

**The Possible Effect of Semantic Modification over Time on the Choice of Persian Lexical Equivalences of Two Iranian Translations of *Taming the Shrew***

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**Abstract**

The aim of present study was investigating effect of semantic modification over time on the choice of Persian lexical equivalences of two Iranian translations of *taming the shrew*. In doing so, two translations of the English novel 'taming of shrew' into Persian were compared, namely "به تربیت در آوردن دختر سرکش" and "رام کردن زن سرکش". First translation was done in 1945 by Hossein-qoli Salvar (Emado saltane) and the second one was published in 2017 by Mohsen Qasemi; with a time interval of 72 years. The present research compared these two translations to see to what semantic modifications affect Persian translators' choice in finding lexical equivalences in their translation of English novels over time. The framework adopted by the present study was Fromkin's categorizations and definitions (2003). In this sense, the required data were collected according to elements provided by classification and definitions proposed by this framework. Dada classification were analyzed based on three factors of spelling, semantic and syntactic modification. Semantic modification divided into meaninglessness, meaning modification and stylistic modification. At last, stylistic modification was found to be the most frequent modifications, within this period of time, which make the text non-sense for reader.

**Keywords:** Lexical Equivalence, Semantic Modification, Stylistic Modification, Translation Meaninglessness.

## **1. Introduction**

Translation in today's world is of great importance more than the past time because knowledge around the world progresses and people exchange these knowledge through translations. Translation is a phenomenon that has a huge effect on everyday life (Hatim & Munday, 2004). Its effects occurs in each times of our life. There are many problems in translations because languages have many different words. Since half of a century ago, translation has begun as an academic subject Rhetoricians in the 1950s and 1960s to analyze translation more systematically.

Comparative translation from language to another language inevitably involves a theory of equivalence. In comparative translation, there should not be word by word translation, the important thing is that translation text must be as fluent as target text (Hatim & Munday, 2004). Therefore, one of the variables which plays a crucial role as a key concept in translation is choosing the proper equivalence.

Translators may be influenced by factors such as source text, target culture, target receptors, financial affairs, gender of translators, writers, and time. Choosing appropriate equivalence is very vital for translators. It means translators must choose words with approximately the same meaning and form in different language. In other hands, beliefs and ideologies are always reflected in translators' way of choosing equivalence, but this is not just beliefs and ideologies which have effect on translators. This characteristic of language causes semantic modification which affected choosing translation equivalence when translators translate in different times. Language and translation have a closed relationship to each other. So language modification directly affects the translation. This study aimed to show the modifications occurred in Persian

language over the past forty years. This has been done by comparing two translated version of the two Persian translations of famous English novels — *Taming of the Shrew* — to identify how these modifications affect the translators' mind to choose the equivalence. In this regard, this research aimed at investigating the effect of pass of time on choosing equivalences by two different Iranian translators.

## **2. Literature Review**

### **2.1 Translation**

In a world with [over 7000 spoken languages](#), translation is important because it allows people to communicate and understand each other's ideas and cultures, without having to learn a second language. In 19<sup>th</sup> century because of scientific interactions and either due to economic or commercial needs, field of translation became prominent. Initially, knowing more than one language was sufficient to accomplish this task. But later by occurring some problems, individuals engaged in translation discovered it as a technical job; therefore, translation should be thought in order to present correct and beneficial target text (Hatim & Mason, 1990).

### **2.2 Concept of Translation**

It is difficult to define the exact concept of translation. In general, translation is a process in which a translator conveys at least the meaning of source text into the target text. Having this outlook establish the wrong mentality that the task can be accomplished by individuals who know more than one language. For representing definition about translation pointing to theorists' viewpoints demands, Newmark (1988) remarks that translation is a process of changing a written message from one language into the other language in the way that the

author intended the text. According to the definition the first important factor is conveying the intention.

In other expression, by dividing a language into the form and function, formal and dynamic equivalence are derived. Nida (1991) claimed that remaining source language form in target language arises from formal equivalence, but in dynamic equivalence translators just convey the intention. Bell declared that "translation is the expression in another language of what has been expressed in another, preserving semantic and stylistic differences" (Bell, 1991, p. 5). In the definition the focus is on preserving semantic and stylistic differences. It is clear that semantic and stylistic differences mostly root in culture. While, Hatim and Mason (1990) presented different explanation of translation. They claimed that translation is "a communication process that takes place within a social context" (p. 3). According to another different definitions of translation, it is found out that many theorists in the field of translation have the same opinion about meaning equivalence which should be conveyed into the target text. Baker (1992) confirms the term meaning equivalence because she believes that the goal of translation is at first transferring the meaning; thus, translators deal with unit of meaning.

### **2.3 Significance of Translation**

Without translation, our world would narrow mercilessly. Many years ago translation meant practice without theory. Translation is a broad notion which has two phases: product and process. Product phase focuses on target text. And process phase focus is on what happens in translators mind. It concerns the role of translators' mind. It concerns the role of translators as transformers who are placed between source text and target text. Of course, at first, translation encompassed Islamic holy text or "word of God". Thus, target texts were not as important as

source texts. But one century ago, translation began an academic field which like other fields has a history, translators', subjects and etc. (Rampaul, Miremadi, Pinder, Lee & Ellis, 2001). Jakobson (1959) was the first one who talked about different types of translation and divided it in to: intralingua translation which is translation between two version and dialects of the same language, Interlingua translation which means translation between two different languages. He, also, believed that Interlingua translation is not always possible. Thus, he introduced two new terms in translation: translatability and untranslatability. He declared that a text is untranslatable where the content and form are very close such as poetry and songs. In poetry and songs sound and rhyme are as important as content. So, recreating translated text which has the characteristics of source text is, almost, impossible. Vinay and Darbelnet claimed that "unit of translation is the smallest segment of the utterance whose signs are linked in such a way that they should not be translated in dividedly" (1995, p. 21). Halliday (1978) sees clause as a unit of translation. Newmark (1988) believed that the unit of translator must be more than a word because he claimed that order of sentence is meaningful and structures of sentences are a communicative dynamism. So, translators must pay attention to word order of source text. This new theory of linguistic has effect on translation as Newmark and Reibel (1968) believe that translations are based implicitly on a theory of language. They look at translation as a craft, they say: "Translation is a craft consisting statement in the attempt to replace a written message and/ or statement in language by the same message and/ or statement in another language" (Newmark, 1988, p.7).

As this statement shows translation was defined as a craft or art and it is translators responsibility to find equivalence for replacement a message of source language by target language one. And this is very difficult or complex responsibility because rarely there is only

one correct equivalence for source word in target language. Thus, theories of translation developed in a way that effectiveness of translation and translators discover the meaning of the source language and use target language forms expressing the meaning in a way that every translated text has these three characteristics: naturally, fluency, and accuracy.

#### **2.4 Studies Conducted on Semantic Modification**

Eslami (2012) sought to provide answer for the research question: to what extent do semantic modifications affect Persian translator's choice in finding lexical equivalent in their translation of English novels over time? Two famous English novels with two different versions of their translations, translated in different times, are chosen. One of the novels is *Pride and Prejudice* written by Austen and translated by Pouranfar in 1969 and retranslated by Reza Rezaei in 2005. Another novel is *The Prince and the Pauper* by Twain. This novel was translated by Mohammad Ghazi in 1962 and retranslated in 2005 by Sakineh Nosrati. Then, to examine semantic modifications and effects on choosing equivalence, the first and the last paragraph of every chapter of two translated versions are compared with source text. The lexical comparison was done to find Persian equivalences of English word.

Vinay and Darbelnet produced their '*Stylistique Comparée du Français et de l'Anglais (1958)*' which is a comparative stylistic analysis of the different translation strategies and procedures used in French and English. In its English version, first published in 1995, they distinguish between direct and oblique translation, the former referring to literal translation and the latter to free translation. Moreover, they propose seven procedures, the first three covered by direct translation and the remaining four by oblique translation. These procedures are: borrowing, calque, literal translation, transposition, modulation, equivalence and adaptation. They

concluded their study by stating that the situation is what determines the need for creating equivalences. So translators are encouraged to firstly look in the situation of the ST in order to come up with a solution.

In addition, the structuralism Jakobson (1959) maintains that there are three kinds of translation, namely intralingua (rewording or paraphrasing within one language), interlingua (rewording or paraphrasing between two languages) and (rewording or paraphrasing between signs systems). It is interlingua translation that has been the focus of translation studies. Adopting a linguistic approach, they both argue that translation is possible despite cultural or grammatical differences between SL and TL. They both recognize the fact that the role of the translator should not be neglected and acknowledge some limitations of the linguistic approach, thus allowing the translator to also rely on other procedures that will ensure a more effective and comprehensive rendering of the ST message in the target text.

On closer inspection of the aforementioned views on equivalence, one may claim that there are some similarities between Vinay and Darbelnet's theory of translation. Adopting a linguistic approach, they both argue that translation is possible despite cultural or grammatical differences between SL and TL. They both recognize the fact that the role of the translator should not be neglected and acknowledge some limitations of the linguistic approach, thus allowing the translator to also rely on other procedures that will ensure a more effective and comprehensive rendering of the ST message in the target text.

Furthermore, the contribution of Eugene Nida in the field of translation studies cannot be overstressed, with his two famous books in the 1960s: *Toward a Science of Translating* (1964) and the co-authored *The Theory and Practice of Translation* (Nida & Taber, 1969), attempting

to give a more 'scientific' sense to translation. Borrowing theoretical concepts from semantics and pragmatics, and being influenced by Chomsky's generative-transformational grammar (1965), Nida adopts a more systematic approach to exploring the field of translation studies. With regard to equivalence, Nida maintains that there are two basic types of equivalence: (1) formal equivalence and (2) dynamic equivalence. In particular, Nida argues that in formal equivalence the TT resembles very much the ST in both form and content whereas in dynamic equivalence an effort is made to convey the ST message in the TT as naturally as possible. Also, the narrow and hence mistaken interpretation of translational equivalence in terms of linguistic correspondence is in our opinion one of the main reasons that the very concept of equivalence has fallen into disrepute among many translation scholars (Neubert, 1994). One can only suppose that there was more than logic at stake in Snell-Hornby's critique of equivalence. It was found that that in the course of the 1970s the English term equivalence became increasingly approximative and vague to the point of complete insignificance.

Snell-Hornby concludes that the term equivalence, apart from being imprecise and ill-defined (even after a heated debate of over twenty years) presents an illusion of symmetry between languages which hardly exists beyond the level of vague approximations and which distorts the basic problems of translation. Some kinds of equivalence could be integrated into its appropriate corner (technical terminology), but the equivalence paradigm should otherwise get out of the way.

More related to the present study, mention can be made of Newark's *Approaches to Translation* (1981) and *A Textbook of Translation* (1988). His works do not aim to promote any monolithic translation theory but rather attempt to describe a basis for dealing with problems encountered during the translation process. More specifically, Newmark replaces Nida's terms of formal

and dynamic equivalence with semantic and communicative translation respectively. The major difference between the two types of translation proposed by Newmark is that semantic translation focuses on meaning whereas communicative translation concentrates on effect. In other words, semantic translation looks back at the ST and tries to retain its characteristics as much as possible. Its nature is more complex, detailed and there is also a tendency to over-translate. On the other hand, communicative translation looks towards the needs of the addressees, thus trying to satisfy them as much as possible. In this respect, communicative translation tends to under-translate; to be smoother, more direct and easier to read. Hence, in semantic translation a great emphasis is placed on the author of the original text whereas communicative translation is meant to serve a larger readership. It should be pointed out that during the translation process, communicative translation need not be employed exclusively over semantic or vice versa. It may well be the case in a literary text that a particular sentence requires communicative translation whereas another sentence from the same text may require a semantic one. Hence, the two methods of translation may be used in parallel, with varying focuses where each is employed.

Moreover, Newmark (1981) strongly believes that literal translation is the best approach in both semantic and communicative translation (p. 39). However, he is careful to note that when there is a conflict between the two forms of translation, then communicative translation should be favored in order to avoid producing an abnormal, odd-sounding or semantically inaccurate result. Although Newmark has been criticized for his prescriptivism (Munday, 2000, p. 46), the wealth of practical examples in his books constitutes a good advisory guide for both trainees and established translators.

Thus, this study sought to provide answer for the following research question:

What semantic modifications might have affected Persian translators to choose lexical equivalences in their translations through pass of time?

### **3. Methodology**

#### **3.1 Design**

This study is in descriptive form. It aimed to describe semantic modification and its impact on choosing equivalence. The content of two different novels in two versions were analyzed to find out the range of differences of the two variables, semantic modification and equivalence.

#### **3.2 Material and Instrument**

The framework based on which analysis in the present study was carried out was Fromkin, Rodman, and Hyams' categorization and definition (2003). Two translations of 'Taming of the Shrew', each translated by Iranian translators in two different times were compared against elements of this framework. Elements included categories of 'meaninglessness', 'meaning modifications' and 'stylistic modifications'. Meaninglessness has no subcategory while 'meaning modification' and 'stylistic modification' embodies subcategories. The former is comprised of 'narrowing' and 'broadening' and the latter comprises of 'Connotative Modification', 'Intensity Modification' and 'Formality Modification'.

#### **3.3 Procedures**

There are many translations of 'Taming of the Shrew', out of which two were chosen for the aim of analysis: Dr. Mohsen Ghasemi and Hosein-gholi Salvar's (Emado Saltaneh) translations. These two translations have been translated between 1945 and 2017. This helps studying semantic modification and choosing equivalence in Persian in a period of seventy

years or seven decades. After choosing the novels and their translation, the first and the last paragraph of each version are compared with English novel lexically. Then, based on Fromkin's categorization and definition (2003), the researcher classified the noted. So, findings are categorized in different groups in tables to analysis. All these activities were done to answer research question.

This study is qualitative analysis with no statistical analysis because it is based on the content. In contrastive approach, lexical items are focused to identify the impact of semantic modification on choosing equivalence. So, the first and the last paragraphs of two translated novels in different years are chosen randomly to be compared. By categorized findings of comparing these two novels; "رام کردن زن سرکش" and "به تربیت در آوردن دختر سرکش" and two translated version of each novel in different years, this study indicated that choosing equivalences and translation are influenced by spelling, semantic and also syntactic modification which happen in Persian. It focused on this point that time has a potential effect on everything and translation is one of those things that time has potential effect on it.

## **4. Results**

### **4.1 Results of Spelling Modification**

This part refers to the written form. There is not obvious changes, just tiny ones in dictation. Simplicity is one of the things that happened to the words. Ideology or enthusiasm to especial language can be a reason for this kind of modification. Homophone letters are used

interchangeably such as “ط” and “ت” in the word “طهران” which new version is “تهران”. Or “ه” and “ح” in the word “حانیه” which today is written “هانیه”. This is a new movement to change Persia to a pure language.

When you studied two novels: "رام کردن زن سرکش" and "به تربیت در آوردن دختر سرکش" there are different spelling in Persian. This comparison shows that within 40 years ago spelling modifications were small like writing some letters of a term spiritedly. Here are some example of this changes.

**Table 1.**

*Some examples of writing modification*

Old	Today
سگهائیش	سگ هایش
پارچه ء سفید	پارچه ی سفید
میفرمائید	می فرمایید

#### 4.2 Results of Semantic Modification

By passing time some new things are found, some are invented that should be named in relation to some old things which are disappeared. If humans were supposed to use a new term for a new meaning or object, they would have infinite terms which mind could not serve and memorize them. Thus, a term is used in different meaning or disappeared terms are used in new meaning. Comparison shows that how translation is influenced influence by semantic modification. By comparing Persian terms semantic modification falls into three categorize. First one is meaningless terms. Second, meaning modification terms involving terms that their meaning are broader or narrower than original. And the last one, stylistic modification terms in this study.

### 4.3 Meaningless Terms

As the name speaks, this part shows words that during a time they didn't used more. So, they fade their meaning and after a time they disappeared. One of the cause of this phenomenon may be technology and industry. The other reasons may be using the word's equivalence from other language or finding new equivalence in its language that is easier to pronounce. In comparing two translation of 'taming of shrew', there are few of these words. The old version" درس کردن"new version is"تحصيل". The old version of سرورم is خداوندگار. In Persian the old version of پیشکار is نوکر-خدمتکار. The old version that is used is اذن دادن and new version is اجازه دادن.

**Table 2**

*Some examples of meaninglessness*

Old Persian	Term	New Persian
درس کردن	Study	تحصيل
خداوندگار	Sire	سرورم
پیشکار	liveryman	نوکر-خدمتکار
اذن دادن	Let	اجازه دادن
گیلاس	Glass	جام

### 4.4 Meaning modification

In this part you should find a new name for influenced old meaning. It is hard and it gives long time that people use its new as old one. This one is different from one language to the other. The terms lose different meaning except one. Therefore, meaning modification includes two parts: broadening and narrowing.

Broadening; using previously existed term in a broader realm of meaning means broadening. Broadening, happens in terminology when a new object or concept enters a language usually it is used a related term to name. This relationship can be cause and effect, part as a whole or

metaphorical relation. Sometimes to be fluent second language speakers use generalization. Different examples of Persian- broadening terms within 80 years ago are studied in this research. In the following table, there are some examples of these changes.

Table 3

*Some examples of broadening*

Old Persian	Term	New Persian
این شهر مرا در خود سرشت	My home tone	زادگاه من
اصرار بیش از این شما عیب است	Don't forced me	دگر از من خواهش نکنید
منزل کنیم	stay	سرایبی کنیم
آنقدر مشغول نشوید	understand	انچنان برگیرید

Narrowing is a process by which a term's meaning becomes less general than its earlier meaning. In another words the meaning is narrowed or much more specific. Comparing two translations of 'taming of shrew', some examples of their changes by their English terms are presented in table 4.

**Table 4.**

*Some examples of Narrowing*

Old Persian	Term	New Persian
کارآموده	helpful	بافایده
مهتر	older	بزرگ
شهره	famous	معروف
در امر و نهی	certainty	در اخلاق

#### 4.5 Stylistic Modification

Stylistic modification refers to the other parts except meaning. These changes occurred over passing time. Therefore, stylistic modification includes that kind of modification happens in negative or positive sense of term, or in user's class, and even in its rate of use or intensity. These are important in translation because there are more than one overlaps equivalence for a word in target language. The translator should care about degree of formality, generality and

intensity. In this study by comparing two translated version of two English novels, Stylistic modification in Persian language are divided into three groups connotative modification, intensity modification, and formality modification.

Connotative modification; in addition to meaning and intention of speaker or writer, a term can also show feeling. In each language, there are terms which are synonym in meaning but transfer different sense.

**Table 5.**

*Some examples of connotative modification*

	Term	Sense
Old Persian	عیش و نوش	Neutral
New Persian	عیش و نوش	Negative
New Persian	عیش و نوش	Neutral

Intensity modification means to be in current use. For some reasons some terms were in current use in some years and after that they are useless. These words are not fade up, they still exist in language but their usage are not like before. They may affected by government, economic, religious, and culture. There are some words that the usage of them were commend before but they are not good now a days and vice versa.

**Table 6.**

*Some examples of intensity Modification*

Old Persian	Term	New Persian
تاجر	merchant	دولتمند
خواستار است	love	دوست دارد
اسباب عیش	Feast	رسم مهمانوازی
خواهم گرفت	learn	خواهم آموخت
خوش اقبالی	Luck	خوش بخت

Formality modification; in each language, there are many different terms. These terms fall in different levels. They differ in levels of formality, informality and etc. some terms are used in writing, some others only in speech and some others are used among a specific people and some others are taboo. Generally as the time passes a term may change in level of formality and from one level moves to another. This phenomenon happens in all languages and in Persian, too. A big difference exists between writing and speech in Persian. These differences also include the structure of sentences or phrases.

**Table 7.**

*Some example of Formality modification*

Old Persian	Term	New Persian
در تحصیل پیروی میل و رغبت خودتان بنمایید	Study in a field you like	هر آنچه دوست دارید بخوانید
به فصاحت صحبت خودمانی بنمایید	Do oratory	سخنوری کنید
انچنان برگزید	Don't spend all time to it	آنقدر مشغول نشوید
سرور شریف	sir	آقای مهربان
فضیلت	virtue	تقوا-اخلاق
مدد	assiat	اجازه

#### 4.6 Results of Syntactic Modification

In each language there are especial structure which shows word-order of language or presents a formula to change part of speech by adding suffixes or prefixes. Base of each language is its structure. Changes happen gradually in it. In past translators preferred translated by adjectives and adverbs but now a days translators use verbal phrases and none phrases instead of adjective and adverbs. For example, in Hossein qoli salvar (Emado saltane) translation: از عطش خود را به بی غذایی زد but in Mohsen Qasemi H's translation it is translated: خود را از آبگیر به بی اشتهایی و بی غذایی زد. دریا رساند تاسیراب شود.

Stylistic modification are more common than meaning and meaningless. Table have been presented to show the frequency of modification: intensity modification, formality modification, meaninglessness, broadening and narrowing, and the last one connotative modification.

**Table 8.**

*Frequency and Percentage*

Semantic Modifications	Translated Versions	
	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Meaningless Terms	5	20
Broadening Terms	4	16
Narrowing Terms	4	16
Connotative Modification	1	4
Intensity Modification	5	20
Formality Modification	6	24
Total	25	100

## 5. Discussion and Conclusion

It is clear that change might occur in all parts of language during pass of time. Persian is not an exception to these changes. By comparing these two translated novels with its original and based on Fromkin's categorization and definition (2003) and the researcher classification and by findings in Chapter Four, this research presented changes happen in spelling, semantic and, also, syntactic parts of language and cause spelling modification, semantic modification and syntactic modification.

These comparisons show semantic modification categorized into: meaninglessness, meaning modification and stylistic modification. Meaning and stylistic modification have subcategories.

There are meaning modification in some types of semantic modifications and other types of

semantic modifications which fall under the category of 'stylistic modifications. Stylistic modification includes the changes that occur in other parts of terms except for meaning.

*Semantic Modification;* everyday new objects are found which need a term to be named and also many objects disappear. If humans were supposed to use a new term for a new meaning or object, they would have infinite terms which mind could not serve and memorize them. Thus, a term is used in different meaning or disappeared terms are used in new meaning. Therefore, terms change and change and this dynamism influence the terminology domain and are the basic reason of semantic modification. Comparing terms in different time shows how semantic modification influence on translation. *Modification;* as the name shows, this kind of modification includes changes in writing of terms. Usually, they are not general changes which cause some difficulties such as unreadability or non-understanding for readers. *Meaningless terms;* some words after year's loaned terms are substitute by target language equivalences. So, they fade out from that language after year. *Meaning modification;* in meaning modification, changes influence original meaning of terms. There are different ways in each language to name new objects or concepts. *Broadening;* using previously existed term in a broader realm of meaning means broadening. *Narrowing;* narrowing is a process by which a term's meaning becomes less general than its earlier meaning. In another words the meaning is narrowed or much more specific. *Connotative modification;* in addition to meaning and intention of speaker or writer, a term can also show feeling. In each language, there are terms which are synonym in meaning but transfer different sense. *Intensity modification;* intensity means to be in current use. For some reasons some terms were in current use in some years and after that they are useless. It does not mean they are fading out from language, of course there are in language but there are not as common as past. *Formality modification;* in each language,

there are many different terms. These terms fall in different levels. They differ in levels of formality, informality and etc. some terms are used in writing, some others only in speech and some others are used among a specific people and some others are taboo. Generally speaking, as the time passes a term may change in level of formality and from one level moves to another. This phenomenon happens in all languages. These are some explanations of words those are studied in this research. Also, there are some example of each one above.

### **5.1 Implications and Applications of the Study**

This study focused in linguistic and translation. The important point is common words according to the time not just sense, belief and value. The important point is the use of common words and structures in that period of time in which the translator is translating. This means that the translators' age should not influence the word and structure choice, and always common language among the people of that very time should be taken in to account. Semantic modification plays very significant role in translation in order to identify linguistic modifications. However, the natural levels like creativity and productivity should be higher than modification.

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