A Survey of Poetry Translation According to Antoine Berman's (1985) Text Deformation System: A Case Study of English Translation of Book II of Mathnavi Manavi

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Abstract

The present study sought to investigate deviation in translation of poetry based on Berman's (1985) model of "Text Deformation System". Primarily, English translation of one hundred fifty lines of Book II of Rumi's Mathnavi, translated by Nicholson, in 1926, were analyzed based on twelve deforming items of Berman's model and compared to Persian lines corrected by Nicholson as the source to find out the deformations. Then, chi-square test was conducted to investigate the differences among the frequencies of occurred deformations. The results revealed the deviation, especially syntactic deviation, of poetry translation based on Berman's model. There were statistically significant differences among the occurred deviations. The findings also revealed that Rationalization, Destruction of rhythm, Destruction of linguistic patterning, Destruction of underlying network of signification, and Expansion were the most frequent items among the twelve deforming items.

Keywords: poetry, deviation of poetry translation, Berman, text deformation system

INTRODUCTION

Poetry can be regarded as a means to express one nation's feelings and attitudes, and translation is regarded as a bridge through which different cultures can get closer together (Niknasab & Pishbin, 2011). Poetry has many different definitions that came from poets and critics. The word poetry is derived from the Greek word *poiein* which means to make or to construct. Coleridge, a well-known writer, defined poetry as the product of poet's imagination that are the best words in the best order. Ralp Waldo Emerson says that poetry is an endeavor to express the spirit of things, to pass the brute body and search the reason of its existence. Edgar Allen Poe defined poetry as the rhythmical creation of beauty (Gaol, 2012).

In fact Poetry arranges words in a different way, which depicts a language different from ordinary language and discourse, and produces effects that ordinary language does not produce. Many of these differences derive from certain literary conventions that are involved in creating a poem (Nofal, 2011). In translating poetry, if some aspects, not significant ones, will be missing, it is due to the differences in language phonology, syntactic structure, vocabulary, literary history, prosody, or poetics. This scarification of elements is more in translation of poems that have highly complex structures encompassing imagery, intertextuality, idiom, ambiguity, and complex tonalities (Attwater, 2013).

According to Bennett (2001), translation is the same as displacing an object from one place to another, while some of it may be lost in the transferring process. She pointed that translation of poetry is the same as carrying a bowl of water from sink to table, some water may spill and be lost while carrying. When poetry is translated some of it may leak out and be lost. In translation of poetry, the whole of the poem, meaning, sounds, and shapes of words, the aggregation of words, meaning and sounds in lines, stanzas, the form of poem, the aesthetic facets and the literary tradition behind it must be taken in to account because everything in the poem communicates. Studies showed that there is no single theory of translation, different scholars, especially in the realm of poetry translation, hold different ideas to themselves.

LITERAURE REVIEW

Translatability and Untranslatability of Poetry

There have always been debates on translatability and untranslatability of poetry, how poetry should be translated, and what factors should be considered in its translation. Whereas some scholars contend that poetry is translatable, others support the idea of untranslatability of poetry. What is meant by translatability is the possibility of translating a text linguistically and culturally from one language into the other (Almasaeid, 2013).

Literary translation, because of its special features, as well as its aesthetic and expressive values, is more difficult than translation of other types of texts. The aesthetic function in a literary work emphasizes the diction of work, its figurative language, metaphors, etc. The expressive function emphasizes the writer's thought or process of thought, emotion, etc. The translator's prophecy is transferring these specific values to the target language (Hariyanto, 2003).

Hariyanto (2003) asserts that in comparison to other genres of literature, translation of poetry has features special to its own. A poem achieves its beauty not only with the words choice and its figurative language as in novels, but also with the creation of rhythm, rhyme, meter, specific expressions and structures that have an important effect on achieving the beauty. In short, in comparison to other literary genres, poetry translation needs something more.

Steine indicates the possibility of translation of poetry because things which are rooted in history and society can be found in all languages (as cited in Almasaeid, 2013). Hatem and Munday (ibid) emphasize on translation as a relative notion, pointing on meaning, audience, and the purpose of translation. So, the process of translation is not just to replace a text in the SL by its equivalent in the TL, because loss and gains surround the translator's works.

Wai (2010) defines translation as a process putting the sense of words or texts of one language to reach its product, which is the result of translation. The sense of words or text is multi-dimensional and, depending on context of culture, society, and language, it has various levels of depth. Nida and Taber believe that translation should be close to the SL in terms of naturalness of message by conveying the same meaning and preserving the style. Hatim and Mason (1990) also state that translation is the transmission of lexical, grammatical, and rhetorical meaning, which is implied or inferable meaning for readers (as cited in Wai, 2010).

Hovhannisyan (2012) describes translation of poetry as one of the most difficult and challenging tasks for every translator. He returns to Robert's Frost definition, the loss of poetry in translation, and expresses that Robert Frost's statement is a true definition because when comparing two languages we cannot find one-to-one equivalents for each element. He believes that even translators with profound knowledge of source language would not be able to create what should be replaced by the original.

From past up to present day, translation of poetry has been considered impossible by some, because translation of elements such as the linguistic, cultural and most importantly aesthetic would be considered a failure. However, the history and present day of poetic translation and its strong and weak movement during these years shows that poetry as a genre of literature, as distinguished from fiction, drama, and prose, is translatable (Aiwei, 2005) and the claim of untranslatbility of poetry cannot be accepted when there are vivid examples of successful translations (Hovhannisyan, 2012). Hovhannisyan also emphasizes on preserving the emotion, implied message of the poet, and the uniqueness of the style in translation to reach the same effect in the target language as it is in the ST.

Boase-Beir and De Beauground are those who have also positive views on translation of poetry. They believe that translation of poetry can be successful only if both style and content are transferred in translation process (as cited in Vahid Dastjerdi, Hakimshafaai & Jannessari, 2008).

Vahid Dastjerdi et al. (2008) found that if it is said that poetry is translatable, it does not mean that each aspect of poetry can be translated, since language patterns are different and some patterns of every language cannot be imitated in another language, but close translation of the original is not an impossible ambition because the past translations in the realm of poetry showed ideal results in "cross-cultural renderings: of great poems of one language to others.

Problems in Translation of Poetry

Suryawinata found that linguistic, literary and aesthetic, and socio-cultural problems are the main problems which a literary translator faces while translating. In translating a poem, the translator faces similar problems because poetry is a literary genre (as cited in Hariyanto, 2003).

Linguistic Problems

Poetry cannot be imagined outside language (Pirnajmuddin & Medhat, 2011). Language as a means of communication is not just for communicating daily life. It has different functions and speaks about the cultures, beliefs, traditions and thoughts (Kharmandar & Karimnia, 2013).

Existence of language of poetry depends on the breaking and deviation from some norms. As Shafii- Kadkani points out, poetry emerges only when the norms of ordinary and logical language are broken. Also, Shamisa believes that almost each literary work involves a sort of deviation from ordinary language. He emphasizes that linguistic deviation should be considered important because in some cases a literary work may gain its influence and importance from linguistic deviation. Leech asserts that linguistic deviations which a poet manipulates, is a means of poetry creation. The eight types of linguistic deviation which Leech introduces are: lexical deviation, grammatical deviation, phonological deviation, graphological deviation, semantic deviation, dialectical deviation, deviation of register, deviation of historical period. Hatim and Masom (1990) agree that linguistics scope has widened in recent years beyond the individual sentence span and linguists attempt to account the texts' form in terms of the users. If meaning is accepted as something that is discussed between producers and receivers of the texts the translator will play the role of text user that intervenes in the discussion process, reconstruct it, and relay it across linguistic and cultural boundaries. In this process, the translator should consider matters such as intended meaning, implied meaning, and presupposed meaning based on the text implications (As cited in Pirnajmuddin & Medhat, 2011). The other domains such as socio-linguistics, pragmatics, and discourse linguistics are the areas which are taken in to account in the process of translating (see Aiwei, 2005).

Literary or Aesthetic Problems

According to Russian Formalists, literature is a special kind of language that will gain clarity by deviating and distorting from practical usage of language. They believed studying literature itself is the proper study of literature and its necessity is studying poetics. Poetics is the analysis of the linguistic and structural features and form of a work. As they argued, form includes devices which comprise the artfulness and literariness of any text. Russian Formalists believed in difference of literary and everyday language. Their chief focus in literary analysis was the examination of text's language and its literariness, which unlike ordinary speech, foreground itself and

through imagery, structure, paradox, rhyme scheme etc, identifies its deviation from everyday speech and produces literary feature that is *defamiliarization*, what introduced by the Russian formalist, Victor Shoklovsy (as cited in Pirnajmuddin & Medhat, 2011).

Hariyanto states that aesthetic and literary problems are the other factors that cause hardship in poetry translation. These factors have relations to structure, metaphorical expression, and sound of poetry. While aesthetic values do not carry an independent meaning in poetry they are correlative with the various types of meaning, this means that destruction of word choice, word order, and the sounds in translation destroy the beauty and the expression of the original poem. The carefully-composed alliterations of the original will be ruined if the translator provides unsophisticated alliterations in TL. So these kinds of replacements ruin the gracefulness and gentleness of poem (as cited in Temirov, 2012).

Cultural Problems

Since the 1980s, theorists have become interested in the role of culture in translation. They studied the effect of culture on the process of translation. They also accounted the social and cultural factors which influenced the text choice for translation and its existed result in the target culture. According to them, the position of translated literature in the social, cultural, historical, and literary system of the target language should be the focus of translation studies (as cited in Kotzeva, 2012). All concerns on translation theories since the second half of the 20th century resulted in this important observation that the position of translated text in the culture of the target and its influence in it, is determinable by the relationship between the origin culture and the culture of the target. Also, this relationship influences the possibilities in translation process and the translators' decisions (Kotzeva, 2012).

Differences between cultures cause the most difficult challenge while translating literary texts. In a given culture, people look at things from their own perspective. Nida asserted that biculturalism is a very important necessity of a successful translation. It is the function of words in cultures which give them meaning, so the cultural gaps between two languages are a hard balk for translators to pass. Nord also holds that comparing cultures is the meaning of translation (as cited in Yang, 2010).

According to Larson, each culture has its own focus. There are societies which are more technical than other, this amount of technicality can be seen in the range of vocabularies which are used in talking about the same thing in a given society. Therefore, if the SL has originated in a society with rich technic, its translation to the language of a non-technical society may be much more difficult. However, the conditions are not the same about similar cultures, in which translation is less difficult, because both languages will probably have more or less equivalent terms for various cultural aspects. In terms of very different cultures, finding equivalent lexical items are very difficult (as cited in Singh, 2011). Translation of culturally-bound words or expressions creates certain

problems. These socio-cultural problems which exist in the phrases, clauses, or sentences are containing words related to the ideas, behavior, product, and ecology (as cited in Hariyanto, 2003).

Foreignization of Translation

The grounding of foreignizing strategy returns to the classical and romantic period. It was Friedrich Schleiermacher, the German philosopher and theologian, who formulated it in German culture. Schleiremacher in his lecture *"on The Different Ways of Translation"*, stressed this point that translation of other languages to German should be received, read and sounded as translation, thus the reader should be able to guess the language behind the target text language. He also pointed that the source texts will lose their identity in translation if they read and sound alike in the target culture. According to Venuti in foreignization the translator tries to put pressure on registering the linguistic and cultural differences of the foreign language in target language (as cited in Yang 2010). In short, the purpose of foreignization strategy advocated by Venuti and his followers is to make visible the translator's presence. They highlight the foreign reality of the source text to retain it from the authority of the target culture (Yang, 2010).

Antoine Berman's Trail's of Foreign

Berman, one of the famous theorists of 20th century, along with Radmiral introduced TS (translation studies), a term which detects translation problems in a domain independent of linguistic and literature. They believed that linguistic is not sufficient for assessing translation problems since linguists were not in the outbreak with translation and the qualified theorists in translation domain are the ones who practically bulked with problems of this field (Mehdipoor, 2010).

Berman (1942-1991), a French philosopher, linguist and ST-oriented translator proposed his theories in translation by criticizing the works of classic and current translators. Berman as a famous defender of foreignization in translation believes that every foreign text should keep its foreignness in TL and no change should occur to the benefit of TL, because meaning is conveyed by form. He says that every omission, admission, any change in the writer's style, any change in language patterning, expansion and even the change in punctuation and paragraphs is distortion of ST and calls it as 'Text Deformation System' (Berman, 2000). The foreignizing method of translation, a strategy Venuti also terms *resistance*, is a non-fluent or strange translation style designed to make visible the presence of the translator by highlighting the foreign identity of the ST and protecting it from the ideological dominance of the target culture. Berman's famous article '"La traduction comme e'preuve de l'etranger" (1985), was translated by Venuti into English as "Translation and trial of the foreign". Berman has two descriptions for the term "trial":

- A trial for the target culture in experiencing the strangeness of the foreign text and word.

- A trial for the foreign text in being uprooted from its original language context.

What influenced Venuti's foreignizing translation strategy is Berman's definition of the ethical aim of translation act that is receiving the foreign as foreign. Berman, who defines text deformation system in TTs, counts twelve deforming tendencies that prevent the foreignness of the text to keep in translation. *Negative analytic* is the term which Berman used to examine these deforming forces. The twelve deforming tendencies that Berman identifies are as follow:

1. Rationalization: this tendency affects syntactic structures such as punctuation, sentence structure, order, even tendency to generalization and translation of verbs by noun forms.
2. Clarification: makes clear and explicit what the writer does not wish to be clear in the ST.
3. Expansion: Berman, like other theorists, believes that any translation is longer than ST, but he does not accept this expansion and says these additions is overtranslation that adds nothing but reduce the clarity of the works voice.
4. Ennoblement: refers to the rewriting of the original text in a more elegant style. Indeed, Berman believes that using elegant style in translation destructs the rhetoric and structure of the ST.
5. Qualitative impoverishment: by this term, Berman refers to replacing the words and expressions with TT equivalents that lack their richness, and cannot signify them.
6. Quantitative impoverishment: is the loss of lexical variation in translation, when the translator for example replaces several synonyms by one word.
7. The destruction of rhythms: Berman believes that rhythm of the text will be destroyed if punctuation and word order are deformed.
8. The destruction of underlying networks of signification: although words may not have any significant meaning, they can affect the sense and underlying network of the text, so the translator should be aware of the network of words that is formed throughout the text.
9. The destruction of linguistic patternings: translation techniques such as rationalization, clarification, and expansion used by translators destroy the constructions and patternings of the original text, although the TT is linguistically homogenous, it is incoherent in meaning because the systemacity of the original is destroyed.
10. The destruction of vernacular networks or their exoticization: this relates to the local speech. There is a loss if vernacular or SL slangs replaced by TL vernaculars and follow it's linguistic patternings. Berman counts this replacing rediculous.
11. The destruction of expressions and idioms: in Berman's view replacing the idioms and proverbs of SL by their equivalents in TL is an attack to the discourse of the foreign work.
12. The effacement of the superimposition of languages: Berman uses this term to refer to the omission of traces of different forms of languages that co-exist in ST in translation (Berman, 2000).

METHOD

This study aimed at surveying translation of poetry according to the text deformation system introduced by Antoine Berman in translation in 1985. In this part the researcher explored the methodology used in the study, explained the source materials, described the procedure of collection of data, data analysis, and the chi-square test which was conducted to see if there were differences in frequencies of the occurred deviations or not.

Materials

The selected materials were 150 lines chosen from the English translation of Book II of Rumi's Mathnavi done by Reynold A. Nicholson in 1926. The source materials of the study were chosen from Mathnavi Manavi in Persian that was a copy corrected by Nicholson. These 150 lines were selected randomly to compare with its origin in Persian to find out if any deviation occurred in translation according to the chosen model.

Data Collection Procedures

Book II as the second part of Rumi's Mathnavi contains 112 poems which are so long to be analyzed completely. Among them 15 poems and from each poem 10 lines were selected randomly, so 150 lines of Rumi's Mathnavi were selected as a case to find out the occurred deformations in their translations based on Berman's (1985) "Text Deformation System".

Data Analysis

The desired data were discussed through the qualitative approach to answer the why's and how's questions of the study. In addition, a chi-square test was conducted for statistical discussion to find out if there were statistically significant differences among the frequencies of the occurred deformations.

RESULTS

After selecting the poems, they were studied within the Berman's (1985) model of text deformation system. As discussed earlier, in this model, Berman counted twelve deforming tendencies that prevent the *foreignness* of the text to keep in translation. This part provided information gathered by putting translation of 150 lines of Book II of Rumi's Mathnavi in the frame work of "Text Deformation System" and comparing them with their source text Persian lines. The gathered information then analyzed carefully and the occurred deformations along with their frequencies were extracted and then presented in Table 1.

Analysis of the chosen lines showed that among the twelve deforming items of text deformation system poetry was destructed by some items that quietly occurred in translation of all lines.These items were rationalization, expansion, destruction of

rhythm, destruction of underlying network of signification, and destruction of linguistic patterning. Items of clarification and the effacement of the superimposition of languages occurred in few line's translations. So among the twelve items of Berman's (1985) model translation of poetry was affected by seven destructing items. The other five reminded items which had no effect on poetry translation are ennoblement, qualitative impoverishment, quantitative impoverishment, destruction of vernacular networks or their exociticization, and destruction of expression and idioms.

The statistical findings were put into Table 1, which shows the descriptive frequency of each of the categories observed in the translation of the poem.

Table 1. Frequencies of Deformations Observed

Deformation	Frequency
Rationalization	150
Clarification	32
Expansion	140
Ennoblement	0
Qualitative impoverishment	1
Quantitative impoverishment	0
The destruction of rhythm	150
The destruction of underlying network of signification	150
The destruction of linguistic patterning	150
The destruction of vernacular networks or their exoticization	0
The destruction of expressions and idioms	0
The effacement of superimposition of languages	13
Total	786

As Table 1 shows, a total number of 786 cases were found in the translation. Rationalization, Destruction of rhythm, Destruction of underlying network of signification, and Destruction of linguistic patternings all revealed 150 instances, topping the list of the deformation categories. However, Ennoblement, Quantitative impoverishment, Destruction of vernacular networks or their exoticization, and Destruction of expressions and idioms did not show specific instance. This descriptive counting of instances clearly shows the distribution of the deformations. Table 2 illustrates the results found as a consequence of the chi-square test:

Table 2. Chi-Square Test of the Observed Instance

Chi-square	df	Asymp.Sig.
341.67430	7	0.000

As the Table shows, the test was conducted at the 7 degree of freedom, and significance is 0.000. In fact, considering the results, we can argue that there was a significant difference among the categories observed ($p<0.5$). This difference might be due to the high rate of Rationalization, Destruction of rhythm, Destruction of underlying network

of signification, and Destruction of linguistic patterning which total included 600/786 instances equal to 76% of the whole findings. The next category is Expansion with 140 cases. Clarification and Effacement of superimposition of languages come next with 32 and 13 instances, respectively. The other categories did not show any specific instance, not having an effect on the statistical test. This test definitely shows that the translation was strongly affected by at least 5 deformation types, while not much influenced by others.

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

The results of the chi-square test showed statistically significant differences among the frequencies of the twelve items of deformations presented in Berman's (1985) framework. Thus, the research hypotheses concerning the deviation of poetry in translation based on this model and syntactic oriented deviations was confirmed. It could be stated that although all items of this model did not occur in poetry translation, in whole, deviation occurred strongly based on items such as Rationalization, Destruction of linguistic patterning, Destruction of rhythm, Destruction of underlying network of signification, and Expansion and in some cases occurred based on items such as Clarification, Effacement of superimposition of languages, and Qualitative impoverishment.

Although the results obtained show the deviation of poetry in translation based on Berman's (1985) model of text deformation system, what is important to point out is that this model as Berman too contends is more acceptable in detecting deformations in translation of prose than of poetry. Berman believes it is easier to detect these deformations in a poem, while in prose they do not immediately reveal themselves (Kotzeva, 2012). The results obtained were mostly in line with those obtained from Kotzeva's (2012) "From Theory to Practice in the Translation of Emiliya Dvoryanova's novel *Concerto for a Sentence".* The novel was written in a poetic form and the occurred deformations were the ones regarding the preservation of syntactical structure, rationalization, expansion and clarification, and the preservation of rhythm, the destruction of the text's poetic and musical nature. Items such as the destruction of underlying network of signification and the destruction of linguistic patterning also had some relevance to the translation of Dvoryanova's text as a novel to prevent prose from being the trial of the foreign.

Based on Berman who is a ST-oriented theorist the only way for translator to convey the meaning is faithfulness to the text. He believes that beautiful meaning is the result of beautiful form (Mehdipoor, 2010), but what could be said is that faithfulness to the form of text in translation is avoidable because no two languages have the same structure. So against what Latafaty (2013) asserted although the form is superior in translation especially in literary translation, translator is forced to change the structure and form of the ST or poetry to make it understandable by readers of TT, what Berman named *deformation* in translation. Therefore, to reach the high amount of foreignization in

translation, one needs the closeness of two languages' cultures and structures. As Kotzeva (2012) pointed out when the culture and language of origin have had a special relationship with the culture and language of the target reader, the opportunities to foreignize a target text successfully are greater. However Mehdipoor (2010) stated translation course needs the applicable theories and models, while Berman's opinions are so superlative and do not have much usage in translation0process.

Findings of this study show the syntactical deviations that occurred in structure, punctuation, rhythms, etc. in poetry translation. Meaning deviation less occurred in translation of poetry based on this model. In fact Berman introduced a model which is too strict on keeping the form and syntax of the source text in translation. Foreignization which Berman emphasized on in translation is not possible in all cases, for example a proverb should be translated to an equivalent proverb of source language or if equivalent translation is impossible, the meaning of it should be clarified. If the proverb translated word by word to keep the form of the source text, target text readers will not properly understand the meaning because the meaning is sacrificed for form. Based on twelve deforming items which Berman counted as text deformation system and poetry analysis which was done in this study it could be said that poetry is untranslatable or if any translation produces it will be full of deviations. So it is better to choose a middle ground in translation of poetry. Poetry should be translated in ways that rather meaning and form kept and none of them sacrifices for keeping the other. Although Berman's (1985) model is approximately a complete frame work to measure the faithfulness and correctness of translation syntactically and semantically, however finding or producing a translation which avoid all these deviations is farfetched. So the suggestion is to review this model, reduce or correct the items such as Rationalization to reach a more acceptable and applicable theory of translation.

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