Retranslation and Development of the Translator's Translation Competence over Time: A Case Study of Saleh Hosseini's Works

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1. INTRODUCTION

The present data-driven research addresses retranslation and the development of the translator's (Saleh Hosseini) competence over time. Saleh Hosseini is a very prolific translator of Anglo-American literature in Iran. He spent his time doing full-length translation and teaching translation. His translations are printed and reprinted in huge numbers, making him an influential figure in the Iranian translation market. Moreover, his retranslations of his own previous translations make him an exceptional figure in translation studies. Retranslation is not an easy task; it is an 'artistic recreation' rather than a mere repetition. In fact, the second translation challenges the first translation of the same original work. Thus, the re-translator needs both translation skills and the courage to take up the challenge. The groundbreaking discussion on translators (i.e., Translat*or* Studies) proposed by Chesterman (2009) served as the theoretical point of departure for the present research. Accordingly, Chesterman (2009) suggested a diagram as one way for conceptualizing Translat*or* Studies. In his opinion, there are three branches in this diagram: Cultural, sociological and cognitive branches. The cultural branch is related to history, values, ideologies, the role of translators, and so forth. The Sociological branch concerns the translators' behavior and their social networks. The cognitive branch deals with the decision-making, mental processes, the influence of emotions, personality, and attitudes towards norms. The present research draws upon the third branch of Translat*or* Studies i.e., the cognitive branch.

2. MATERIALS AND METHODS

To this end, the first and second Persian translations of two English novels (*1984, Lord Jim)* by the same translator within a decade were compared at the textual (lexical and syntactic) level. Translating literary works such as novels has been considered a challenging topic in the process of translation. In this regard, translators should be cautious, skillful, and creative in translating such texts. *Nineteen Eighty-*

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Four, written by George Orwell, is one of the literary works which has had a great influence on contemporary literature across the world. *Lord Jim*, written by Joseph Conrad, is considered one of the most important novels in the history of English literature and its sophisticated language makes it very difficult to understand, and by extension, to translate. Both novels have been (re)translated into numerous languages over and over again. After analyzing the data in the first phase of the study, an interview was conducted with the translator in a bid to triangulate the data in the second phase.

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The results revealed that, in his self-retranslations, the translator had made numerous corrections. As a result of the translator's new understanding of the source texts, the target language setting, and the author's intended meaning, the self-retranslations were found to be more target-language-oriented, hence more natural, an indication of the development of the translator's translation competence over time. Therefore, it can be said that translators might undertake the retranslation of their own previous works because they have come to a different understanding of the same work (the internal factor). In light of the data, this seems to be the result of the development of the translator's translation competence over time. In fact, the findings of this research demonstrated that in his first translations, the translator attempted to convey the literal meaning in a bid to be faithful (mostly formally) to the source text while in his retranslations, he attempted to represent the source text's meaning more naturally within the target language norms. The findings also indicated the translator's thorough mastery of the Persian literature and his frequent use of Persian literature masterpieces in the self-retranslations. According to the translator himself, he has been reading Persian masterpieces over time and thus made them inner in his self-retranslation after a decade. Therefore, it can be well argued that the disposition of the translator is very influential in shaping one's career as a literary translator.

4. CONCLUSION

As a result, according to the analysis of textual data in the first phase and the translator's explanations in the interview (second phase), it can be concluded that the translator's translation competence is, and indeed *should* be, constantly improving and that the translations undergo substantial changes as a result of factors such as the translator's experience and expertise, the passage of time, readers' expectations, prevalent norms, and other elements pertaining to the translational situation. The findings of the current research can be a great help for other professional translators and publishers of foreign literary works with regard to retranslating and reprinting their previous translations in a bid to improve the overall quality of translated literature in the TL literary system. Also, the results of the current research can pave the way for other researchers, students, and scholars interested in this subject to do further research on this intriguing topic.

Keywords: First Translation; Retranslation; Self-retranslation; Translation Competence