



## A Study of Metaphor Equivalents in the Five Persian Translations of William Shakespeare's Hamlet

### KEYWORDS

Shakespeare, Hamlet, translation, metaphor

**Marjan Salehi Chakousari**

M.A Department of English Translation, East-Azarbaijan Science and Research Branch, Islamic Azad University, Ta-briz, Iran

**Somaiyeh Alipour Kakroudi**

M.A Department of English Translation, East-Azarbaijan Science and Research Branch, Islamic Azad University, Ta-briz, Iran

**ABSTRACT** *The play Hamlet is a story of Danish Royal Family, which is written by William Shakespeare in 1601. After the king's death, the family's relation is disturbed. Their dialogues are full of irony and literary elements in the play which increases its aesthetic aspects and difficulty of understanding. Hamlet also got popular in Iran and different translators tried to render this masterpiece into Persian language. There are eight Persian translations of Hamlet in Iran. Masoud Farzad, Ala-Addin Pazargadi, Mahmood Etamad Zadeh(M.A. Behazin), Dariush Shahin, Esmail Fasih, Mostafa Rahimi, Mir Shams-Addin Adib Soltani, and Arash Kheir Abadi have translated it. Hamlet is full of metaphors, this feature concerned the researchers. The researchers studied five Persian translations of Hamlet according to seven ways Peter Newmark has suggested in his book "Approaches to Translation" (1988). Three samples were chosen to examine whether the metaphors were conveyable into Persian language or not. The essay came to the conclusion that English metaphors can be translated metaphorically.*

### INTRODUCTION

Shakespeare's play Hamlet has been enshrined by the excessive translations, adaptations and discussions. Eight Persian translations of Hamlet and four adaptations of the play in Iran show the significance of the work in Iran and calls for a scientific study.

The play's complete plot brings forth the complexity of the structure and the language. The metaphoric language of Hamlet causes the translators to have a hard task to handle. This study intends to investigate the nature of the task the translators have done. It also aims at tracing the major events in the history of the translation theories in the twentieth century, to be followed by formulating a clear-cut definition of the controversial concept of translating metaphors. The study will discuss the extra bearings that the use of metaphors contributes to the multi-meanings of the text at hand. It will highlight the difficulties of literary translation, having the translations of metaphors in a text which is enshrined by too much controversy over it.

This study can be very significant in an academic atmosphere and hopefully among the reading public which pretends to know all about the translation intricacies in the contemporary era, while the public knowledge has never been tested. The present study will be an interdisciplinary task between the translation theories and literary criticism, having a time-honored text as its case study. The research will have a close study of metaphors in Hamlet in the light of translation evaluation.

### Review of Related Literature

Shakespeare's Hamlet is a tragedy about which we are told so much yet understood too little.

Reading Hamlet makes the reader face with an unaccustomed trouble. Too much appreciated work of literature is hard to read, yet Hamlet is everywhere. Hamlet is adored by every body; however, it remains an enigma for all. The difficulty of understanding is partly due to the language of the play and partly because of the innumerable interpretive bearings assigned to the action of the play by the critics. It is hard to read the play because it is too much rich in aesthetic aspects. Nevertheless, Hamlet, the central character of the tragedy, himself gives rise to the major difficulties of the play.

Hamlet lives in two worlds; one of his father and the other of his uncle. The duality of Hamlet's condition brings forth the dichotomy of his being. The dichotomy of the prose/verse, metaphor/fact, real/unreal, close/far away and friend/enemy is prevalent in the tragedy and all are developed by Hamlet himself. Hamlet expresses his thoughts both in prose and verse to the other characters. The use of the prose style in the speeches establishes a normal relationship between Hamlet and his addressee. The sudden turn to the verse makes the atmosphere be quite ambiguous and open for interpretation.

Drama is essentially spoken language. In the first decade of the 17th century there had not existed the electric devices of today to add to the visual and audible effect of the action; instead, the playwrights used the force of language to drive the intention of the play home. Shakespeare used to employ the dramatic language in the most influential form of it. The use of blank verse with its rhythms and poetic ornaments helped Shakespeare create a world needed for the atmosphere.

In fact, the complicated phraseology and sometimes the syntax serve often to reflect the inner turmoil in the soul of the speaker on the stage. The use of figures of sound such as alliteration, rhyme and assonance in the text is common and adds to the musicality of the utterances on the stage. This quality makes the text seem ambiguous to understand.

An ambiguity, in ordinary speech, means something very pronounced, and as a rule witty or deceitful. In an extended sense, all the poetic texts can be ambiguous.

Creation of a particular meaning for a word and using it in various situations imparts the words and sentences some new meanings which enhance the ambiguity of the situation. In fact, it is because of the ambiguous nature of the language of the text that it calls on different interpretations. The reader might doubt whether the analogy is right.

A metaphor is simply defined as identifying one thing with something else, or expressing one thing in terms of another. Metaphors appear in human language basically in the form of positive statements.

Shakespeare's language in Hamlet is basically metaphoric.

Shakespeare's metaphors are not only limited to a phrase or a sentence, but his whole text is metaphorical. He frequently uses metaphors, to more accurately and more effectively describe the emotions of his character.

It is commonly believed that a metaphor is a comparison made without using words of comparison, including as, such as and like.

The word metaphor derives from the Greek word *metaphora*; *meta* meaning over and *phora/pherein*, which means to carry. Aristotle defined metaphor as the application to one thing the name of another thing. Translation theory seems to be lacking a precise definition of metaphor. In his article *Can Metaphor Be Translated?*, M. B. Dagut criticizes this approach, and writes: The rehabilitation of metaphor in translation theory must thus, clearly, begin with the restoration to the term of its proper (and vitally significant) semantic content (1976). He divides metaphors into two categories, simple and complex, which in their passage from performance to competence results in the creation of polysemes and idioms accordingly (1976).

Within cognitive linguistics, however, Lakoff & Johnson (1980) and Sweetser (1990), studying the conceptual metaphors English people "live by," pointed out the important place metaphor occupies in our central thought processes and the crucial role it plays in semantic structure, respectively. Metaphor is associated, among other things, with "indirectness" (Green, 1989, Maalej, 1990), which makes it a privileged mode of expression in areas where direct expression is censured such as in the field of politics. Hence, the importance of metaphor in a cross-linguistic enterprise such as translation is established. Translation in general (and the translation of metaphor in particular) is not dissociated from the experiential reality of both source (SC) and target (TC) cultures. As a result, the extent to which a text is translatable varies with the degree to which it is embedded in its own specific culture, also with the distance that separates the cultural background of source text and target audience in terms of time and place.

Proposals of rendering metaphor into a TL in terms of rules originate in Newmark (1980), Larson (1984), Crofts (1988), and Alvarez (1993). They all agree on the following procedures for translating metaphor:

- Keeping the same metaphorical image, i.e. translating it literally (as long as it sounds natural to target readers);
- Changing it into a simile;
- Substituting it by an equivalent metaphor in the TL;
- Keeping the same metaphorical image, and adding an explanation making the ground of similarity explicit; and
- Translating it by a paraphrase.

### Methodology

William Shakespeare's tragedy *Hamlet* is an outstanding example of the genre produced so far. The ambiguous language of the play creates a situation in which words, phrases, statements, the text and finally the discourse seem to bear various meanings. Each of these aspects can provide enough food for thought and sufficient material for a research. The researchers studied the whole text of *Hamlet* considerably. Five Persian translations of the text for studying the metaphor's translation were chosen. Several samples were picked up from the text which three of them are brought up in data analysis. After each English sample its five Persian translations are given in a table. The metaphors are underlined and the researchers studied each of them in order to understand whether they were translated metaphorically or not. Finally, the equivalents were analyzed according to Peter Newmark's seven strategies.

**Newmark suggests seven ways to translate metaphors. These ways are in order of preference:**

1. Reproducing the same image in the TL
2. Replacing the image in the SL with the standard TL image
3. Translation of metaphor by simile
4. Translation of metaphor by simile plus sense
5. Conversion of metaphor to sense
6. Deletion
7. Same metaphor combined with sense (1988).

The text of the tragedy *Hamlet* is indeed replete with metaphors. The images are taken from nature and human feelings of envy and revenge. There are many images of sickness, disease, wickedness, blemishes on the body, and other loathsome things that are metaphorically descriptive of the unwholesome condition of Denmark.

### Data Analysis

**Table 1 The cock that is the trumpet to the morn, (Act I. Scene I. Line 150)**

<u>Farzad</u>	خروس سحر که ندای صبح است (ص 22)
<u>Pazargadi</u>	خروس، که شبپور سرگامی است (ص 900)
<u>Behazin</u>	خروس شبپور سینه دم است، (ص 12)
<u>Adib Soltani</u>	خروس، که شبپورزن بامندان است، (ص 24)
<u>Kheir Abadi</u>	بانگ خروس سحر، کوس صبح ظفر است (ص 18)

"Cock" and "morn" (morning) are used in their literal sense, but the trumpet is a metaphor. The cock is compared to a musical instrument that makes a loud and piercing sound when it crows at dawn.

"Trumpet" is translated into

شبپورزن، کوس ندای، شبپور، شبپور.

All the above translators translated "trumpet" metaphorically. Farzad replaced the image in the SL with the standard TL image. Pazargadi, Beh Azin and Kheir Abadi translated the metaphor by simile. Adib Soltani's translation is a simile plus sense.

**Table 2 No, nor the fruitful river in the eye, (Act I. Scene II. Line 80)**

Translator	Translation
<u>Farzad</u>	چشمان اشک آلود (ص 28)
<u>Pazargadi</u>	سیلاب روان چشم (ص 902)
<u>Behazin</u>	نه جوی های زاینده اشک در چشمها (ص 16)
<u>Adib Soltani</u>	نی، و نیز نه رود پر آب در چشم، (ص 34)
<u>Kheir Abadi</u>	این چشم های اشکبار (ص 23)

*Hamlet* uses figurative language to describe the outward behavior of mourning. The "fruitful river of the eye" is a metaphorical description of crying. It has been translated into

اشک، رود پر آب، اشک بار اشک آلود، سیلاب روان، جوی های زاینده

Pazargadi, Beh Azin and Adib Soltani were successful in metaphorical rendering and they reproduced the same image.

Table 3 The pangs of dispriz'd love, the law's delay  
(Act III. Scene I. Line 72)

Translator	Translation
<u>Farzad</u>	آلام عشق مردود، درنگهای دیوانی، (ص 111)
<u>Pazargadi</u>	رنج عشقی که مردود شده، و تأخیر قانون، (ص 933)
<u>Behazin</u>	دلهره عشق خوار داشته و دیر جنبی قانون (ص 68)
<u>Adib Soltani</u>	شکنجه‌های عشق خوار داشته شده، سر دواندن قانون، (ص 168)
<u>Kheir Abadi</u>	شکنجه‌های عشق‌های به پستی کشانده و تا نفرت رسانده، قانون سر دواننده، (ص 92)

He refers to love as "pangs of despised love," making the beauty of love a metaphor for pain and torment.

This metaphor has been translated into آلام عشق مردود، رنج عشقی که مردود شده، دلهره عشق خوار داشته، شکنجه‌های عشق خوار داشته شده، شکنجه‌های عشق‌های به پستی کشانده. None of the equivalents are metaphor in the TL.

#### VI. Conclusion

As translating metaphors is a hard task for translators to accomplish, in some samples they were not successful to translate metaphorically. But in the others, they could translate metaphorically. As it can be observed in the previous samples, the translators conveyed a metaphor by simile and sense. They replaced and reproduced the same image in the SL with a standard TL image.

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