

Investigating Ideological Manipulation in Translation of Political Texts Case Study: Iranian Nuclear Talks

Masoud Sharififar¹, Milad Bani Asad Azadi^{1*}

1. Dept. of English Language Translation, Institute of Higher Education of Kerman, Kerman, Iran.

* Corresponding Author's Email: Baniasadazadimilad@gmail.com

Abstract – Despite the fact that translation has a crucial role in human's life and ideology is of great importance in manipulating translator's mind through text or talk, there is lack of research in this area. This study aimed at uncovering the underlying ideological assumptions hidden in the texts, target text (TT), consequently to ascertain whether the translators' ideologies are imposed on their respective translations. Considering the aim of present study, the researchers have applied Dukate's model on political corpus of Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action alongside its Persian counterparts BARJAM which was translated by Foreign Ministry in order to seek the most frequently used translational manipulation occurring in translation process. The typology of manipulation of Dukate has extracted alongside examples from the mentioned corpus. The researchers have reached to the point that the text has been manipulated and the most frequently used type of manipulation was manipulation as distortion. Then, manipulation as improvement and manipulation as handling respectively.

Keywords: manipulation, translation, ideology, Dukate's model

1. INTRODUCTION

According to House, translation is not only a linguistic act, it is also a cultural one, an act of communication across cultures (2009, p. 11). Translation always involves both language and culture simply because the two cannot really be separated. Language is culturally embedded: it both expresses and shapes cultural reality, and the meanings of linguistic items, be they words or larger segments of text, can only be understood when considered together with the cultural context in which these linguistic items are used (ibid). The general notion of translation includes other related activities such as diagrammatic translation, inter-semiotic translation, paraphrase, pseudo translation (Shuttleworth & Cowie 1997).

However, based on recent studies, translation is viewed in different ways and translators' decision making has been focused much more on theories of translation. In this perspective, Yazdanmehr and Shoghi (2014) indicated translation is not just a process of substituting lexical and grammatical equivalences; However, it is seen as a process in which the translators are in challenge of decision making to select among the wide varieties of lexical and grammatical choices. According to Hatim and Mason (1997), if we look at translation in general, we will find out that translator's choices are related to his/her ideological orientation. This view is supported by Schaffner's (2002) idea that each

translation is a product of an ideology, and ideological aspects of a translation can be extracted and analyzed in lexical and grammatical levels.

Manipulation is a common phenomenon in translation, which has only recently been proposed by translation theoreticians of what is called “manipulation school”. Based on Lefevere (1992) who was one of the representatives of the Manipulation School, believed that translation is the rewriting of source texts which is manipulated by ideology, poetics, patronage and universe of discourse in which ideology and poetics are the most important constituents. Lefevere (1984) called the manipulated text as “refraction”. He argued that refraction would be any text produced on the basis of another, with the intention of adapting that other text to a certain ideology.

As a general look to the manipulation, at least two understanding of translational manipulations can be inferred which are manipulation as handling and manipulation as change (Dukate, 2007). On the one hand everything that is done on a certain text, including translation, is manipulation. Manipulation as handling has no major change and is neither positive nor negative. In the case of translation it is language change (ibid, p. 80). On the other hand manipulation is the approach (and results of such approach) to translation whereby one processes a certain text so as to fit it to a certain model or belief about the culture, author and intention of the text. Such processing involves major changes and may be either positive, as in the case of localisation, or negative as in the case of distortive ideological translation.

1.1 Political Discourse in Translation

Political discourse has been described as "a complex form of human activity" (Chilton and Schäffner, 1997, p. 207), based on the recognition that politics cannot be conducted without language. In modern linguistics, among scholars, there is widespread agreement that meanings are not restricted to words, neither are they stable. It is rather the case that language users assigned meanings in communicative contexts, and in this process of meaning construction, the information presented in the text interacted with previously stored knowledge and mental models. Schäffner (2004) mentioned Political concepts are relative to the discourse of a cultural and political group and thus they are contestable. In this regard, translators, who are operating in contexts which are shaped by social aims and ideologies, always use certain specific terms and avoid others.

1.2. Translation and Ideology

Schäffner (2003) claimed that all translations are ideological since "the choice of a source text and the use that is made of the subsequent target text are determined by the interests, aims, and objectives of social agents" (p. 23). Schäffner further explained that: the ideological aspect can be determined within a text itself, both at the lexical level (reflected, for example, in the deliberate choice or avoidance of a particular word) and at the grammatical level (for example, the use of passive structures to avoid an expression of agency). Ideological aspects can be more or less obvious in texts, depending on the topic of a text, its genre and communicative purposes (ibid).

Ideological aspects can also be examined in the process of text production (translating) and the role of the translator as a target text producer as well as a source text interpreter. Furthermore, Sertkan (2007) stated that “The ‘cultural turn’ is a term used in Translation Studies to describe a shift of emphasis towards the analysis of translation from the perspective of cultural studies” (P.6).

Dukate (2007) defined a typology of translational manipulation. According to him there are two major types of manipulation: text-external manipulation and text-internal manipulation. Under each of the major two types of manipulation one distinguishes further three types of manipulation: manipulation as improvement, manipulation as handling and manipulation as distortion, which can be either conscious or unconscious (Dukate, 2007).

2. REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

2.1. Ideology

The expression “ideology” was invented by Destutt de Tracy and his friends in 1785 in France, who assigned to it as an object (the genetic theory) of ideas. Ideology was first favored and later dismissed by Napoleon. After his conspiracy of establishing a monarchy was opposed by ideology theorists, Napoleon considered “ideology” negative and derogatory. When Marx took up the term, he gave it a quite different meaning, even in his early works. According to Marx, ideology is the system of the ideas and representations which dominate the mind of a man or a social group. Later on French philosopher Louis Althusser used “ideology” to refer to a representation of the imaginary relationship of individuals to their real conditions of existence. From the above definitions, it is clear that ideology is closely related to politics, power and history, etc.

2.2. Ideology and Translation

Sertkan (2007) stated that “The ‘cultural turn’ is a term used in Translation Studies to describe a shift of emphasis towards the analysis of translation from the perspective of cultural studies” (P.6). Baker and Saldanha (2009) also held that the practice of translation was for a long time, and in some cases remained, deeply implicated in the religious ideology, as it can be seen in the grim fate of translators such as Tyndale in Britain and Dolet in France.

2.3. Manipulation and Translation

Aixelá (1995), a practicing translator, in his research concentrated on the translation of specific cultural items (SCI). He classified the possible translation strategies for translating SCIs on the basis of the degree of intercultural manipulation resorted to in the process of translation. From his article it followed that intercultural manipulation is resorted to by the translator when dealing with specific cultural items (SCIs). He offered a classification according to the degree of manipulation, where repetition, transcription or transliteration is the lowest degree of manipulation and an autonomous creation is the highest degree of

manipulation. It is interesting to note though that according to him any translation strategy for dealing with SCIs is (intercultural) manipulation.

Aaltonen believed that the target text can manipulate the source text in three different ways, which she termed “transformation”, “intersection” and “borrowing”. She has borrowed those terms from Andrew (1984).

According to Andrew (1984: 98ff) translation **transforms** its source text when it follows “the letter of the source text” in that it uses the same dramatic structures or the style of presentation. It **intersects** the source text when it foregrounds a particular aspect of it by changing the order of the scenes, some of the characters or the setting.

Klimovich (2015) studied translation as a mean of manipulation and its direct impact on reader’s perception. The paper studies methods of translation of the largest group of intertextual elements in fiction – intertextual elements from the Bible. Based on the comparative analysis of the intertextual elements from the Bible in original literary texts in English and their translations, which were performed in the Soviet period, we can see manipulation of reader’s perception by intentional omission or replacement of the intertextual elements.

2.4. Political Discourse and Manipulation

Orwell (1969), who was the first in drawing attention to the manipulative feature of political discourse stated that: "political speech and writing are largely the defense of indefensible" (p. 225). Politicians tried to avoid straightforward presentation of facts. Instead, there is a persuasive representation to the truth. Political discourse has been described as "a complex form of human activity" (Chilton & Schäffner, 1997, p. 207), based on the recognition that politics cannot be conducted without language.

There was widespread agreement in modern linguistics that meanings were not restricted to words, neither were they stable. It was rather the case that language users assigned meanings in communicative contexts, and in this process of meaning construction, the information presented in the text interacted with previously stored knowledge and mental models. Political concepts were relative to the discourse of a cultural and political group and thus they were contestable (Schäffner, 2004). In this regard, translators, who were operating in contexts which were shaped by social aims and ideologies, always used certain specific terms and avoid others.

3. METHODOLOGY

The current chapter aimed to elaborate on the methodology and processes applied to conduct this study. Different sections in the following provided and explained some information concerning the design of the study, the corpus of the study, data collection procedure and data analysis procedure. Regarding the features and aspects of the study, it is a descriptive and corpus-based research aimed at extracting the most frequent types of manipulation in the Persian translation of the Iranian nuclear agreement that is a joint

comprehensive plan of action. The data of this study were extracted based on Dukate's theory and the corpus was analyzed completely.

3.1. Design of the Study

With regard to the different types of researches, the present study is classified as comparative and a descriptive-qualitative research. It is descriptive since it describes manipulation of political texts through analyzing the ST and TT using the strategies employed by the translator and it is a kind of qualitative since it exposes standard, quality of research and the result of the study using words rather than numbers as the data for analysis.

3.2. Corpus of the Study

Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action, the Iranian nuclear agreement, is a sort of political text which is known in Iran by the Persian acronym BARJAM. It is an international agreement on the nuclear program of Iran signed in Vienna on 14 July 2015 between Iran, the P5+1 (the five permanent members of the United Nations Security Council—China, France, Russia, United Kingdom, United States—plus Germany), and the European Union.

Formal negotiations toward the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action on Iran's nuclear program began with the adoption of the Joint Plan of Action, an interim agreement signed between Iran and the P5+1 countries in November 2013. For the next twenty months, Iran and the P5+1 countries engaged in negotiations, and in April 2015 agreed on an Iran nuclear deal framework for the final agreement and in July 2015, Iran and the P5+1 agreed on the plan.

The rationale behind political texts that are the focus of attention stemmed from the circumstance that political texts are instances of texts where ideology in its purest or the crudest form could be manifested as the core of the translation process. Since the aim of the study was to detect translators' ideological manipulation, a political text about Iran's nuclear program was selected. The source text, Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action, and the target text, BARJAM, were picked from a website, which was translated by the foreign affairs' members.

3.3. Data Collection Procedure

Considering the objectives of the present study, the data collection procedure was a descriptive type. The used procedures in order to achieve the result of the study are as the following. At the beginning, the source text was read, then its translation was read carefully by the researcher in order to detect manipulation and the most frequent one in the mentioned corpus based on the ideological implication. Since the corpus of the study was absolutely long; therefore, the sentences were chosen randomly in order to analyze them and reach the point.

3.4. Data Analysis Procedure

Considering the type of research, comparative, it was feasible to compare the extracts from ST and TT in order to identify the manipulation in translation. After extracting and comparing the data, the analysis of each piece of data was provided immediately after every extract. In each analysis the type of manipulation was determined and wherever needed sufficient information was also offered in order to reveal the most frequent typologies of manipulation.

4. ANALYSIS AND RESULTS

In this part, some examples corresponding to each type of manipulation proposed by Dukate (2007) have been presented. The examples have been selected from the corpus of the study. Classification of the manipulation typologies developed by Dukate (2007) was stated in the previous chapter.

4.1. Text-internal manipulation as distortion

According to Dukate Text-internal manipulation as conscious distortion is a type of manipulation, which usually is due to the dominant political ideology, and may take the form omissions, additions, substitutions and attenuations (2007). Therefore, the following examples were chosen on closer examination by the researcher.

Sentence 1

The Islamic Republic of Iran and the E3/EU+3 (China, France, Germany, the Russian Federation, the United Kingdom and the United States, with the High Representative of the European Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy) have decided upon this **long-term** Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA).

جمهوری اسلامی ایران و گروه (5+1 چین، فرانسه، آلمان، فدراسیون روسیه، انگلیس و ایالات متحده، و نماینده عالی اتحادیه اروپایی) در امور خارجی و سیاست امنیتی، در مورد این برنامه جامع اقدام مشترک (برجام) تصمیم گیری نمودند.

Analysis 1

In above sentence the translator has not translated the phrase **long term** and it is deleted in the target text.

Sentence 2

From the end of the eighth year, and as described in Annex I, Iran will start to manufacture agreed numbers of IR-6 and IR-8 centrifuge machines without rotors and will store all of the manufactured machines at Natanz, under IAEA continuous monitoring until they are needed under Iran's long-term **enrichment and enrichment R&D** plan.

از پایان سال هشتم، و به نحو مندرج در پیوست 1، ایران آغاز به ساخت تعداد مورد توافقی از دستگاه های سانتریفیوژ 6 IR-8 و IR- بدون روتور (چرخاننده) نموده و تمامی دستگاه های تولید شده را در نطنز، تا زمانی که بر اساس برنامه بلندمدت ایران مورد نیاز واقع شوند، تحت نظارت مستمر آژانس انبار خواهد نمود.

Analysis 2

Considering manipulation as distortion, in this sentence the translator has omitted **enrichment and enrichment R&D** and it has not rendered. Therefore, it has caused manipulation as distortion.

Sentence 3

Iran will **begin** phasing out its IR-1 centrifuges in 10 years

ایران سانتریفیوژهای IR-2 - خود را طی 10 سال از رده خارج خواهد نمود.

Analysis 3

In this part the translator has omitted **begin** which is existed in the source text and has not translated it. It is deletion as distortion.

Sentence 4

In redesigning and reconstructing of the modernized Arak heavy water research reactor, Iran will maximize the use of existing infrastructure **already installed at the current** Arak research reactor.

برای طراحی مجدد و بازسازی راکتور تحقیقاتی آب سنگین اراک، ایران از زیر ساختهای موجود در راکتور آب سنگین اراک بیشترین استفاده را خواهد داشت .

Analysis 4

Considering deletion as distortion, the translator has ignored **already installed at the current** and it has not been translated to the target text which has caused distortion.

4.2. Text-internal Manipulation as Handling

Based on Dukate (2007) text-internal manipulation as conscious handling are unavoidable changes introduced due to linguistic and/or cultural peculiarities. Therefore, the following examples were chosen on closer examination by the researcher.

Sentence 1

As Iran **will** be phasing out its IR-1 centrifuges, it will not manufacture or assemble other centrifuges, except as provided for in Annex I, and will replace failed centrifuges with **centrifuges of the same type**.

از آنجا که ایران **قصد دارد** سانتریفیوژهای IR-1 را از رده خارج نماید، به جز نحوه مندرج در پیوست 1 اقدام به ساخت یا مونتاژ سانتریفیوژ نخواهد کرد، و سانتریفیوژهای از کار افتاده را با **نوع مشابه** جایگزین خواهد نمود.

Analysis 1

In above sentence, the translator due to linguistic rules that is two future tenses, has translated one of them to **قصد دارد**. The next analysis is choosing **نوع مشابه** as the equivalence of **centrifuges of the same type** which is due to linguistic changes.

Sentence 2

Iran will **manufacture** advanced centrifuge machines only for the purposes specified in this JCPOA.

ایران تولید دستگاه های سانتریفیوژ پیشرفته را صرفاً برای اهداف مشخص شده در این برجام انجام خواهد داد.

Analysis 2

Based on its long-term plan, for 15 years, Iran will carry out its uranium enrichment-related activities, including safeguarded R&D exclusively in the Natanz Enrichment facility, keep its level of uranium enrichment at up to 3.67%, and, at Fordow, **refrain** from any uranium enrichment and uranium enrichment R&D and from keeping any nuclear material.

4.3. Text-internal manipulation as improvement

According to Dukate Text-internal manipulation as conscious improvement are elements that make the text clearer and more comprehensible and acceptable to the target audience, for example through explicitness (2007). Therefore, the following examples were chosen on closer examination by the researcher.

Sentence 1

From the end of the eighth year, and as described in Annex I, Iran will start to manufacture agreed numbers of IR-6 and IR-8 centrifuge machines **without rotors** and will store all of the manufactured machines at Natanz, under IAEA continuous monitoring until they are needed under Iran's long-term enrichment and enrichment R&D plan.

از پایان سال هشتم، و به نحو مندرج در پیوست 1، ایران آغاز به ساخت تعداد مورد توافقی از دستگاه های سانتریفیوژ IR-6 و IR-8 بدون روتور (چرخاننده) نموده و تمامی دستگاه های تولید شده را در نطنز، تا زمانی که بر اساس برنامه بلندمدت ایران مورد نیاز واقع شوند، تحت نظارت مستمر آژانس انبار خواهد نمود.

Analysis 1

In the above example considering the phrase without rotors, the translator has rendered it to بدون

روتور (چرخاننده) which the word **چرخاننده** is extra and improve translation in order to make the text understandable for reader.

Sentence 2

and mark a fundamental shift in **their approach** to this issue.

و یک تغییر بنیادین در نگرش های این کشورها به این موضوع رقم می زند.

Analysis 2

Going through the source text, it is clear that translator has rendered **their approach** to **این کشورها**. In this way, the translator has chosen **این کشورها** as the equivalence of possessive adjective **their** in order to explicate and improve the translation.

Sentence 3

All remaining uranium oxide enriched to between 5% and 20% will be fabricated into fuel for the Tehran Research Reactor (TRR).

تمامی اکسید اورانیوم باقی مانده غنی شده بین 5 تا 20 درصد به منظور استفاده در راکتور تحقیقاتی تهران به سوخت تبدیل خواهد شد

Analysis 3

In the mentioned sentence the translator has added **به منظور استفاده** in order to explicate the target text for reader.

In the following pie, the researchers have shown the percentage of using manipulation as distortion, manipulation as handling and manipulation as improvement which is totally comprehensible to the readers and clarify the most frequently used manipulation.

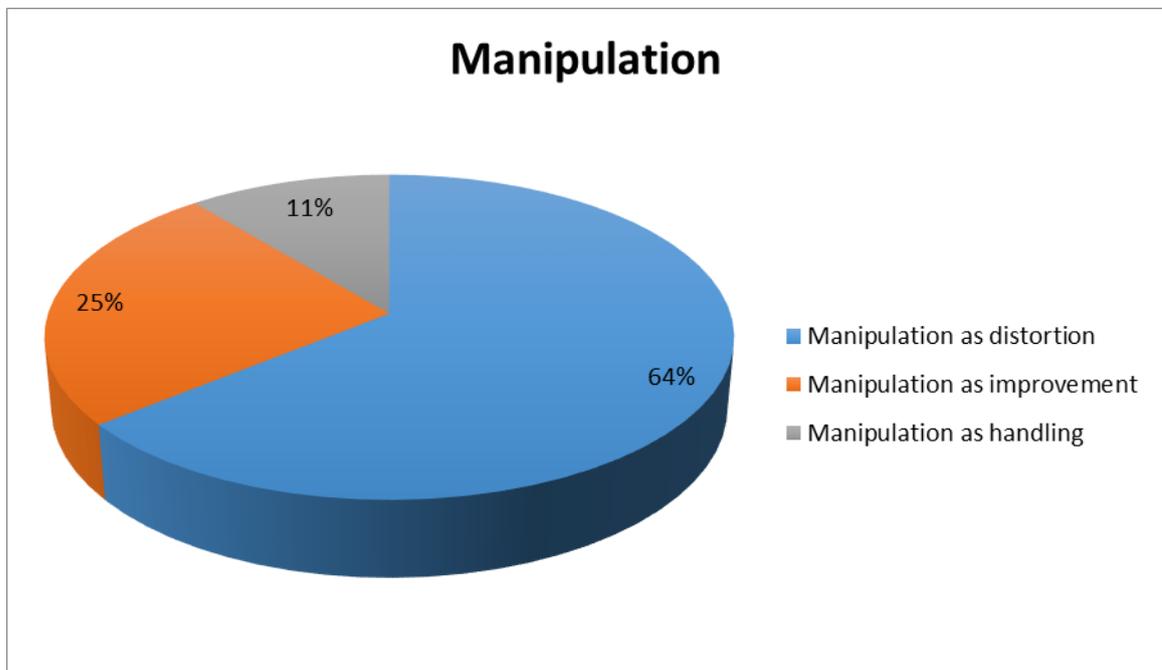


Figure 1: Typology of manipulation as distortion, improvement and handling

5. CONCLUSION

The results of analysis of each sentence were organized following each sentence in the previous chapter. Based on the Dukate's model and considering the obtained result, it was concluded that the most frequently used type of manipulation was distortion and the least used were manipulation as handling and improvement.

considering the analysis offered in chapter four it is concluded that the ideology of the translator has played a role in translation of the mentioned corpus and the translator has manipulated the text which distortion was the most frequently used. In this regard, the ideology of the translator was applied on some sentences which caused different meaning or manipulation.

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