Preface

Translating is not a thing to be learned by studying a series of principles and rules; rather, it is a kind of knowledge which is acquired through practice and experience. Although one should follow, when doing translation, some general or specific principles and theories, the most important thing is to transfer accurately the meaning of the original text into the target language without any addition, deletion or distortion. The process of translation should be carried out in such a way that the content of the message and the style of the original text are retained in the receptor language as far as possible. To accomplish this serious task the translator is to employ those equivalents which are the closest ones in the meaning and style.

Every language has its own linguistic characteristics and features, and that is why there are different languages. To convey a message each language has its own wordings and forms, and these are to be changed when the same message is to be conveyed in another language, and it is this process of change which is called translation. It is true that the main task of the translator is to transfer the message of the source-language text into the receptor language, but finding total equivalence is an imaginary idea which is almost impossible to be actualized. According to Roger T. Bell (1993), the ideal total equivalence is a chimera, because languages have distinct codes and rules regulating the construction of grammatical stretches of language and these forms have different meanings. The contrasting forms in two languages convey meanings which cannot but fail to coincide totally, and it is not the total meaning which is reproduced in the target language;

something is always 'lost' in the process of translation (p. 6).

Although translation is not a form of synonymy, it is possible to translate a sentence from one language into another in numerous corresponding sentences which are synonyms of one another. This means that translation is not a prescribed thing without any alternative. Rather, the translation of a certain statement can be reworded or restructured in numerous lexical or grammatical synonyms conveying the same message in different wordings or forms. See the following twenty English translations of a Qur'ānic verse:

<div dir="rtl">

اِيّاکَ نَعْبُدُ وَ اِيّاکَ نَسْتَعين (١:۵)

</div>

1. It is thee whom we adore; it is from thee we require help. (A. Ross, 1649)

2. Thee do we worship, and of thee do we beg assistance. (G. Sale, 1734)

3. Thee *only* do we worship, and to Thee do we cry for help. (J. M. Rodwell, 1861)

4. Thee do we serve and Thee we ask for aid. (E. H. Palmer, 1880)

5. Thee we worship, and Thee we ask for help. (M. Abul Fazl, 1910)

6. Thee do we serve and Thee do we beseech for help. (Muhammad Ali, 1917)

7. Thee alone do we serve, and Thee alone do we ask for help. (Ghulam Sarwar, 1929)

8. Thee (alone) we worship; Thee (alone) we ask for help. (M. Pickthall, 1930)

9. Thee do we worship, and Thine aid we seek. (A. Yusuf Ali, 1934)

10. Thee do we serve, and on Thee do we call for help. (Richard Bell, 1937)

11. Thee only we serve; to Thee alone we pray for succour. (A. J. Arberry, 1955)

12. Thee alone do we worship and Thee alone do we implore for help. (Sh. Ali, 1955)

13. You alone we worship and to You alone we pray for help. (N. J. Dawood, 1956)

14. Thee *alone* do we worship, and of Thee *alone* we seek help. (Abdul Majid, 1957)

15. Thee (*alone*) worship we and of Thee (*only*) we seek help. (Mir Ahmad Ali, 1964)

16. Thee only do we serve and Thee only do we ask for help. (S. Abdul Lateef, 1968)

17. THEE alone would we serve, THEE alone we pray for help. (H. Amir-Ali, 1974)

18. You alone we worship, and to You alone we look for help. (M. Y. Zayid, 1980)

19. Thee alone do we worship; and unto Thee alone do we turn for aid. (M. Asad, 1980)

20. You do we worship and You do we call on for help. (T. B. Irving, 1985)

Peter Newmark (1982, 101) has given the following ten possible English translations, as synonyms in grammar, corresponding to a German sentence which can be equal to the Persian sentence given below:

حل مسأله غیرممکن است.

1. It is impossible to solve the problem.
2. Solving the problem is impossible.
3. The problem is impossible to solve.
4. One cannot solve the problem.
5. A solution to the problem is impossible.
6. The problem is insoluble.
7. To solve the problem is impossible.

8. There is no solution to the problem.

9. The problem has no solution.

10. Solving the problem is an impossibility.

As Newmark says, since 'impossible' can be replaced by 'not possible', 'insoluble' by 'not soluble' and 'one' by 'we' or 'you', we can have fifteen possible translations. We will have even more renderings if we also use lexical synonyms, such as replacing 'problem' by 'question'. However, grammatical synonyms are often semantically closer to one another than lexical ones, and yet among all the synonyms in grammar we may normally find just one of them that, as a translation, keeps the same stresses of the original text, since the source-language sentence can also be said in numerous grammatical synonyms like its translation in the receptor language. For example, the Persian sentence mentioned above can be reworded or restructured in many lexical and grammatical synonyms, each of which being corresponding to all of the ten given English translations. Therefore, we come to this conclusion that a certain sentence, as a unit of translation, in one language, can be translated into another by numerous equivalents, which are made through paraphrasing and employing lexical and grammatical synonyms. Newmark (1988, 59) considers familiar alternatives as referential synonyms.

Introduction

The objective of this work is to acquaint the Iranian students of English language with the English translation of Islamic texts in Persian literature. It covers selections mostly from the Būstān and the Gulistān of Sheikh Muslihuddin Abdullah Sa'di, a distinguished Iranian literary figure, well-known not only in Iran, but in many parts of the world. As Hossein Razmdjou (1984) says, Sa'di's Gulistān "is the most beautiful of didactic and edifying Persian prose works," and his Būstān "is filled with praise of virtue and purity of character; with faith and sincerity." It was for this reason and some others that the present writer preferred surveying the English translations of such embellished, illuminated, splendid and eloquent texts of prose and poetry to many others in Persian literature.

The book embraces fifteen lessons and three sample tests. Each lesson consists of a theoretical part, which contains translation issues, and two practical sections in the following format.

I. Translated Islamic Literary Texts

A. From the Būstān of Sa'di

(Translated into English by H. Wilberforce Clarke and G. M. Wickens)

B. From the Gulistan of Sa'di

(Translated into English by Edward Rehatsek, Edited by M. H. Tasbihi)

(*Notice*: 1. In a few lessons, this part covers some wise sayings from Nahj al-Balāghah, translated into English by Seyed Ali Reza.)

2. After part B of section I, in each lesson, you will see matching exercises on the key words used by H. W. Clarke and G. M. Wickens in part A.

II. Translation Exercises

A. Guided Translation of the Persian Terms Used in the Lesson

B. Translating Some Persian Sentences Based on the Lesson

Translating Literary Texts

Linguistically speaking, each language has its own features and stylistic specialties which differ from those of others. In other words, languages differ from one another in their linguistic forms. Therefore, a translator should not attempt to reproduce the linguistic characteristics of the source language in the receptor language, for such a reproduction may result in unintelligibility, awkwardness or distortion of the meaning. For example, in translating poetry, one should not aim at reproducing the rhythms and rhymes; rather, he must strive to reproduce the message in the linguistic features of the receptor language, in a style which is the closest equivalent to that of the original. No translator is allowed to sacrifice the meaning for the sake of style, even in translating literary texts, for it is the meaning which is of vital significance and must be preserved at any cost, though the style is also important, specially in literary and religious texts. To keep the meaning undistorted and also to make the translation natural and more understandable in the receptor language, it is often necessary to make many semantic and structural adjustments, to some of which we refer below.

Semantic Adjustments

Semantic adjustments are made in various areas, two of which, expansion and reduction, are discussed here.

A) Expansion. Expansion, as Nida and Taber (1969) say, is distribution of the semantic components over a number of different words. When we

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translate one word of the source language by several words in the target, we make expansion adjustment. According to Mildred L. Larson (1984), "there is seldom a complete match between languages. Because of this, it is often necessary to translate one word of the source language by several words in the receptor language in order to give the same meaning." Expansion adjustment in a translation is, in fact, an analytical rendering of the original term. The original is the Persian text in all the examples. Examples:

1. those who believe	۱) مؤمنان
2. those who disbelieve	۲) کافران
3. **the embroidered leather surface** of the earth	۳) ادیم زمین
4. those who are distressed	۴) فروماندگان

۵) دهد نطفه را صورتی چون پری   که کردست بر آب صورتگری

5. He gives to **the seed of man,** a form like a pari;

Who has made a painting on the water?

۶) زبان آمد از بهر شکر و سپاس   به غیبت نگرداندش حق‌شناس

6. The tongue was given for gratitude and thanks:

The man who knows what's due will wield it not for slander.

۷) گذرگاه قرآن و پندست گوش   به بهتان و باطل شنودن مکوش

7. The ear is a passage for Koran, good-counsel:

Strive not to hear calumny and **what is false**.

    B) Reduction. Reduction is, indeed, the opposite of expansion. It is translating several words of the source language by a single term or fewer words in the receptor language. In this type of semantic adjustment, which is a synthetic rendering of the original text, the translator puts several semantic components into a single term. Examples:

1. the believers	۱) آنان که ایمان دارند
2. the unbelievers	۲) کسانی که کافرند
3. the helpless	۳) آنان که درمانده‌اند

۴) مرا شرمساری ز روی تو بس   دگر شرمسارم مکن پیش کس

4. **Shame of Thee** is for me enough;

   Make me not further ashamed before any.

Structural Adjustments

Structural adjustments cover all linguistic structures. A translator may, and sometimes is obliged to, adjust the structures of words and sentences of the translation in order to accord it with the linguistic features of the receptor language. We discuss only some important areas of structural adjustments here.

   A) Active Structure ⇌ Passive Structure. Examples:

۱) زبان آمد از بهر شکر و سپاس   به غیبت نگرداندش حق‌شناس

1. **The tongue was given** for gratitude and thanks:

   The man who knows what's due will wield it not for slander.

۲) کرم کن که فردا که دیوان نهند   منازل به مقدار احسان دهند

2. Practise liberality, for tomorrow, when **Court is held,**

   Stations will be given in accord with beneficence.

۳) بدان که پاک آفریده شده‌ای، مبادا ناپاک به خاک بروی

3. Know that **He created you** pure, lest you go to earth impure.

   B) Adjustment of Tenses. Examples:

۱) عزیزی که هر کز درش سر بتافت   به هر در که شد هیچ عزّت نیافت

1. Glorious One! **Whoever turns** from His door his head,

   To whatever door **he goes, he finds** no glory.

۲) ببین تا یک انگشت از چند بند   به صنع الهی به هم درفکند

2. See how one finger from so many joints,

   With craftsmanship divine, **He casts together.**

۳) تأمّل کن از از بهر رفتار مرد   که چند استخوان پی زد و وصل کرد

3. Reflect, in order that Man may walk,

   How many bones **He links and joins!**

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۴) تو را آنکه چشم و دهان داد و گوش   اگر عاقلی در خلافش مکوش

4. As to the One Who gave you eyes and mouth and ears,

   If you're intelligent, **to thwart Him you'll not strive.**

   C) Singular ⇌ **Plural.** Examples:

۱) یکی گوش کودک بمالید سخت   که ای بوالعجب رای برگشته بخت

1. A certain person boxed **a child's ears** severely,

   Saying: 'O you of clownish judgment, of fortune in reverse!

۲) گر امروز گفتار ما نشنوی   مبادا که فردا پشیمان شوی

2. If, to-day, thou hearst not **my word,**

   God forbid! that, to-morrow, thou shouldst be abashed.

۳) بیا تا برآریم دستی ز دل   که نتوان برآورد فردا ز گل

3. Come, let us lift up **our hands** from **our hearts,**

   For tomorrow they cannot be raised from the clay!

   D) Nouns ⇌ **Verbs.** Examples:

۱) هر نفسی که فرو می‌رود ممدّ حیات است و چون برمی‌آید مفرّح ذات.

1. **Every inhalation of the breath** prolongs life atnd **every expiration of it**

   gladdens our nature.

۲) از آن سجده برآدمی سخت نیست   که در صلب او مهره یک لخت نیست

2. Again, it is not hard for Man **to make prostration,**

   Since in his back he has no vertebra all in one piece.

۳) بهایم به رو اندر افتاده خوار   تو همچون الف بر قدمها سوار

3. The beasts are fallen low upon their face,

   While you like *alif* **ride high on your legs.**

   E) Nouns ⇌ **Pronouns.** Examples:

۱) ما همه خداپرستیم و به خدا توکل می‌کنیم.

1. We all worship God, and in **Him** we trust.

۲) گر او تاجدارت کند سر برآر   وگرنه سر ناامیدی بخار

2. If **God** makes thee a crown-possessor, – raise thy head;

   But, if not, scratch the head of despair.

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Various Versions of Classical Persian Texts

Another problem to be discussed here is the difference of some words in different copies of many classical Persian texts. There are some terms in the Būstān of Sa'di, which have been printed differently in different copies, or read in two different ways, and this has brought about various renderings of those terms by the translators. We refer here to some of such cases in the two English translations done by H. Wilberforce Clarke and G. M. Wickens.

A) Different Prints

۱) اگر بر جفاپیشه بشتافتی   که* از دست قهرش امان یافتی؟ (*کی)

1. **Cl.:** And if He had hastened against one tyranny-practising,

    Who would have obtained safety from the hand of His violence?

  W.: But if He were to rush against one practising injustice,

    How should he find quarter from His overpowering hand?

۲) گرت بیخ اخلاص در بوم نیست   ازین بر* کسی چون تو محروم نیست (*در)

2. **Cl.:** If the root of sincerity be not in thy soil,

    No one is disappointed like thee, **at this door (of God).**

  W.: But if sincerity's root you have not in the soil,

    None, **of this fruit** so deprived as you will be.

۳) گر او نیکبختت* کند سر برآر   وگرنه سر ناامیدی بخار (*تاجدارت)

3. **Cl.:** If God makes thee **a crown-possessor,** – raise thy head;

    But, if not, scratch the head of despair.

  W.: If He shall make you **fortunate**, then raise aloft your head:

    If not, despair's own head you may well scratch!

B) Different Readings

۱) جهان ای پسر ملک* جاوید نیست   ز دنیا وفاداری امّید نیست (*۱. مُلک ۲. مِلک)

1. **Cl.:** Oh Son! the world is not an everlasting **country;**

    There is no hope of the sincerity from the world.

  W.: The world, my son,'s no **property** for ever:

    Hope not for good-faith from the universe!

۲) تو با دشمن نفس همخانه‌ای   چه در بند پیکار* بیگانه‌ای (۱.* دربندِ پیکارْ بیگانه‌ای

۲. دربندِ پیکارِ بیگانه‌ای)

2. Cl.: Thou art fellow-lodger with the enemy, – lust;

 Why art thou a stranger in the art of conflict?

 W.: You share house with your enemy, the lower-self:

 Why, then, be caught in conflict with strangers?

۳) هوا و هوس را نماند ستیز   چو بینند سرپنجۀ عقل* تیز (۱.* سرپنجۀ عقلِ تیز

۲. سرپنجۀ عقلْ تیز)

3. Cl.: On the part of lust and concupiscence, opposition remains not,

 When they experience **the grasp of sharp wisdom.**

 W.: Yet fancy and lust have no fight left

 When they see **the claws of intelligence sharpened.**

 C) Different Understandings

۱) خداوند بخشندۀ* دستگیر   کریم خطابخش پوزش‌پذیر (*بخشنده: دو معنی متفاوت

در دو ترجمۀ زیر)

1. Cl.: The Lord, the **giver**, hand-seizing!

 Merciful, sin-forgiving, excuse-accepting!

 W.: Lord **forgiving**, apt to help,

 Generous, fault-forgiving, excuse-accepting!

۲) به قدرت نگهدار بالا و شیب   خداوند دیوان* روز حسیب (*دیوان: دو معنی

متفاوت در دو ترجمۀ زیر)

2. Cl.: By power, the Guardian of high (sky) and low (earth),

 The Lord of the **Court** of the day of reckoning (Judgment-day).

 W.: In power Preserver of height and depth,

 Lord of the **Register** on the Day of Reckoning.

۳) کرم کن که فردا که دیوان نهند*   منازل به مقدار احسان دهند (*دیوان نهند: دو معنی

متفاوت در دو ترجمۀ زیر)

3. Cl.: Practise liberality that to-morrow (the Judgment Day) **when they (the angels) place the account-book,**

They give thee dignities, according to the extent of thy beneficences.

W.: Practise liberality, for tomorrow, **when Court is held,**

Stations will be given in accord with beneficence.

۴) دگر ره به کتم عدم دربرد   وز آنجا به صحرای محشر[*] برد (٭صحرای محشر: دو

معنی متفاوت در دو ترجمهٔ زیر)

4. **Cl.:** Another time, He takes away (creation) to the concealment of non-existence;

And, thence conveys (it) to **the plain of the place of assembling (the Resurrection).**

W.: Yet, once again He'll bring it down into the reticence of non-existence,

And thence unto **the plain of Judgment.**

A Note for the Students

Each lesson of the book has been designed in such a way that it can entirely be covered in one session, provided the students do all the exercises of the lesson in advance and before it is actually presented in class. The multiple-choice questions in the tests are just samples to guide the students and to let them know how they will be tested in the final examination. To fulfill the requirements of the course, the students are highly recommended to prepare themselves for active participation in class discussions, so that they may really be acquainted with the English translation of Islamic texts in Persian literature, and thereby attain the objective of the course, God willing.

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