Characters such as prince, princess, fairy queen, ghoul, wizard, witch, in fairy tales are the same in different cultures, so their names can be translated.

English

Persian

Tom Thumb /tam saesti//tam baend-?aengosti/
/noxodi//noxodu//noxodaek/

1.2.4. According to Mokhtari (1992), characters in the kids stories are animals and their names can be translated. The reason might be one of these.

1. A characters name in target language may not be suitable and become ridiculous.
2. The name is inappropriate to the personality of the character.
3. A characters name has the licalcolour of source language which is not necessary to translate it.
4. Translation of the original name does not transfer the connotation, so we should translate it into which carries the implied meaning or connotation.

1.2.5. Other literary works by Shakespear, Bernard Shaw, Charles Dickens, Anthony Powell, Powys, Pristely selected suitable names for their characters. As cited before, translation of these names is not permitted directly in the text for the cultural and pronunciation reason. For example, if we translate Mr. Dolittle to / taenbaelxan/ , it will be incongruous to other names. So, it is better to explain their connotations in parentheses or footnote.

1.2.6. Persian titles of fictitious or literary proper names are not changed, since some of these bames are known to the English speakers.

They are like the titles of factual proper names. Persian tittels such as /?ostad/ and/ mohaendes/ would either be omitted completypr translated to Mr. in English.

1.2.7. Suffixes such as / dirazi/ , / xorasani/ and / taebrizi/ ,... which are used with proper nouns, either factual or ficitious, do not belong to Persian language and they belong to other languages. The only difference is that, they are sometimes aristocratis titles. If these suffixes are family names or part of the family names, they are written like family names, such as SalehiSirjani , / salehisirjani/. If these suffixes are not part of the family names , they are written like the following:

English

Persian

| | |
|----------------------------|----------------------------|
| Mirza of hiraz | /mirza- ye sirazi/ |
| Mulla(h) Hadi of Sabzevar | /mollahadi – e saebzevari/ |
| Faid of kashan | / feyz- e kasani/ |
| Mahmood of Ghazna | /maehmud-e qaeznaevi/ |

1.3. Antonomasia

Although some names are proper but they function as common names. They are called antonomasia.

1.3.1. Popular common proper names are more frequent proper names in a language. Theses names do not refer to specific persons, and are used in allegory and transference of the nationality is not important.

| English | Persian |
|----------------|-----------------|
| Jack and jill | /hadi o hoda/ |
| Johny and judy | /ʔazaer o dara/ |
| Aunt Sally | /ʔaemeqezi/ |

1.3.2. Although some common proper names are part of common names, they refer to a specific nationality or religion, they should be translated from one language to another. For example, John Bull is a typical English layman. If transference of the nationality is significant, names must not be translated.

| | |
|-----------|------------|
| Uncle Sam | /ʔaemusam/ |
|-----------|------------|

1.3.3. Some other common proper names refer to persons with specific characteristics, such as Irving (a dull, uninformed obnoxious person) and Melvin (a dull, tedious person).

| English | Persian |
|---------|--------------|
| Irving | /faetollah/ |
| Melvin | /saebzʔaeli/ |

1.3.4. Eponyms are also common proper names that have been derived from factual or fictitious proper names. Peter Newmark(1988) as expressed by Mokhtari(1992) classified them into three categories. 1) Persons name 2) Place name 3) Objects name. Eponyms are often used in the form of metaphors. They must be translated unless they are more popular in target language.

| English | Persian |
|--------------|---------------|
| Shakespear | /sekspiyer/ |
| Bernard shaw | /Bernard saʔ/ |

Some eponyms have different connotations which should be limited or explained, according to the context. For example, this sentence "He is IransShakespear" means he is a good poet or play writer.

Shakespear /saʔer – e – xub/ naemayesname- nevis- e xub/

It should be considered that eponyms may have different meaning and connotation in the source and target languages.

Sometimes an eponym has one connotation and does not need to be explained.

| | |
|-------|-------------------|
| Judas | /yaehuda// xaʔen/ |
|-------|-------------------|

If an eponym is local or temporary or limited, it would be translated.

| | |
|----------|----------------------------------------|
| Quisling | /xaʔen/ / jenayaetkar/ / vaetaenforus/ |
|----------|----------------------------------------|

1.3.5. Some adjectives are made from the name of individual people. If the names are popular and well-known, they should not be translated.

| English | Persian |
|-----------|-------------|
| Marxist | /marksist/ |
| Stalinist | /ʔestalini/ |

If the names are not popular, they should be translated. It is important to know that some adjectives are neutral but some other have positive connotations.

2. Places name

2.1. Factual place names: Factual place names are geographical names and addresses such as names of the streets, squares, institutions and....

2.1.1. Since geographical names have usually noconnotation, they are easy to be translated. It should be taken into consideration that the pronunciation and dication of several peographicalnames, have been changed in one language to another.

| English | Persian |
|---------|------------|
| Delhi | / dehli/ |
| Bushire | /busehr/ |
| Meshed | /maeshaed/ |

Old geographical names should be used in translation of old trxt and their modern names should be written in the parentheses.

| English | Persian |
|-------------|------------------------------------------------|
| Caspian sea | /baehr- e- jorjan/ / daerya – ye taebaerestan/ |
| Aegian sea | /baehr- e aeljaezayer/ |

New names should be used for translation of modern trxts.

| English | Persian |
|-------------|-----------------------|
| Caspian Sea | /daerya – ye xaezaer/ |
| Aegian Sea | /daerya- ye ?eze/ |
| Belguim | /belzik/ |

2.1.2. A few peographical names have changed into common nmes and become like expressions. If they are not familiar to the target language speakers, they should be explained. "He found his Mecca:, means his desire was satisfied.

| | |
|-------|----------|
| Mecca | /?arezu/ |
|-------|----------|

2.1.3. Name of the streets and squares do not need to be translated especially if they are in the form of address.

| English | Persian |
|---------------------------|------------------------|
| Enghelab square | /meydan – e ?enqelab/ |
| Esteghlal street (avenue) | /xiyaban- e ?esteqlal/ |

2.1.4. Names of companies, institutions, universities, hospitals and...must not be translated, because they belong to source language.

| English | Persian |
|---------------|-------------------------|
| Mehr Hospital | /bimarestan – e – mehr/ |

Sharif University /danesghasaeirif/

Kakhsa Compa /sekaet- e kaxsaz/

2.1.5. Name of newspapers and magazines should not be translated.

| | |
|---------|---------|
| English | Persian |
|---------|---------|

| | |
|---------|--------------------|
| Newweek | /maejaeleniyuzvik/ |
|---------|--------------------|

| | |
|----------------|------------------------|
| Zaneruz weekly | /maejaellezaen- e ruz/ |
|----------------|------------------------|

2.1.6. Some of the address names should be translated, unless they are known to the target language readers.

Whitehall (a street London where most government offices are located there).

Fleet Street (a street in central London where several major newspapers have their offices).

| | |
|---------|---------|
| English | Persian |
|---------|---------|

| | |
|------------|---------------------------------------------|
| Whitehalla | /dowaet- e britaniya/ / xiyaban- e vaythal/ |
|------------|---------------------------------------------|

| | |
|--------------|------------------------------------|
| Fleet street | /filit ?estirit/ ruzname- negaran/ |
|--------------|------------------------------------|

| | |
|--------|-------------------------------|
| Maetbu | /? At / / ruznamehayelaedaen/ |
|--------|-------------------------------|

2.2. Fictitious place name

2.2.1. Fictitious place names in literature are like persons name.

According to peter Newmark(1988) as expressed by Mokhtari (1992) "Dotheboys Hall", in one of the Charles Dickens, means Swindleboys School.

| | |
|----------------|-----------------------------|
| Dotheboys Hall | / maedrese – ye gorizestan/ |
|----------------|-----------------------------|

| | |
|------------------------|--|
| Maedrese- ye jimestan/ | |
|------------------------|--|

2.2.2. Although nationality should be transferred in translation of the place names iin literature, there is no limitation in translating in translating these names in comedies, allegories, fairy tales and kides stories.

| | |
|---------|---------|
| English | Persian |
|---------|---------|

| | |
|----------|--------------|
| Eastasua | /saerqasiye/ |
|----------|--------------|

| | |
|---------|--------------|
| Eurasia | /qaerbasiye/ |
|---------|--------------|

| | |
|-------------------|--------------|
| Humiliation Vally | /daerexoz?u/ |
|-------------------|--------------|

| | |
|------------------|--------------------------|
| By – Pass Meadow | /caemaen- e kenargozaer/ |
|------------------|--------------------------|

| | |
|---------------------|-----------------|
| City of Destruction | / xaerab ?abad/ |
|---------------------|-----------------|

| | |
|-----------------|---------------|
| Doubting Castle | / qael?esaek/ |
|-----------------|---------------|

| | |
|----------------------|------------------------|
| Delectable Mountains | /kuhsar- hayelaezzaet/ |
|----------------------|------------------------|

3.Objects name

Common properobject names are divided into two categories:1. Commercial eponym (Barand name)

2. Object eponym.

3.1.Commercial eponym (Barand name)

If brand names are known to the readers, they should not be translated. If these names are not known, they should be explained or translated.

| | |
|---------|--------------|
| English | Persian |
| Pepsi | /pepsi/ |
| Aspirin | /ʔasprin/ |
| Kleenex | /kliniks/ |
| Hoover | /jarubaerqi/ |

According to Mokhtari (1992), while translating the drugs name, instead of brand names either generic names or both of them should be used.

3.2. Object eponym

If object eponyms are familiar to the speakers of second language, they would not be translated. If they are not known to them, they should be explained.

| | |
|--------|---------|
| Diesel | /dizel/ |
|--------|---------|

Conclusion

As we noticed it can not be stated that proper nouns are untranslatable. Some proper nouns should be translated, but some others should not or they should be transferred and still several others should be names often have connotations, either literal meaning or implicature, so they should be translated. If the transference of message and context of a literary work is preferred to the culture and nationality of the source language, names must be translated. If the culture and nationality are as important as the connotation and context of names or they are more important, they should not be translated or they should be explained in the parentheses or footnote.

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