Explicitation in Translation: Culture-Specific Items from Persian into English

Neda MORADI1,*, Muhamad RAHBAR2, Mohsen OLFATI3

1MA student in Translation Studies Islamic Azad University, Quchan Branch
2PhD in Translation Studies
3MSC student in Pure Mathematics Khayam Non-profit University, Mashhad

Abstract. Investigating the concept of explicitation has been the center of attention to many scholars recent years. A lot of studies have been carried out dealing with the exploitation of explicitation on the culture-specific items on the translation of English source text into Persian. However, few studies has been carried out investigating such culture-specific items on Persian source text translated into English. The present article aims at providing sufficient data to cover the identification and classification of different kinds of culture-specific items exploited in the translation of a Persian novel entitled Boof-e Koor by Hedayat, S. (1973) and its translated version into English The Blind Owl by Bashiri, I. (1974). Its peripheral objective is also identifying the most frequent strategy adopted to explicitate the culture-specific items in the translation of the above mentioned novel. To this end, the study adapts a conceptual framework incorporating Klaudy’s (2008) typology of explicitation entailing obligatory, optional, pragmatic and translation-inherent explicitation as well as Newmark’s (2010) classifications of culture-specific items comprising of ecology, public life, social life, personal life, customs and pursuits and private passions. The Findings of this study show culture items were more translated by adopting pragmatic explicitation. This study introduces explicitation as applicable strategies for translating culture-specific items to translator.

Keywords: Explicitation, culture-specific items, translation

1. INTRODUCTION

The concept of ‘explicitation’ is generally understood as ‘the spelling out of information which is otherwise implicit in the source text’. The notions of ‘explicit’ and ‘implicit’ are thus central in understanding the terms of explicitation and implicitation. Explicitation is a translation feature which has been received a lot of attention in the studies of translation. It has been first introduced by Vinay and Darbelnet (1958) who defined it as the method of introducing into the target language details which are implicit in the source language, flowing Vinay and Darbelnet, Blum-Kulka (1986) proposed her Explicitation hypothesis, which posits that translations are generally more explicit than their respective source texts, i.e. “explicitation is a universal strategy inherent in the process of language mediation” (p.266). Klaudy (2004) considers explicitation as the act of explicating the information in the target text, which is implicit in the source text. Translating culture-specific items in literary translations seems to be one of the most challenging tasks to be performed by a translator. Translation scholars have introduced many strategies for translating culture-specific items among which explicitation is the most important one.

Culture-specific items are words and phrases conditioned by the cultural diversity. Newmark (1998) described six “cultural categories” and their sub-categories. Culture-specific items have been discussed and categorized by many scholars such as Baker, Newmar; Espindola; Gambier and Aixela. (Baker 1992: 21; Newmark 2010: 173; Espindola 2006:49-50; Gambier 2004: 159; Aixela 1997: 59).

*Corresponding author. Email address: Nedomo88@gmail.com

Special Issue: The Second National Conference on Applied Research in Science and Technology

http://dergi.cumhuriyet.edu.tr/cumuscij ©2015 Faculty of Science, Cumhuriyet University
Culture-specific items in the present study are categorized based on Newmark (2010) classification. The category he proposed for classifying foreign cultural words entails six subcategories: Ecology, public life, social life, personal life, customs and pursuits, private passions.

Many studies have been carried out considering the notion of explicitation, however, types of explicitation used in the translation of culture-specific items have not been investigated thoroughly in novels translated from Persian into English. The aim of the present study is to investigate the explicitation in the translation of culture-specific items in a Persian novel entitled *Boof-e Koor* and its English translated version *The Blind Owl*.

2. **RESEARCH QUESTIONS**

Having the above objectives in mind, the following research questions are proposed:
1. What types of explicitation are more dominantly employed in the translation of culture-specific items in the selected novel from Persian into English?
2. What is the most frequent strategy adopted to explicitate the culture-specific items in translating the selected novels from Persian into English?

3. **METHODOLOGY**

The methodology adopted for the present study is based on the six categories suggested by Newmark (2010) for classifying foreign culture-specific items. These six categories are: ecology, public life, social life, personal life, customs & pursuits and Private passions. For exploring explicitation in a Persian – English corpus, four chapters from the predetermined novel randomly selected are used. The categorization of culture-specific items in this study is based on the Newmark, (2010) categorization. These categories are ecology, public life, social life, personal life, customs & pursuits and Private passions.

Ecology encompasses cultural-specific items referring to geological and geographical environment. Public life refers to politics, law and government. Social life includes economy, occupations, social welfare, health and education. Personal life encompasses food, clothing and housing. Customs and pursuits refer to various body language signs that are specific to particular culture and Private passions include religion, music, poetry and their different social organizations.

The present study adopts the typology of explicitating shifts proposed by Klaudy (2008).

In her typology, which has become widely accepted in the translation studies literature, Klaudy distinguishes between the following four kinds of explicitation in translation:

Obligatory explicitation: caused by lexicogrammatical differences between the source language and the target language.

Optional explicitation: motivated by differences in stylistic preferences between source language and target language.

Pragmatic explicitation: motivated by differences in cultural and world knowledge shared by members of the source and target language communities; and.


4. **PROCEDURE**

The procedures for identifying, extracting and classifying the desired data are carried out manually. At first the selected novel is carefully read for identifying the culture-specific items being explicitated.
In this study, following Newmark’s (2010) category, 25 samples of CSIs were selected. The selected units of translation are coupled with their corresponding target texts. The comparison is carried out for any mismatches, followed by identifying the desired shifts.

The identified incidents of explicitation are analyzed and classified according to Klaudy’s typology of explicitation for investigating type of explicitation (optional and pragmatic) most frequently used in translation cultural items.

As part of the contrastive-linguistic approach, the researcher relies on Klaudy’s (2008) typology of explicitation optional and pragmatic.

5. DATA ANALYSIS

25 items of this novel (ST) “Boof-e Koor” were selected from the texts in both Persian (source text) and English (target text). They were selected from the beginning, amidst and final part of this novel.

Sample 1

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ST</th>
<th>Type of CSIs: personal life</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>نگاه به بالای رف افتاد</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Top most the shelves on the wall</td>
<td>Type of Explicitation :optional</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Sample 2

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ST</th>
<th>Type of CSIs: public life</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>فوقین</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>An interpreter of the law</td>
<td>Type of Explicitation :pragmatic</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Sample 3

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ST</th>
<th>Type of CSIs: ecology</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>در محمدیه بودم</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I was in the Mohammad square.</td>
<td>Type of Explicitation :optional</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Sample 4

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ST</th>
<th>Type of CSIs: private passion</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>وضو</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The ceremonial washing of the body</td>
<td>Type of Explicitation :translation -inherent</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Sample 4

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ST</th>
<th>Type of CSIs: social life</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>جگرکنی</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A cooked-meat vendor</td>
<td>Type of Explicitation :optional</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 1. Percentage of different types of explicitation adopted to explicitate culture-specific items

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Classification of CSIs</th>
<th>Optional</th>
<th>Pragmatic</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Social items</td>
<td>33%</td>
<td>67%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Public items</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Personal items</td>
<td>62.5%</td>
<td>37.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ecology items</td>
<td>47%</td>
<td>53%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Private items</td>
<td>25%</td>
<td>75%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
6. CONCLUSION

Analyzing the accumulated data in the present study, it was found that the translator distinctly applied explicitation in translation of amidst from Persian into English. Overall, among different types of explicitation exploited in the translation of culture-specific items in the selected novel, pragmatic explicitation were used more frequently among others.

REFERENCES


