
Assessing the Translation of Parvin Etesami's Selected Poems Using Vinay and Darbelnet's Model

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Abstract

Translators always seek to find the best equivalents for each word, sentence or phrase in the target language (TL) in order to have the most accurate and meaningful translation of the text. Generally, a translator's main concern is whether to prefer the form over the content or vice versa. In translation studies, literal translation prioritizes the form while free translation concentrates on the content. Literal and free translations are roughly categorized by Vinay and Darbelnet (1995) as direct and oblique translations respectively, overall covering seven concrete procedures. This study aimed to look at the works of Parvin Etesami, a 20th century Persian poetess, with the intention of analyzing a selection of her poems translated by Alaeddin Pazargadi, professor at the University of Tehran, according to Vinay and Darbelnet's model in order to identify the strategies and procedures most frequently used by the translator. Every Persian line and its English translation from nine poems of Parvin were analyzed and classified under the relevant taxonomy proposed by Vinay and Darbelnet. By calculating the number of cases of each procedure, it was found that the translator mostly utilized the direct strategy which resembles word for word translation. Finally, some improvements were suggested for some defective cases. This study benefits research on translating literary works.

Keywords: Direct strategy; Literal translation; Parvin Etesami; Vinay and Darbelnet's model

INTRODUCTION

Every translator has a strategy to translate stimulated by the theories in the field of translation studies. The old terms of "literal" versus "free" translations in translation studies were defined by many theorists in favour of different definitions. Nida (1964) developed the terms formal equivalence and dynamic equivalence for literal versus free translations, respectively. In formal equivalence,

"the message in the receptor language should match as closely as possible the different elements in the source language" (Nida, 1964, p. 159). On the other hand, in dynamic equivalence "the relationship between receptor and message should be substantially the same as that which existed between the original receptors and the message" (Nida, 1964, p. 159). Newmark (1981) applied the terms semantic translation versus communicative translation. According to him, communicative translation tries to produce an

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effect as close as possible on the reader while semantic translation tries to transmit “as closely as the semantic and syntactic structure of the second language allow, the exact contextual meaning of the original” (Newmark, 1981, p. 39). House (1997) defined the terms overt translation and covert translation. According to House (1997), in overt translation target text (TT) does not imply to be of an original while covert translation possesses an original status of the source text (ST) in the target culture.

Similarly, Vinay and Darbelnet (1995) used the terms oblique for free and direct for literal translations which constituted the basis of the current study. Direct strategy includes three procedures of borrowing, calque, and literal translation, while oblique strategy consists of four procedures including transposition, modulation, equivalence, and adaptation. However, modulation procedure is subdivided along the following lines: abstract for concrete (AFC), explicative modulation (EPM), the part for the whole (PW), one part for another (PP), reversal of terms (ROT), negation of opposite (NOP), active to passive (ATP), space for time (SFT), exchange of intervals for limits (IAL), and change of symbol (COS).

Parvin Etesami was a great Iranian poetess of 20th century. Yet, there are a few English translations of the collection of her poems. A comprehensive translation is done by Alaeddin Pazargadi (2002). Pazargadi, an Oxford graduate, was an Iranian author and translator who is considered as the founder of English Language and Literature (as a university major) in Iran. To the best of the researchers' knowledge, there is no available analysis on the English translations of Parvin's works based on translation models. Thus, the first major contribution of this study is that it provides analysis on the English translation of Parvin Etesami's poems. Also, Vinay and Darbelnet's (1995) model is not usually utilized to conduct Persian-English comparative studies for investigating translations of Persian poetry. Accordingly, the second important implication of this research is to identify the strategies and pro-

cedures frequently used by Alaeddin Pazargadi, according to the model developed by Vinay and Darbelnet (1995). In this sense, the main research question is: what strategies and procedures are frequently utilized by Pazargadi according to the model proposed by Vinay and Darbelnet (1995) on the selected poems of Parvin Etesami? Also, are there any cases in which the translations do not match the original text? Finally, the findings of the current study were compared to previous ones in order to figure out what the present study adds to the existing knowledge in the discipline.

Findings from Previous Studies

A collection of Parvin Etesami's poems was translated into English by Alaeddin Pazargadi, an Iranian author and translator, which is published in 2002 by Rahnama Publication that is a comprehensive translation of Etesami's works. According to Pazargadi, “this book is intended to make the reader familiar with the poems of a young Iranian woman who began life a few years before the First World War and died at the beginning of the Second World War, and during this short span of her life, she won a great name as a poetess in Iran” (Pazargadi, 2002). Also, Smith (2015) provided a book on English translation of Parvin's poems as well as an introduction on her life. Based on the researchers' investigations throughout the academic resources, no analysis has been conducted on the English translations of Parvin's poems, however, a number of studies were done on the original work of Parvin including the following: Gerami Gilan (2015) worked on types of nostalgia of Parvin Etesami's poems. Ibnorrasool and Mohammadi Fesharaki (2012) investigated the influence of an Egyptian advocate of women's liberty's writings on Parvin's poetry. Sharifpour and Marjazadeh (2014) studied various moods on Parvin's moral advices. Mosharraf (2011) worked on the concept of modernity and neoclassic approach in Parvin Etesami's divan. Nooraie and Azizi (2015) analyzed the grammar of narrative in didactic literature in Parvin's debates. Zou Alfaghari and Mirzaei (2011) explored gender and class dis-

criminations from Parvin's view. Meanwhile, Vinay and Darbelnet's (1995) translation model has been used as the theoretical framework in many Persian-English comparative studies on literary texts including studies by Shabani, Emadi, and Daftari (2019), Delzendehrooy and Karimnia (2013), Iranmanesh and Azadmanesh (2015), Shahbaiki and Yousefi (2013), Yarahmadzahi, Beikian, and Nadri (2013), and Behtash and Moghadam (2017). However, except the first two studies, none of them investigated Persian poetry, rather they all used English texts as the ST and Persian translations as the TT.

Parvin Etesami's Biography and Poetic Style

Parvin Etesami (1906-1941) was an Iranian poetess of the century. She was highly interested in literature and started to compose poetry even in her childhood (Pazargadi, 2002). According to Moayyed (1998), Parvin graduated from the American girls' college in 1925 and in 1934, she married her father's cousin and moved to the city of Kermanshah. But the marriage only lasted for two months and she returned to Tehran. After the divorce, in order to make her feel better, her father decided to publish her divan. Her divan that was published in 1935, with a preface from Bahar Magazine which was warmly welcomed in literary events. However, her completed works were not published until 1954 (Moayyed, 1998).

According to Pazargadi (2002) in the arrangement of Parvin's poetry book, there are 209 pieces of poetry; 42 untitled odes and 167 lyrics, distichs, parables, allegories and fragments. A large portion of Parvin's divan contains debate (monazara). She composed approximately 65

poems in the style of debate. Parvin's poems are mostly in the form of literary pieces that portray social themes with critical views. Her poems have a lot of advice regarding appreciating opportunities, criticizing oppression and the world's instability. Her style is influenced by the Iranian poets of the fifth and sixth Hejira centuries.

Parvin's poetic style can be divided into two categories: first category called Khorasani style includes advice which is more like Nasir Khusraw's poems (a Persian poet, philosopher and writer). Second category includes poems in Iraqi style that is focused on telling stories especially through debates. The second category is more like Saadi's poems (a major Persian poet) which is more popular. Khorasani style is characterized by its concrete images, metaphors and plain poetic technique. It is mostly in the form of qasida. It uses simple terms and lacks complex compounds and shows a limited use of Arabic loan words. While in Iraqi style more Arabic words, as well as scientific, philosophical, religious, astronomical and medical terms are used. Iraqi style is mostly in the form of ghazal; simile, interpretations and metonymy are often used in this style (آثار و سبک شعری پروین).

METHODS

Corpus

The corpus of this study included nine poems of Parvin Etesami and its English translation by Pazargadi from the book "A Collection of Parvin Etesami's Poems" published in 2002. Vinay and Darbelnet's (1995) translation model is used as the theoretical framework to investigate the selected poems.

Table 1.

List of studied poems

	Poem's Title	عنوان شعر
1	God's Favour	لطف حق
2	Fatherless	بی پدر
3	Elegy Written on my Tombstone	این قطعه را برای سنگ مزار خود سروده ام
4	The Orphan's Tears	اشک یتیم
5	Aspirations	آرزوها
6	A Wish to Fly	آرزوی پرواز

Vinay and Darbelnet's Model of Translation

Jean-Paul Vinay and Jean Darbelnet, two French scholars, explored the linguistic aspect of translation. They examined texts in two languages while noting the differences between them. They identified two general translation strategies: direct (literal translation) and oblique (free translation).

I) Direct Translation

Vinay and Darbelnet (1995) note that because of structural and metalinguistic parallelisms between languages, in order to overcome gaps between the source and target language, the SL message can be transferred into the TL piece by piece. This can be realized with one of the following procedures of direct translation: borrowing, calque and literal.

Borrowing

Borrowing is when the "SL word is transferred directly to the TL to fill a semantic gap, sometimes borrowings are employed to add local color" (Munday, 2001, p. 56).

Example: ST: Computer TT:
کامپیوتر

Calque

Calque is a strategy to borrow the SL expression or structure and then transfer it in a literal translation that introduces a new mode of expression to the TL (Munday, 2001).

Example: ST: Sky scraper TT:
آسمان خراش

Literal

According to Munday (2001), literal or word for word translation is common mostly in languages of the same family. It is "the direct transfer of a SL text into a grammatically and idiomatically proper TL text" (Vinay & Darbelnet, 1995, p. 33).

Example: ST: خدا حافظ TT: God
protect you

II) Oblique Translation

Vinay and Darbelnet (1995) believe that in cases where direct translation is not possible, the strategy of oblique translation must be used. This covers four procedures: transposition, modulation, equivalence and adaptation.

Transposition

Transposition involves change in the part of speech without change in the meaning. In translation, there are two types of transpositions, namely obligatory transposition and optional transposition. Obligatory transposition occurs when the target language has no other choices because of the language system. An optional transposition is a transposition that, for the sake of style, can be chosen by the translator if it fits better into the utterance (Vinay & Darbelnet, 1995).

Example of optional transposition:

ST: it *seems* great TT: ظاهراً عالی است

Example of obligatory transposition:

ST: پسرک TT: little boy

Modulation

According to Vinay and Darbelnet (1995), modulation is change in the point of view. They identified modulation as "the touchstone of a good translator" (Vinay & Darbelnet, 1995, p. 246). Modulation, at the level of message is subdivided along the following lines: abstract for concrete, explicative modulation, the part for the whole, one part for another part, reversal of terms, negation of opposite, active to passive (and vice versa), space for time, exchange of intervals for limits (in space and time) and change of symbol (including fixed and new metaphors).

Table 2.

Modulation subcategories

Modulation subcategories	Description and Examples
Abstract for concrete (and vice versa)	Concrete words are easier to be recognized than abstract words. ST: اگر من جای تو بودم TT: If I were in your shoes
Explicative modulation	It gives the means for the result. ST: I am exhausted TT: من خیلی کار کردم
The part for the whole (and vice versa)	When a specific term in ST is translated into more general term in TT. ST: I washed my hair TT: من سرم را شستم
One part for another	When some part of a thing is translated into another part. ST: I read this book from cover to cover TT: من این کتاب را صفحه به صفحه خواندم
Reversal of terms	It makes language sound natural. ST: Hope and fear TT: بیم و امید
Negation of opposite	It is positive for double negative or double negative for positive. ST: It does not seem natural TT: به نظر غیر طبیعی است
Active to passive (and vice versa)	Passive sentences which translate into an active sentence. ST: They were examined TT: آنها را امتحان کردند
Space for time (and vice versa)	It happens when a word or phrase indicating space is translated into a word or phrase representing time. ST: Here, we define the term TT: اکنون اصطلاح را تعریف میکنیم
Exchange of intervals for limits	It is where there is a change when an interval phrase is translated into limit symbol. ST: I come back in a minute TT: من چند دقیقه دیگر بر میگردم
Change of symbol	The symbols in different languages are based on quite different images. ST: He was green with envy TT: از حسودی چهره اش بر افروخته شد

Equivalence

Equivalence is to describe the same situation in the ST and the TT using completely different structural methods and is commonly used in translating idioms and proverbs (Vinay & Darbelnet, 1995).

Example: ST: Carry coals to Newcastle
TT: زیره به کرمان بردن

Adaptation

Adaptation is used for the cases in which the TL is unfamiliar with the situation being referred to by the SL (Vinay & Darbelnet, 1995).

Example: ST: April fools TT:
دروغ سیزده

Procedure

This study is a qualitative product-oriented descriptive research. In this study, a comparative analysis was employed to consider selected poems of Parvin as the source text and its English translation by Alaeddin Pazargadi as the target

text using the model developed by Vinay and Darbelnet (1995). Every line of the poems and its translation was analyzed and situated under the relevant category. Furthermore, in order to discover the highest and lowest frequency of the strategy used by the translator, the data were collected, calculated and presented in figures.

The following are samples for illustrating how data were collected:

In the following line, all of the words of the Persian line are translated literally, word for word, into English. This is an instance of literal procedure which is under the category of direct translation.

To illuminate the dark روشنی دادن
heart with the light of دل تاریک را
knowledge (p.107) با نور علم

In the following example, there is a change in the part of speech. A preposition (چون, like) is translated to a verb (seemed), while the meaning of the original message is conserved; this is what

Vinay and Darbelnet (1995) call transposition, one of the procedures of oblique strategy.

The poor child seemed to have taken wings like a dove, (verb) (p.342) یا سین است

The following is an example of adaptation procedure that occurs when a term used in the SL is unknown in the TL culture. Hymns and prayers are adopted for the terms فاتحه و یاسین that are only recognized in the Islamic context. However, hymn is a religious song which is most familiar in the context of Christianity.

Is today a beggar for hymns and prayers (p.388) سائل و فاتحه

RESULTS (preposition) گرفت

After applying Vinay and Darbelnet's (1995) model to the translation of Parvin Etesami's poems, the following results were obtained. The figures below illustrate the percentage that the translator used the strategies and procedures according to Vinay and Darbelnet's (1995) model. Also, the following table indicates the number of cases of applied strategies and procedures.

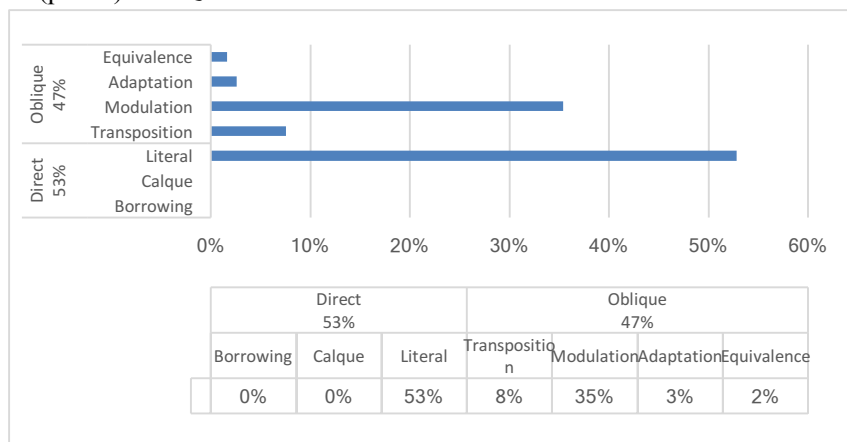


Figure 1. Percentage of implementation of strategies and procedures

Table 2.

Number of applied strategies and procedures

Direct	Borrowing	0	161
	Calque	0	
	Literal	161	
Oblique	Transposition	23	144
	Adaptation	8	
	Equivalence	5	
	The Part for the Whole	23	
	Change of Symbol	23	
	Abstract for Concrete	21	
	Active to Passive	11	
	Negation of Opposite	11	
	Modulation	108	
	One Part for Another	6	
	Explicative Modulation	5	
	Reversal of Terms	5	
	Exchange of Intervals for Limits	3	
Space for Time	0		

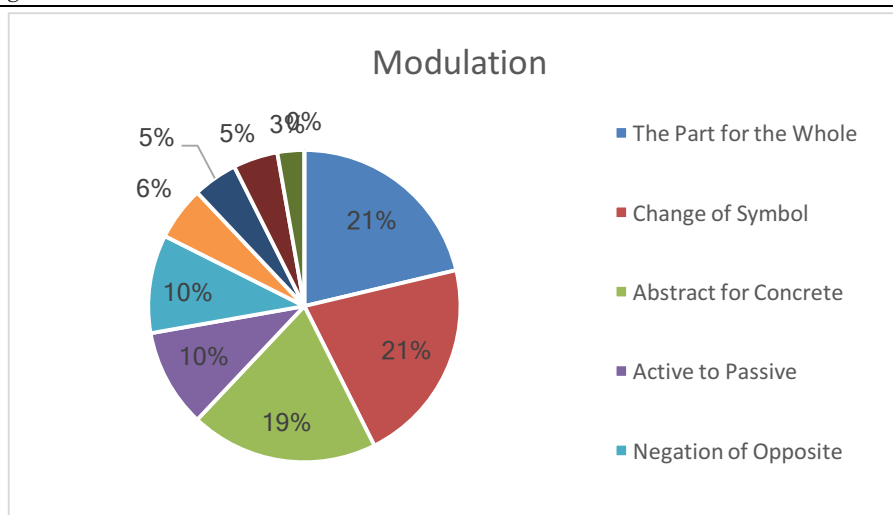


Figure 2. Breakdown of procedures in Modulation

According to the collected data (see **Error! Reference source not found.**) in 305 cases, Vinay and Darbelnet's (1995) taxonomy was applied to the translation of Parvin's nine poems by Pazargadi. In 161 cases, the translator used the direct strategy, while in 144 cases he used the oblique strategy. Within the procedures of the direct strategy the translator only applied literal translation; he did not use calque and borrowing procedures at all, while within the procedures of the oblique strategy, transposition, modulation, adaptation and equivalence were used by the translator 23, 108, 8, and 5 times, respectively. Among the subcategories of modulation, COS and PW were used 23 times each, AFC 21 times, NOP and ATP 11 times each, PP six times, EPM and ROT five times each, IAL three times and SFT was not used at all by Pazargadi. Therefore, the most frequently used strategy by Pazargadi was the direct strategy with a frequency of 53 percent while the frequency of the oblique strategy stands at 47 percent. Within the procedures of the direct strategy, literal translation was the only procedure used by the translator and from the procedures of the oblique strategy, the most applied one by the translator was modulation with 35% and the second most used procedure was transposition with percent followed by adaptation and equivalence with 3 percent and 2 percent respectively (see **Error! Reference source not found.**). Among the ten subcate-

gories of modulation, SFT procedure was not used at all by the translator.

The translator's choices constitute 21 percent COS and PW each, 19 percent AFC, 10 percent ATP and NOP each, 6 percent PP, 5 percent EPM and ROT each, and 3 percent IAL. Thus, change of symbol and the part for the whole were the most frequently used procedures by the translator (see **Error! Reference source not found.**).

DISCUSSION

The prevalent tendency of the translator was literal translation. According to Vinay and Darbelnet (1995), whenever the translator faces idioms or proverb, s/he can apply equivalence procedure in which the same situation is described in the source and target language using completely different structural styles. However, the data collected illustrated that the translator seldom used the equivalence procedure; rather he usually translated the proverb or idioms literally. For instance, in the following line *not having leg to go* is the literal and word for word translation of رفتن نداشتن پای, however, the Persian line is an idiom which means *having no strength*.

هنوزت

You do not yet have the leg to go to every roof or street (p.109) نیست پای و برزن بام

In the following line also, the translator used literal translation for an idiom. دل سرچشمه‌ی دل is literally translated as *the fountain of my heart* while the meaning would be better conveyed if he translated it as *from the bottom of my heart* that is an equivalent expression in English.

من که آب

I irrigated you from the fountain of my heart (p.388) تو ز سرچشمه‌ی دل میدادم

The second most used procedure by Pazargadi was modulation. Parvin frequently used culture-bound terms, literary devices and figures of speech such as idiom, proverb, metaphor, metonymy and so on, and procedures of oblique strategy provide suggestions for translating these terms. Modulation,

one of the procedures of oblique strategy, is the change in the point of view that has ten subcategories. The translator frequently used subcategories of modulation in order to make the translation more natural and easy to understand and to convey the adequate meaning of the original message. For instance, in some cases where Parvin used metonymy or metaphor, the translator used change of symbol method. The following line is an example of the change of symbol procedure in which both the source and target texts used metaphor. دامن مادر and *mother's lap* in both languages means the peace that comes from the support of mothers.

and floated on the sea as if it was his *mother's lap*" (p.341) بحر را چون دامن مادر گرفت

Furthermore, there are some Islamic terms in Parvin's poems for which the translator used adaptation procedure, for, based on Vinay and Darbelnet's (1995) model, adaptation procedure can be applied when the situation in the source language does not exist in the target culture, so the translator can instead use a term familiar in the culture of target language. For example, in the following line, the word نماز refers to a special kind of prayer by Muslims. The word *prayer* used in the TT is a general term known by many religions which is adopted for the word نماز that is only recognized in Islamic context.

Let us go to the mosque and engage in prayer (p.274) بیا رویم سوی مسجد و نماز کنیم

However, while Pazargadi frequently used free translation (47 percent), he mostly had a tendency towards word for word translation (53 percent). Thus, the answer to the first research question regarding the frequency of applied strategies and procedures by Pazargadi, is that literal translation (direct strategy) is commonly used by him followed by modulation (oblique strategy). This implies that in the translation of Parvin's works, Pazargadi, as a native Persian speaker, mostly tried to convey the form of the original text rather than sense or meaning. Meanwhile, in six cases

the translations did not match the original text, so suggestions were provided by the researchers to improve the translations that are mentioned in the next section.

Finally, as mentioned previously, there is no available analysis on the English translations of Parvin's poems, yet, studies were conducted to investigate Vinay and Darbelnet's model (1995) on literary texts using comparative Persian-English analysis. Most of the related studies investigated English texts as the ST, contrary to the current study. Also, only two studies investigated Persian poetry including the study conducted by Delzendehrooy and Karimnia (2013) and Shabani et al. (2019). Delzendehrooy and Karimnia (2013) only investigated modulation and found that the most frequently used procedure by the translators was the part for the whole. In this study it was revealed that the most used subcategories of modulation were the part for the whole and change of symbol equally. Shabani et al. (2019) investigated two translations of selected poems of Forough Farrokhzad and discovered that the non-native Persian speaker considerably used more oblique strategy (free translation) than the native translator. The present study also found that Pazargadi, as a native speaker, had more tendency towards direct strategy. Iranmanesh and Azadmanesh (2015) studied collocations in an English novel and discovered that the most frequently used procedures were literal translation and modulation, respectively that was the same for the current study. Shahbaiki and Yousefi (2013) investigated two Persian translations of "Jane Eyre" and found that one of the translators commonly used the equivalence procedure, while the other used literal translation. However, in this study it was discovered that equivalence was the least used procedure within the procedures of oblique strategy by Pazargadi. Yarahmadzahi et al. (2013) also realized that equivalence was commonly used by the translators; the result is opposite to this study's. Sharei (2017) found that in the application of Vinay and Darbelnet's strategies to the translations of "the Old Man and the Sea," one of the translators used

the oblique strategy and the other used the direct one. In this study, the translator mostly used the direct strategy. Behtash and Moghadam (2017) investigated only the oblique strategy and realized that the equivalence procedure was mostly used by the translator, but, as mentioned previously, equivalence was seldom used by the translator, rather Pazargadi often used literal translation.

Defective translations and suggested improvements

During the analysis of the translation of nine poems of Parvin Etesami by Pazargadi, some of the translations seemed to be defective, since it could not properly transmit the original meaning to the TL. The following are instances of those translations and suggested improvements are provided.

And you have no whim بجز
but the plays of children بازيچه، طفلان
(p.109) را هوس نيست

Suggested translation: And children have no whim but the play

Addressee in this line is taken by mistake.

Let us kill the *greed's* كه بيا
eyes, and the heart's caprice حرص دل و آرزو
(p.274) را دیده
بکشيم

Suggested translation: Let us kill the heart's caprice and the *eye's greed*

آرزو is translated as *greed's eyes* instead of *eye's greed*.

For, what *We won from* آنچه
you, We will return to you از برديم
(p.341) تو، باز
آريم باز

Suggested translation: For, what *We took away from you, We will return you*

Here, *بردن* means *to take away*, not *to win*.

And is our acquaintance آشنا با
since *he knows us* (p.341) ماست، چون
بي آشناست

Suggested translation: And is our acquaintance since *he has no other acquaintance*

است شناس بی چون is ignored by the translator.

Death became your	مرگ،	گرگ
wolf, O Joseph of <i>Kanaan</i>	تو شد،	ای
(p.387)	یوسف	کنعانی
	من	

In the above line, the word *کنعان* is translated to *Kanaan* with no regard to the correct spelling of *Canaan* in English.

And <i>like a fairy</i> cover	روی	مانند
the face from the crowd	پری	از خلق
(p.106)	پنهان	داشتن

Alternative translation: And to cover *the beautiful face* from the crowd

Since no comma is used in the original poem, two meanings can be extracted.

CONCLUSION

Nine poems of Parvin Etesami translated by Pazargadi were analyzed in detail. Each of the lines was evaluated based on the two main strategies (direct and oblique) and the seven procedures (borrowing, calque, literal; transposition, modulation, adaptation, equivalence) developed by Vinay and Darbelnet (1995). After investigating the translation and situating each line in the relevant category, the frequency of each applied procedure was calculated. It was found that the translator mostly used direct strategy and within the procedures of direct strategy, literal translation was frequently used by him. It can be concluded that the translator preferred word for word rendering more than free translation in which the translator could have a communicative approach through preserving the meaning of the original message. Meanwhile, some of the translations that were not properly conveying the original message to the TL were called “defective translations” by the researchers and suggested improvements were provided accordingly with a brief analysis. Previous related studies on the application of Vinay and Darbelnet’s (1995) model explored the frequently used procedure by the translator(s) depending on the text. Like those studies on Persian poetry, the current study also found that a Persian native-speaker favours word

for word translation which is called oblique strategy by Vinay and Darbelnet (1995) and among the subcategories of modulation, the preferred

procedure is part for the whole. But the results for novel translation analysis are different where the translators generally applied equivalence (oblique strategy) unlike this study. This study contributes to research on translating literary works, especially translation of Parvin Etesami's poems. In addition, this study demonstrated that Vinay and Darbelnet's (1995) taxonomy can be properly applied in order to analyze the English translation of Persian poems, especially those with a style similar to Parvin's. Researchers can investigate other poems of Parvin Etesami translated by Pazargadi or other translators. Researchers can also use other translational models to analyze Parvin's poems or use Vinay and Darbelnet's (1995) translation model to investigate poems of other outstanding poets.

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