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## **Non-obligatory Shifts in Persian literary Translations: A Normative Enterprise**

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**Abstract:** Shifts are one of the universals of translation. Vinay & Darbelnet (1997) implicitly divide shifts into obligatory or non-obligatory. Obligatory shifts are the results of the inevitable system-based differences between source text (ST) and target text (TT), whereas non-obligatory shifts (NOS) are related to individual translators' cultural, stylistic and normative choices. In this study, the NOSs of three professional Iranian translators in three translated novels were identified and their drivers and cumulative impacts were discussed and accounted for. The common NOSs were found to be (1) frequent use of nativized Arabic lexical and functional items, (2) tendency to use various doublets instead of single items (3) style-mixing (4) style-shifting and (5) frequent use of colloquial culture-specific idioms. Iran's long tradition of poetry and poetic prose (nasr-e-mosaja), leakage of contemporary author-translators' styles (their linguistic signatures) and the dominant cultural-linguistic norms of the Iranian community are thought to be the underlying causes of these NOSs.

**Keywords:** translation, norms, invariant of comparison, non-obligatory shifts (NOS), domestication.

## 1. INTRODUCTION

One of the important types of translation (if not the most important) is literary translation. Chesterman and Wagner observe that “a great deal of what has passed as traditional translation theory has in fact been restricted to literary translation.” They add that literary translations enjoy a high status (if not the highest) among other types of translations (2002, 18). When translators venture to translate a novel, more often than not two different literary and social systems with their own respective rules, conventions and norms meet each other and may enter into a clash.

In order to accommodate a foreign novel into a domestic system of literature, translators consider (consciously or unconsciously) a wide range of expectations in the receptor system, both on the side of (1) the general readership and (2) the academia (experts in the field of literature, reviewers, authors, other translators etc). Literary translators’ task is to mediate between the source and target text across a semiotic border using appropriate strategies which potentially entails some changes with respect to the source text.

These changes which are formally called shifts in Translation Studies operate on the textual and micro-level of the target texts and may have a cumulative effect on the higher macro-levels. Different Translation Studies scholars have employed various terminologies to name these shifts and strategies. Venuti has resorted to *domestication* and *foreignization* as two umbrella terms to cover broad shifts (1995, 21). He explains that the reason for the application of the former in the hegemonic English speaking countries is the political agenda of the Anglo-American system to make the foreign texts comply with the dominant domestic values. However, this may not necessarily hold true for other literary systems and countries. In countries like Iran, there also exists a degree of domestication of Anglo-American novels. Domestication potentially entails a set of shifts towards the target culture and language.

Linguistically speaking, these shifts are not always obligatory. Shifts are obligatory when they are due to the formal and system-based

differences between English and Persian. Interestingly, on many occasions one can observe that no attempts have been made on the side of the translators to change many of the linguistic, non-linguistic and even ideological mismatches present in the original Anglo-American novels. A lot of linguistic mismatches are transferred using direct translation strategies like borrowing, calque, and literal translation as if resorting to Venuti's *foreignization* strategy (1995) and no shifts are done where they seem justified. Many of the borrowed and calqued terms which are the results of direct translation strategies become quite nativized and are used in everyday communication of the Persian people.

However, there happen numerous cases in which the translators go for optional shifts when formally they have much more direct (in its technical sense) options available in the inventory of their translation strategies and where a direct literal translation can provide a quite adequate equivalent. Translators make some changes in their works that they don't have to make according to systemic differences between Persian and English. In fact, translators do not resolve for the so-called Mini-Max strategy (Levy 156). There must be some sort of explanations for this extra effort. The reasons and motivations for these domesticating non-obligatory shifts (NOS) don't seem to be Iran's political agenda.

It is possible for every novice translator to translate from English into Persian tackling the systemic differences between English and Persian using a set of dictionaries, but the professional translators opt for some artistic changes in their works which distinguishes their works from the novice translators'. That is why this study is looking forward to finding those non-system-based shifts in the Iranian translators' works. It seems that NOSs are significant for the success of the professional translators. Identification and classification of NOSs is of great importance for translation trainees and thought provoking for the practicing translators. Following the above arguments, the aim of this study is to answer the following questions:

1. What are the non-obligatory shifts (NOSs) opted for by the Persian translators?

2. What motivate the translators to spend time on NOSs when the systemic difference between source text and target text does not entail a shift?
3. What are cumulative, macro-level impacts of these NOSs on the translated texts?

## 2. TRANSLATIONAL SHIFT AND THE INVARIANT OF COMPARISON

Various scholars with different orientations and interests have studied translational shifts and proposed various models for translational shift analysis. According to Toury (1980, p.17) the transformations which happen in the translation process can be defined as changes with respect to the STs, these changes are called shifts. Because translation involves an invariant which often undergoes transformation like any other kinds of transfer, the ideas of shifts and invariant are intertwined and cannot be considered separately. Any attempt to define and categorize shifts necessarily entails a definition of an invariant which is under transformation.

Koster (2002, 34) defines the relationship between an original and its translation as a “network of correspondences and shifts”. Here, translation can be conceived of as a network of similarities and differences. When mediating between the original author and the target readership shifts or small linguistic changes occur in the process of swinging back and forth from the original to the translation. Popovič observes that this movement is not “performed directly” and involves potential difficulties. According to Popovič (1970) “all that appears as new with respect to the original, or fails to appear [...], may be interpreted as a shift” (79). This definition indicates that shifts must be studied with respect to the features of the original texts and the expectations and requirements of the receptor audience and language.

Bakker, Koster and Leuven-Zwart observe that since translation is an instance of language use, the idea of shift is related to the domain of “linguistic performance”, not theories of competence (2009, 263). They further argue that because translation can potentially result in “different

entities”, we consider shifts in the domain of competence. Systemic differences between ST and TT which are related to competence are “the opening conditions for translation.” Therefore, shifts must be distinguished from the systemic and competence-based differences between languages. Toury believes that the study of shifts as instances of performance should be concerned with the dynamic and cultural aspects of translation rather than static and competence-based description of two languages and cultures (1980, 11-18). Shifts as manifestations of competence are obligatory or system-based shifts, where performance shifts which are individualistic are in fact non-obligatory in nature.

The idea of shifts was implicitly introduced by Vinay & Darbelnet (1997) in their stylistic comparison between English and French. One of the important factors which they observed was the difference between *servitude* and *option* in the translational strategies (shifts). By *servitude* they meant obligatory changes in the translation because of the different ST and TT systems and by *option* they meant non-obligatory changes because of the translator's own decisions and preferences. Vinay & Darbelnet further emphasized that it is the option or non-obligatory shift which should be the main priority of the translators (84-92).

Catford (1965, 141-7) distinguishes between two broad translation strategies: *formal correspondence* which is a system-based translation and *textual equivalence* which is a more pair-specific and context-based one. For Catford, shift is a departure and divergence from formal correspondence in going from the STs to the TTs. The invariant of comparison for Catford is the formal correspondence. Formal correspondence is any TL category which can have, as nearly as possible, the identical position in the “economy” of the TL as a SL category has in the SL (Catford 1965, 27). Shifts occur when translators skew from a direct and formal correspondence. Sometimes the textual equivalence is obligatory, other times it is optional. He distinguishes between two main kinds of shifts which are level shift and category shift (1965, 141-3). Catford's main emphasis is on the category shifts which he further divides into four groups (1965, 143-7): structural shifts, class shifts, rank shifts, intra-system shifts.

For Toury, shifts - obligatory or not - are a universal feature of translational action (1995, 75). This claim endorses Vinay & Darbelnet's recognition of option and servitude. Toury employs *adequate translation* (as opposed to *acceptable translation*) as the invariant of comparison in shift analysis. An adequate translation is a reconstruction of source text textemes composed of an explication of the textual relationships and functions of the ST. In fact any divergence from the ST- oriented adequate translation towards the TT-oriented acceptable translation is considered as a shift.

If one compares the English novels with their translated versions into Persian, one can identify numerous obligatory shifts which are driven by the inevitable system-based differences between English and Persian. These shifts could be identified by applying each one of the classification and models presented above on a quantitative basis, but identifying the obligatory shifts is not the concern of this article, because their occurrence is something inevitable and matter of fact. Application of the obligatory shifts where the translators have to make shifts based on the systemic differences between STs and TTs doesn't make the translators much more than advanced translation machines which operate based on predetermined grammatical and semantic rules. One also witnesses many NOSs which fall within the area of stylistics and are the touchstone of good translators. The existence of such voluntary shifts dependent more on the artistic sensitivity and the normative behavior of the translators than anything else. In the models proposed above, shifts have been considered as a whole and no attempts have been done to classify the non-obligatory shifts which are more performance-based rather than system and competence based. Studying the shifts and findings regularities and patterns in their application can lead us to the reconstruction of the translational norms which drive them.

## 2.2. TRANSLATIONAL NORMS

Translations are not produced within a vacuum. They come into existence within a society with its own respective norms and conventions. Every action taken by the translators is affected by the dominant translational norms of the receptor community. Shifts either

obligatory or voluntary are normative like other actions of the translators. When a translator opts for an NOS, he is under the influence of the translational norms of the society. The nature of the NOSs made by the translators on a regular basis could be indicative of the norms they are adhering to.

Toury defines the norms as “the translation of values and ideas shared by a community into performance instructions” (1995, 55). Norms seem to exert some pressure and perform some unconscious prescriptive function (54). Toury observes three types of norms operating in the translation process: *initial*, *preliminary* and *operational norms*. The basic *initial norms* refer to the choice between adherences to source or target culture norms. If translators follow the ST norms their translations are *adequate* and if they follow the TT norms their translations are *acceptable*. As mentioned in the previous section, Toury employs adequate translation as the invariant of the comparison to find shifts. It can be inferred that the choice of initial norms somehow determines the adherence to the following norms. If translators follow the TT norms to produce an acceptable translation, they should subsequently follow the preliminary and operational norms of the TT which certainly support the production of an acceptable translation.

Following Toury, Andrew Chesterman introduces another set of norms, namely *expectancy* and *professional* norms (1997, 68). He believes that expectancy norms are determined by the expectations of the readers and what a translation should look like in the target language and culture (64). Factors ruling these norms are dominant translation tradition, discourse convention of similar target language genre and ideological and political considerations. They allow evaluative judgment about the translation and are “validated by a norm authority of some kind” (66). As to the professional norms, he defines three types of norms. *Accountability* norm is an ethical norm about professional translation standards and responsibility of the translator; *communication* norm is a social one. Translator should work to establish the maximum understanding between the parties involved and the *relation* norm is a linguistic one about the relation between ST and



TT in general. Translators should consider the intention of the original author and the needs of the assumed readers simultaneously (68-70).

Chesterman's idea of expectancy and professional norms and Toury's initial norms could be very helpful in explaining the motivations of the translators to opt for NOSs in the process of translation. The shifts may have occurred in order to fulfill the readership, the academia or a norm authority's expectations. Although NOSs are subjective, and individualistic, they are still normative and are not opted for in an ad hoc fashion. They may not be rule governed, but they are still affected by the dominant norms of the receptor society. By comparing the STs and TTs using a suitable invariant of comparison, one can find some patterns and themes in the application of NOSs.

### 3. METHODOLOGY

This study aims to identify and categorize the NOSs employed by the Iranian translators. The author tried to hunt for recurring themes and patterns in the application of the NOSs in the translated texts to reconstruct the regular behavior of the translators and translational norms. According to Toury (1995) there are two major sources for a reconstruction of translational norms and regular behavior of the translator, namely textual and extra-textual. By textual sources he means the translated texts which are products of the norm-governed processes. By extra-textual sources Toury includes theories of translation, statements made by translators, editors, and other persons involved in or connected with the activity (65). In this study, only the textual sources were taken into account, because, firstly, textual sources provide us with observable facts whose examination would help us to reconstruct the strategies used by the translator as it is and, secondly, extra-textual sources are rare and subjective.

The distinction Catford's made between formal correspondence and textual equivalence was employed to operationalize the notion of NOSs in this study. Formal correspondence was used as the invariant of comparison between STs and TTs. Shifts were marked as non-obligatory:

- If there was a departure from the formal correspondence (invariant of the comparison) towards a textual equivalence and
- If there was no system-based grammatical, syntactic or semantic necessity whatsoever for this shift.

The first criterion guarantees the realization of a shift and the second criterion warrants the realization of a non-obligatory shift.

The corpus of the study consisted of George Orwell's novels *Animal Farm* and *1984* along with Mark Twain's *The Mysterious Stranger* translated into Persian by Amir Amirshahi, Saleh Husseini and Najaf Daryabandari, respectively. In the process of comparison, STs and TTs were compared and contrasted line by line using formal correspondence as the invariant of comparison to find instances of departure. Then, the English-Persian pairs were mapped to each other as coupled pairs of "replacing and replaced" segments (Toury 1995). Then, the relationships between the replacing and replaced segments were determined for each pair. Finally, the nature of NOSs was determined based on the nature of departure from the formal correspondence. Only non-obligatory shifts which recurred on a regular basis were considered in the categorization, not those accidental and ad hoc shifts which mainly happen due to translation mistakes and misunderstanding of the translators.

The researcher was trying to unearth the kinds of non-obligatory shifts rather than frequency of their occurrence, so no quantification was performed. The author believes that quantifying the results of such an exploratory study would be useless in this stage, because the study is based on a limited corpus of just three classic novels and the findings could not be generalized. The author assumes that the frequencies may fluctuate based on the text-type and every individual translator's preferences, but the kinds of shifts directed by the prevalent norms of the target communities may remain constant.

#### 4. FINDINGS OF THE STUDY

Having compared the chosen STs with their translations into Persian, some recurrent NOSs were identified. The translators had

resorted to these NOSs where they could have easily opted for a direct formal translation with a high degree of efficiency and accuracy. The NOSs found in the corpus can be divided into five main categories:

- a) frequent use of doublets
- b) frequent use of nativized Arabic words
- c) style shifting
- d) style mixing
- e) frequent use of colloquial culture-specific idioms

#### 4.1. FREQUENT USE OF DOUBLETS

Mildrad Larson defines doublets as near-synonyms or phrases which function as a unit (1984, 156). Toury (1995) calls them co-joint phrases which consist of same part of speech. Beekman and Callow (1974) define them as two (or more) synonymous words and expressions used along with each other. For instance *law and order*, and *peace and quiet* are among common English doublets. Persian is a language which employs many doublets, e.g. جست , عیش و نوش , بیچ و خم , صلح و صفا and وخیز , too.

Having compared the STs with their Persian translations, many cases were found in which the translators could have readily used a single word to translate the ST single word, but they resolved for doublets. Doublets employed in the translations can further be classified (1) etymologically (2) phonologically (3) morphologically and (4) Stylistically. Etymologically they can be subdivided into the following categories:

- Persian doublets in which both words are from Persian origin e.g. هرگز و هیچگاه (never); دشنام و ناسزا (curse), چون و چرا (why), راه و روش (way), عدل و داد (justice), ظلم و ستم (oppression);
- A combination of Arabic and Persian words .e.g. عدل و داد (justice), ظلم و ستم (oppression);

- Arabic doublets in which both words are of Arabic origins .e.g. عجایب و غرایب (certain), محقق و مسلم (friends), اعوان و انصار (wonders).

Phonologically, the doublets identified in the corpus of the study can be categorized into six distinct categories:

- doublets in which the first and second words are rhymed word-initially at the onset position. For example, جول و حوش, جنب و جوش, میجزا و میحصور and پرج و یارو ,
- doublets rhymed word-finally at the coda position. For example, بگو مگو and آمد و شد, داد و ستد ;
- doublets in which the first sound of the first word rhymes with the second sound of the second word. For example, حزم and قطع و یقین, and احتیاط و .
- doublets rhymed word-initially and word-finally at the same time both in onset and coda positions. For example, زیر و زیور ;
- doublets which are completely rhymed; two repeated words one after another. For example, دهان به دهان, لنگان لنگان, and دراز به دراز.
- non-rhymed doublets which are usually coined by the process of direct and word by word or translation transfer from English. Their number is by far less than the rhymed doublets. For example, طفیلی و بی ارزش and واضح و روشن. These are the only type of doublets in which the order of the words is not fixed and can be easily changed. Because they are newly coined and not familiar enough to the readership. The translator could have used بی ارزش و طفیلی and روشن و واضح for the above doublets.

Stylistically, the doublets found in the corpus can be subdivided into two groups; (1) Formal doublets which are composed of formal Persian and Arabic words. All the examples cited above fall into this category, and (2) Colloquial Persian doublets like بخش و پلا and سلانه سلانه .

## 4.2. FREQUENT USE OF NATIVIZED ARABIC WORDS

This group can further be divided into two distinct categories: (1) frequent use of Arabic functional words and (2) lexical items. Analyzing the corpus of the study it was found that formal Arabic coordinate-conjunctions and conjunctives have been applied instead of their Persian counterparts. The most common conjunctive adverbs used in the translations are معذلک، معهدا، لیکن and لاکن. For example:

He had lately grown stout, but he was still a majestic-looking pig.

اخیرا کمی تنومند شده بود، معهدا خوک با عظمتی بود.

Nevertheless, without openly admitting it, he was devoted to Boxer.

معذالک بی آن که نشان دهد به باکسر ارادت داشت.

(Animal Farm)

In this case the translator could have used با این وجود instead of معهدا; he could have also used ولی and اما which have both Arabic origins too, but the translator has opted for معهدا which is marked as Arabic by the common readers readily.

Many Arabic lexical items have been used in the translations instead of their available Persian counterparts. Some Arabic lexical item are employed in combination with Persian words as in the case a doublet like عدل و داد. There are some doublets which are Arabic all over like له و اعوان و انصار and عليه شجره. Sometimes, Arabic words and phrases like ممنوعه, مجرور, and محتمل have been used by the translators. All three TTs are replete with such NOSs. Here are other instances:

God was all goodness and would find a way for all His poor human children.

خدا خیر محض است و سرانجام راهی برای نجات فرزندان مستمندش که همان ابناء بشر هستند پیدا خواهد کرد.

(The Mysterious Stranger)

Winston did not buy the picture. It would have been an even more incongruous possession than the glass paperweight .

وینستون تصویر را نخرید مایملکی ناهگون تر از وزنه بلورین می بود.  
(1984)

In both cases, the translators could have formally used Persian lexical items to render the English ones, but they preferred to employ the nativized Arabic items. They could have used فرزندان and دارایی respectively in the above Persian excerpts. It seems that there is some motivation behind the tendency for the application of such nativized Arabic items instead of their Persian counterparts. The motivations will be discussed in the discussion section.

#### 4.3. STYLE SHIFTING AND STYLE MIXING

All three English novels in the corpus of the study mainly employ formal style, whereas the translations employ a range of styles from very formal to colloquial. At times, one can see a mixture of different styles in one single paragraph in the translated versions. This is quite evident in the following excerpt.

“It’s just as well,” said the other, “because I don’t suppose I could have satisfied you.” He made an apologetic gesture with his soft palmed hand. “You see how it is; an empty shop, you might say. Between you and me, the antique trade’s just about finished. No demand any longer, and no stock either I haven’t seen a brass candlestick in years.”

دیگری گفت: "چه بهتر. چون فکر نمیکنم چیز درد بخوری می توانستم تقدیمتان کنم." با دست لطیف خود حرکتی اعتذار آلود نمود و اضافه کرد: "می بینید که وضع مغازه چطور، خالی خالی. بین خودمان باشه، فاتحه عتیقه فروشی دیگه خوانده شده. عرضه و تقاضا دیگه وجود نداره. [...]. سالهاست که یک شمعدان مسی محض نمونه ندیدم.

(1984)

Here, the ST style is quite formal. The original has, at least, a homogenous style, but in the Persian translation one can observe a mixture of formal and colloquial styles. There are some colloquial and informal items along with the formal ones in translated text. In the first sentence of the Persian translation, most of the words and the syntax are formal, but می‌تونستم and درد بخوری do not go with the rest and are quite colloquial. One cannot categorize the sentence as either formal or colloquial in Persian because of this mixture of formal and colloquial items. Again, in the second sentence all the words are formal, but چطوره is colloquial. Idiomatic expressions like بین, فاتحه عتیقه فروشی خوندست, خودمان باشه and double repetition of colloquial دیگه contribute to the formation of a colloquial Persian style which is a non-obligatory shift from the formal style of the original. Interestingly, in the Phrase بین خودمان باشه the word خودمان is formal, while باشه is colloquial (the formal word for it is باشد). These are all cases of style shifting and style mixing. Here is another example.

We were not overmuch pestered with schooling. Mainly we were trained to be good Christians; to revere the Virgin, the Church, and the saints above everything. Beyond these matters we were not required to know much; and, in fact, not allowed to. Knowledge was not good for the common people.

هدف عمده از تربیت ما این درس و مدرسه زیاد مزاحم اوقات ما نمی شد. به حضرت مریم و کلیسا و بیش از هر چیز بود که مسیحیان خوبی بار بیایم و قدیسان حرمت بگذاریم. از اینها که بگذریم دیگر کسی از ما نمی خواست علم و دانش و حقیقت اینکه اجازه اش را هم نداشتیم. که چندان چیزی بدانیم. به مزاج مردم عوام سازگار نبود.

(The Mysterious Stranger)

Again one can see that the English text has quite a formal style, both on syntactic and semantic levels; it employs mainly formal words and formal structures; most of the sentences are passive. However, the Persian text is a mixture of formal and colloquial styles. The style of the translation is quite formal following the lead of the English version, but some words and phrases like بار بیایم, حقیقت اینکه, and از اینها که بگذریم in the Persian translation are more colloquial than the original.

Interestingly, we can see that the lexical items in the translation are mostly formal, where the functional words are quite colloquial. Thus, we have a mixture of formal and colloquial styles again. There are many such cases in the translated novels.

One can observe from the examples above that style-shifting and style-mixing are mostly intertwined. When there happens style-shifting, it mostly entails style-mixing. These two complementary NOSs go hand in hand in Persian translations.

#### 4.4. FREQUENT USE OF COLLOQUIAL CULTURE-SPECIFIC IDIOMS

Colloquial culture-specific idioms are employed by the translators to render the formal non-idiomatic words of the STs, when a non-idiomatic rendering could have resulted in an adequate translation in Persian. These NOSs happen where a formal correspondence (non-idiomatic equivalence) is quite possible and the translators need not bother and look for an idiomatic expression to render a non-idiomatic phrase in the ST. Here are some examples:

But it needed desperate courage to kill yourself in a world where firearms, or any quick and certain poison, were completely unprocurable.

اما در دنیایی که گیر آوردن سلاح گرم یا سم قاتل کار حضرت فیل بود، خودکشی شهادت می خواست.

A momentary hush passed over the group of people round the chairs as they saw the black overalls of an Inner Party member approaching.

با دیده شدن روپوش سیاه حزب مرکزی آدم هایی که گرد صندلی ها بودند ماست ها را اکیسه کردند.

(1984)

Father Adolf had actually met Satan face to face more than once and defied him.

کشیش آدولف بارها واقعا با خود شیطان روبرو شده و با او دست و پنجه نرم کرده بود.

(The Mysterious Stranger)



Here, the translator could have easily gone for formal correspondence to render the underlined utterances; the translator could have said کاملاً غیر، با او مقابله کرده بود and قابل تهیه بود برای چند لحظه همه سکوت کردند، respectively, but he opted for those Persian culture-specific idioms in an obvious and conscious departure from the formal correspondence. Note that the original segments are all non-idiomatic.

## 5. DISCUSSION

### 5.1. Motivations and the drivers of the NOSs

There might be a couple of reasons behind the application of these NOSs. The motivation for and the implications of the NOSs presented in the preceding section will be discussed in this section.

#### 5.1.1. Use of Arabic Lexical and Functional items

The abundance of Arabic and Arabic+Persian items and doublets in Persian originals and translations can be explained in several ways. Historically, there has been a long-running relationship and contact between Iran and its Arabic speaking neighbor communities. Sometimes Iran was ruled by Arab Caliphs; other times Iranians ruled the Arabs. Even, at the moment, some of the southern Iranian provinces like Xuzestan are full of Arabic-speaking communities with people whose mother tongue is Arabic. This contact is one of the reasons why Persian works and translations into Persian are replete with nativized Arabic words.

Also, many Iranian men of science like Avicenna, the famous polymath (980-1037) and al-Khwarizmi, the famous astronomer and mathematician (780- 850) and most of Iranian poets and writers had been quite familiar with Arabic and were true bilinguals, because they were either born in Arab speaking communities of Iran, or traveled and had contact with Arabs. For a long period of time, Arabic was the primary authorial language and these men of science and letters wrote their own books in Arabic instead of Persian. Through ages, Persian language was mixed with Arabic language. As an obvious example of this phenomenon, it is said that the famous Iranian poet, Hafiz (1340-

1412), could read and recite the Arabic Quran with forty interpretations which shows his excellent mastery of Arabic.

Quran, the holy book of Islam, was revealed in Arabic and Iranian people who converted to Islam through the ages have had an Arabic religious book. The hadiths and sayings of the holy prophet of Islam and his household are all in Arabic and are mostly memorized by heart and recited frequently in different occasions. Quran memorization and recitation has been a revered tradition and practice in Iran. All of the prayers including the five obligatory daily prayers are all recited and performed in Arabic by Iranian Muslims.

In addition, the influence of Arabic has been great among the religious authorities of Iran. They have always been fluent in Arabic in order to have a firsthand access to religious sources which are mostly in Arabic. Many of the religious authorities received their formal religious education in Iraq (especially Najaf) using Arabic as the medium of communication. Use of Arabic coordinate-adverbs and conjunctions like مع هذا and لاكن has been quite common in religious sermons of Iranian religious authorities.

Hakkak (2009) observes that some works were translated into Arabic because it was thought the only method to preserve the original Persians was to preserve them in Arabic. These works were later translated back into Persian. It is not difficult to imagine that in such a process many Arabic words could have interred into Persian and become nativized through the years.

Due to a long contact between Arabic and Persian, the use of Arabic items by Iranian intellectuals (writers, religious authorities and men of science and letters), and the influence of Islamic and Quranic tradition, it is quite reasonable to argue that Iranian people are quite at ease with the presence of Arabic items in their readings. Moreover, Arabic words enjoy a high prestige in Persian language. Therefore, translators are highly motivated to shift from Persian items to Arabic ones non-obligatorily. In the translated works, readers encounter some Arabic items that are far from foreign and strange to them. They witness their intellectuals using these items every day in their own works and their religious leaders deliver sermon using the same vocabulary. Abundance

of items with Arabic origin renders the translations even more prestigious in the eyes of the readership and academia. Thus, extra effort to use Arabic items and doublets in the translations seems to be paying back.

Arabic words are mainly considered formal in Persian. If one considers two synonymous words, one originally Persian and the other Arabic, the Arabic one sounds more formal than the Persian one. Thus, there is a natural tendency and high motivation on the side of the authors and translators to use the more formal and more prestigious vocabulary.

Based on the above reasons, the tendency of the Iranian translators to opt for nativized Arabic words are so high that one is tempted to exclude them from the list of NOSs and consider their application as *semi-obligatory*, but note that the translators can still formally use Persian words instead if they prefer to do so. It means that they still meet the criteria set for the non-obligatory shifts.

#### 5.1.2. Frequent Use of Doublets

Mollanazar notes that use of doublets is now a “feature of naturalness” in Persian language (1999, 77). The readership in Iran is quite used to seeing doublets in both translations and original works. Javad Kamali notes that Iranian translators have employed doublets to make the translations beautiful and reduce the “dryness of the speech” (1993). By *dryness* he supposedly means the foreignness of the translated texts. He also asserts that use of doublets has been common among all the famous Iranian translators during the past few decades.

As it was presented in section 4.1, there are different types of rhymed doublets employed in the translated works. Considering the long history of Iranian poetry and poetic prose (*Nasre-mosaja*), it is not unusual that we find Iranian prose works and the translated works into Persian rhymed and verse-like. Rhyme-making is a natural tendency on the part of the Iranian writers and translators. The translations which are rhymed and melodious are quite welcome to the Persian readership and academia. This rhyming bears a strong domesticating effect and reduces the foreignness (dryness) of the text.

Some Iranian scholars have strongly criticized the presence of doublets instead of single words in Persian translations. Hasan Lahuti (1996, 46-50) criticized the over-use of doublets in his article named “Pinnacle of Prediction”, subtitled “the necessity of avoiding synonyms”. He maintains that translators must customarily use one word to translate a foreign word. If the translators use doublets excessively, the volume and size of the translation increases a lot. He somehow prescriptively adds that when it is possible to use single words, it is better not to use doublets. As it was presented in section 4, Iranian translators mostly opt for doublet equivalents where a single-word-equivalent suffices. Thus, it seems that the prevalent textual-linguistic norm among the translators is not what Lahuti prescribes. He seems to be disregarding the prevalent norms of translation and expectancy norms of the readership in Iran.

### 5.1.3. Style Shifting and Style Mixing

In some parts of the translated novels the prestigious foreign is quite shining through with its own style, but in some parts, on the other hand, the foreign is quite invisible and the text looks very familiar and domestic to the Persian readership (natural and acceptable to use the old terminologies of Translation Studies). By looking at the selected excerpts of the translations, it could be seen that the translators have tried their best to satisfy the expectations of various readerships by changing and shifting the style of the originals. They have shifted and mixed the original style drawing on different tools. Using nativized Arabic functional and lexical items, translators have tried to fulfill the expectations of the religious authorities and communities who have always been revered by Iranians and are among the most influential readership. Translators have fulfilled the expectations of academia and the educated people following the formal language of the original novels and also by use of Arabic words which are considered more formal and prestigious in comparison with their Persian counterparts. Using colloquial style, translators have also addressed the common people among the readership.

This non-obligatory style shift from formal language to colloquial in the translations has brought about a domesticating effect. This may be

one of the reasons for the widespread acceptance of such translations among the lay persons. Such mixed-style translations are called *fluent and natural* by common readers, because they speak their colloquial language along with the formal language of the country. There are some posts and lights all over the text to make various readers believe that they are still home and the texts have been written to address them directly.

Sometimes a combination of various styles are employed in a single paragraph in the translation to serve the expectation of different sorts of readerships. Further research is needed to determine how conscious are these non-obligatory shifts which stem from the unconscious pressure of the dominant norms of the society. However, it is clear that translators acquire the translational norms in the process of becoming translators like other individuals acquire social norms in the process of socialization.

#### 5.1.5 Frequent Use of Persian Culture-Specific Idioms

If one reads the works of Iranian novelists and short story writers like Sadeghe Hedayat, Sadegh Chubak, Jalaj Al-ahmad etc., it can be clearly seen that their works are replete with colloquial idioms and expressions. Frequent use of such idioms can be identified in their translations, too. In fact, culture specific idioms are the linguistic signatures of the Iranian writers. Thus, such idioms are employed by the translator who may follow lead of the traditional Iranian novelists.

#### 5.2. The Cumulative Effects of Non-obligatory Shifts

The non-obligatory shifts identified in this study are target-oriented in nature. They depart from Catfords's formal correspondence towards textual equivalence, from Toury's adequate translation towards his acceptable translation; from Venuti's foreignization towards domestication. It seems that the aim of the translators has been the acceptability of the translations rather than adequacy. Translators have also tried to meet the expectancy and professional norms of the receptor community.

The first cumulative effect of the non-obligatory shifts is reproduction of the domesticated versions of the STs in the receptor community. The reasons behind the application of the domesticating shifts do not seem to be political and ideological, but rather they are literary and linguistic. The application of these non-obligatory shifts results in heterogeneous translated texts, especially when the translators shift the style and mix the style of the originals to meet the expectations of a wider range of readers. These translations do not seem to belong to any national and conventional text type or genre. These non-obligatory shifts have led to the production of a translation-specific genre in Iran. This genre bears some resemblance to Persian texts, but there are some dissimilarity, the most obvious of which is the quite unconventional style-mixing which is non-existent in the source texts and the conventional text-typology of Persian language. This genre seems quite acceptable to the common readership on the surface and meets their expectations, because there are enough domestic elements inside the translations. Although they are domesticated, a closer look reveals their strangeness and unconventionality (see the examples in section 3). These style-mixing and style shifting have bestowed a kind of *pseudo-naturalness* to the translated works, because there exists a lot of unfitting elements in them. Such translations are changing the Persian languages styles under the name of natural and acceptable translations.

Another cumulative effect of these non-obligatory shifts is a considerable increase in the size of the TT in comparison with the ST which is being rendered into Persian. Application of doublets almost doubles the size of the original. In fact, TT words and idioms are quite longer than their corresponding single words. This has been criticized by some Iranian linguists (e.g Lahuti, 1996). Frequent use of doublets also leads to higher explicitation in comparison with the original text. Using a doublet to render one word clarifies the meaning of that single word. This, in turn, leads to higher readability and acceptability of the translation.

These non-obligatory shifts generally add a sense of archaism to the translated texts. The abundance of colloquial idioms, Arabic words, rhymed doublets stemming from Poetry tradition make the translations

feel archaic and make the readers believe that they are reading some folklore tales.

When translators change the style, the direction of change is mostly from formal to informal and not the other way around. This is a kind of *colloquailization* effect of style-shifting and style mixing. It seems that there is an element of acceptability in colloquailization of the formal styles of the STs which motivates the translators to go for it.

In the original novels of the case study, the omniscient third-person narrators narrate the events using a quite formal style of their own. They imply a sense of detachment between themselves and the readers by using a formal style of narration. For instance, in the novel *1984* Orwell opts for a highly formal style of writing for the narrator of the story to further emphasize the class difference and high degree of detachments between the individuals in a monarchic society. He is narrating from a chilling and dystopic future, so he does not try to be one of the readers and detaches himself by keeping his serious and formal style. On the contrary, in the translated versions the narrator seems to be among the readers speaking their familiar colloquial and idiomatic language. Domesticating non-obligatory shifts recreates a less dystopic future in the translated novel. It is obvious that the non-obligatory shifts indentified in the case study bring about a kind of non-obligatory discourse shift too. It is a non-obligatory shift from a dystopic discourse, which is warning and threatening all over, to discourse which seems to be less dystopic in its beliefs.

To sum up, it can be said that the identified shifts seem to work in a synergy to end in the hypothesized translation-specific genre. An example may well show this synergy in action.

این آدم علاوه بر مطالعه کواکب و پیشگویی، به تدين و تقدس هم تظاهر بسیار می کرد و البته این امر در اسقف خیلی موثر می افتاد. اما کشیش پطر برای ستاره شناس تره هم خورد نمیکرد، بلکه او را علناً به عنوان یک نفر کلاش کلاهدار محکوم میساخت. می گفت که این آدم حقه بازی است که هیچ نوع علم و دانش که به پیشیزی بیرزد در چننه ندارد و جز قوای یک انسان عادی (و حتی پست) هیچ قوه دیگری در ید اختیارش نیست. این امر طبعاً باعث میشد که ستاره شناس از پدر روحانی متفرد و خواهان خانه خرابی او باشد.

Besides studying the stars and prophesying, the astrologer made a great show of piety, which would impress the bishop of course. But Father Peter took to stock in the astrologer. He denounced him openly as charlatan—a fraud with no valuable knowledge of any kind, or powers behind of ordinary rather than inferior human being which naturally made the astrologer hate the Father Peter and wish to ruin him.

(The Mysterious Stranger)

The original English excerpt is quite formal and contains only formal words (*prophesying, denounced, fraud, inferior* etc); there is no doublet and no colloquial expressions or idioms whatsoever, but the Persian contains doublets ( کلاش و کلاهبردار , علم و دانش , تدین و تقدس ), some colloquial idioms ( تره خورد نمی‌کرد , در چنته ندارد , خواهان خانه خرابی ), and some etymologically Arabic items ( تظاهر , علناً , طبعاً , کواکب , تدین و تقدس ). The double repetition of آدم adds more colloquiality to the Persian text. The syntax of Persian text is quite formal, but the text is lexically colloquial. Meanwhile, the use of doublets, Arabic words, and colloquial words and idioms add an archaic flavor to the translation. The only foreign looking word is the English name پتر (Peter). This translated excerpt is that an example of the translation-specific or the translator-created genre. One can witness a true example of pseudo-naturalness in this excerpt. The non-obligatory shifts have turned this translated text quite heterogeneous and hybrid, belonging to nowhere, no specific genre.

## 6. CONCLUSION

This study compared and contrasted the translations of three classic English novels into Persian to identity the non-obligatory shifts opted for by the translators. It was argued that translators have resolved for these shifts because they are operating within a system of various norms and expectations. Although the shifts they make are non-obligatory and are not due to systemic differences between ST and TT, they are still working under the invisible pressures of dominant translational norms of the society which support acceptability rather than adequacy as the initial norm (Toury 1995). Translators have a tendency towards



acceptability. Non-obligatory shifts are the manifestations of this tendency. They result in the rhyming, archaicization, colloquialization, explicitation of the STs and help form domesticated versions of the original texts. However, because of the nature of norms the translated texts are somehow pseudo-natural rather than natural.

Apparently, translators do not operate within a vacuum. Translations are evaluated and criticized by their fellow translators and editors who are operating within the system of Iranian literature and can recognize the works which are in line with their professional norms. Translators are aware (at least unconsciously) of these norms and the expectations of the professionals in their field; so they try to adhere to the expectancy and professional norms in order not to have their translations rejected. That is why they are so much inclined towards the acceptable translations rather than the adequate ones.

Translators try to meet the expectations of a wide range of audience using non-obligatory shifts to reach maximum acceptability for their works. Usually, the translations are mixtures of various genres struggling to meet the demands of as many readers as possible. Stylistically, the translations are partly formal, partly colloquial, and partly poetic. They are such that every reader can find some elements in the text to identify with.

Since non-obligatory shifts are the manifestations of the translational norms of the society and the norms are invisible and unconscious, the translators could not have been completely conscious in the application of the identified non-obligatory shifts. As it was argued in the previous section, the non-obligatory shifts have led to a production of translation-specific genre. Translators have somehow unconsciously domesticated their works under various translational norms, but the resultant translation-specific genre is easily recognizable as a translation because of the inconsistencies which can be detected in it. Such translations are readily recognized as foreign because there is no domestic literary genre matching with their features. These translations are quite hybrid in nature.

The non-obligatory shifts opted for by the translator's leads to some discourse changes on the novels, too. These non-obligatory shifts have

faded away the original purpose of these apocalyptic novels which is to warn people about a strange, horrible world. These non-obligatory shifts, especially the colloquialization and the use of culture specific idioms, have done the greatest harm to the original purpose of the original texts.

Some of the normative non-obligatory shifts identified in the translations occur so frequently that their occurrence seems much more rule-like than normative, especially the use of Arabic items instead of the available Persian counterparts. In fact it is not a surprise to see some norms change into rules and fixed law in the long term. If non-obligatory shifts are used with a high frequency by the professional translators now, they may have the chance to turn into obligatory shifts in long-run and opted for by the future translators. What seems to be non-obligatory today may change little by little into obligatory tomorrow.

The findings of this study are limited to three literary translations into Persian. More research is needed to prove the reliability of the findings of this study across other texts-types. Each text type may entail its own specific shifts according to its unique properties. It is not hard to imagine that in the translation of legal texts, for example, the translator must think twice before opting for a non-obligatory shift. Here, departure from formal correspondence at will may cost a head.

To conclude, the findings of this study can be illuminating for both translator trainees and the professional translators. Novice translators can observe those shifts which add value and acceptability to the professional translators' works and can opt for the non-obligatory shifts to make their own translation different and join the line of the professional translators. They can at least understand what distinguishes a successful professional translator from a machine translator equipped with formal rules of TT and ST. They can see how the Iranian literary tradition and translational norms are influenced by the works of the practicing translators. They must be much more conscious in their own work and don't produce translations which belong to no specific genre. They will see that they ought to avoid the style mixing and style shifting which is the main reason for the inconsistency of the style of

the translated works. However, as tendency for deviance and departure from the formal and normal style can make a good writer, it may help make a good translator.

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