



Manipulative Strategies Used in the Anglo-American Novels Translated into Persian under Two Administrations in Power after the Islamic Revolution in Iran

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Received: 13 July, 2014

Accepted: 15 May, 2015

Abstract

The present study addresses the influence of Iran's post-Revolution political structure on the formation of the country's translated literature system. It examines the translated Anglo-American novels published under two administrations in power after the Islamic Revolution: 1) the Reformist administration, which was a more liberal, leftist administration, seeking to improve Iran's relations with the West and promising to give people more social freedoms and to open the political atmosphere of the country, 2) the Fundamentalist administration, a conservative administration with hostile, aggressive policies towards the West, which maximized Iran and West's confrontations in the international arena. The manipulations found in the novels published under each administration were compared to see what manipulative strategies were most frequent in each period. The results show that the administration with closer relations with the West is more open to Western literature, and only renders its culture in a softer, more decent language and keeps the original image of the cultural Other. That is, the administration's main manipulative strategy is, to use Dukāte's terminology, the 'attenuation' of the taboo concepts. While the administration with hostile policies towards the West is less tolerant of its culture and frequently eliminates the manifestations of the Western culture, that is to say, its main manipulative strategy is 'deletion'. Consequently, it projects a very different image of the cultural Other.

Keywords: manipulation, manipulative strategies, translated literature, Reformist administration, Fundamentalist administration.

INTRODUCTION

Translated literature is almost always manipulated to be brought in line with the norms and standards of the target society. Translation, as Lefevere notes, is "a rewriting of an original

text" (Bassnett & Lefevere 1990: preface). "All rewritings," he further explains, "whatever their intention, reflect a certain ideology and a poetics and as such manipulate literature to function in a given society in a given way" (ibid). Rewriting, thus, Lefevere notes, is "manipulation". Transla

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tors rewrite the original text under the influence of the values in the target culture, and under the ideological and poetological constraints imposed on them by those who can further or hinder their rewritings, that is their patrons (see Lefevere, 1992a). Each translator has to produce a text which is acceptable to the target society, and accordingly “has to ‘manipulate’ between the various constraints under the influence of the political and literary power structures in a given society” (Dukāte, 2007: 112). This will distort the original text and provide a twisted image of the world presented by it. As Katan (1999) points out (cited in Dukāte, 2007), “[d]istortion does not give us an objective picture of reality, but functions like a zoom lens allowing the reader to focus on certain aspects, leaving other aspects in the background” (2007: 117). The socio-political conditions in any society and the values held by the patrons, thus, will certainly have a role in forming the final product and in giving shape to the translated literature system.

Lefevere (1992a) considers translation as a kind of text handling in which the source text is rewritten under “the socio-cultural, ideological and literary constraints which lie behind the production of texts” (Shuttleworth & Cowie, 1997: 147). He integrates the concept of rewriting and manipulation with issues concerning ideology, power and political conditions which obtain at a certain time in a certain place (1992a: 2). For Lefevere “rewriting is closely connected with the political and literary power structures which operate within a given culture, as the processes of adaptation and manipulation which rewriters perform generally lead to the production of texts which reflect the dominant ideology and poetics” (Shuttleworth & Cowie, 1997: 147). In their introduction to *Translation, History and Culture*, Lefevere and Bassnett (1990) suggest that translation should be studied in the broader cultural and political context, with due attention paid to the role of power and manipulation in shaping the final product of translation. For them translation is not an ‘inno-

cent’ act, but a phenomenon which is under the influence of certain agents who use translation as a means of serving their own goals and “advancing their own ideology” (1990: 6).

Dukāte (2007) defines translational manipulation as “the translator’s/interpreter’s handling of a text which results in the adaptation of the text for the Target Audience, considering the cultural, ideological and literary differences between the cultures in contact, which takes place within a particular cultural setting and is carried out by a human agent, with the consequence of a possible influence of individual- or psychology-related factors upon the end product” (Dukāte, 2007: 79). She distinguishes three general types of manipulation: manipulation as handling, manipulation as distortion and manipulation as improvement. Manipulation is considered to be handling when it brings about a change which is neither improvement (positive) nor distortion (negative) (Dukāte, 2007: 80). It can change, for example, “the state of affairs i.e. it brings something new into the Target Culture [...], thus changing its environment to a larger or smaller extent” (2007: 69). Manipulation as distortion is what traditionally has been considered as ‘manipulation’. This kind of manipulation is “the changing of the input information in a way that makes it differ from the original and misrepresents it” (Dukāte, 2007: 70). Adding parts to or omitting parts from the text or changing the tone or meaning of the original text are typical examples Dukāte (2007) gives for manipulation as distortion. Manipulation as improvement signifies everything which is done to improve the source text or some parts of the source text, and render it more readable and more organized (Dukāte, 2007: 70). Examples she provides include “shifts of punctuation, lexical choice, change of style, sentence structure and textual organization” (ibid).

Manipulation, according to Dukāte (2007), can also be subdivided into ‘conscious’ and ‘unconscious’ manipulation. Conscious manipulation is applied ‘intentionally’, and “can be of two types, which can be termed ideological and

lingua-cultural” (2007: 82). It is ideological when it is “carried out in the name of a certain ideology” (ibid), and it is lingua-cultural when the translator tries “to overcome the linguistic and/or cultural differences” (ibid). Unconscious manipulation is “unintentional and results from the workings of human psyche” (2007: 83). Such manipulations can manifest themselves as “normalization, explicitation or digressions due to the specific source text features in an attempt of finding a suitable target culture version for a source culture phenomenon” (2007: 83). It might also appear as a result of the translator’s ignorance, “which manifests itself as errors of various kinds” (ibid).

Dukāte (2007) also distinguishes between ‘text-external’ and ‘text-internal’ manipulation. Text-external manipulation is a kind of manipulation which “proceeds outside the text” (2007: 108). It might include “the processes of selection of texts to be translated, the external constraints affecting the translator in the process of translation as well as the processes which take place in relation to a particular translation after the translation has been completed” (2007: 108). Text-internal manipulation refers to “all kinds of manipulation which may occur within the text” (2007: 109). In other words, it signifies manipulation which brings about shifts in the target text in order to make it more acceptable to the target audience and the target socio-cultural conditions. The two types of manipulation can embrace all kinds of manipulation including handling, improvement and distortion of the original text (Dukāte, 2007: 186).

The present study deals with ‘text-internal manipulation as conscious distortion’. This type of manipulation occurs “due to the dominant political ideology” (Dukāte, 2007: 109). In fact, it is an “ideology-induced manipulation” (Dukāte, 2007: 102) which causes changes in the text in order to bring it in line with the dominant ideology of the society where the text is being translated. By ‘ideology-induced manipulation’, Dukāte (2007) means all kinds of manipulation which emerge from social, political and individ-

ual factors. This kind of manipulation, according to Dukāte, can take the form of deletions, additions, substitutions and attenuations, a classification which she takes from Zauberga (2004, cited in Dukāte, 2007). These are usually carried out, as stated above, on ideological and moral grounds to omit, substitute or soften taboo words, swear words, immoral ideas as well as politically undesirable viewpoints.

Background information

The 1979 Revolution in Iran created several changes in the Iranian society. In fact, it overturned the country’s political, economic, social and cultural order, and began a new form of social life for the Iranian people. The Revolution established an Islamic Republic, which replaced the monarchy of Mohammad Reza Shah Pahlavi. The Islamic Republic, then, let the Islamic commandments define the social behavior of the Iranian people. Most of such behaviors were ‘Islamized’, and a new social system was established. This new social system influenced the literature and translated literature of the country, as “[t]he literary system and the other systems belonging to the social system as such are open to each other: they influence each other” (Lefevere, 1992a: 14). It left a huge impact on the policies of book publication in Iran. Attempts were made to bring the literary production closer to the Islamic social system which was established after the Revolution.

The Regulations of Book Publication (2001), approved by the Supreme Council of Cultural Revolution, states that books which disturb the principles of Islam and the public rights are unfit for publication. This, for example, includes books which are engaged in the “promotion and propagation of heresy and denial of religious principles”, “Propagation of obscenity and moral corruption” and “the propagation and promotion of ideologies of the illegal opposing groups and misleading sects” (*The Regulations of Book Publishing*, 2001: 3, my translation).

The Ministry of Culture and Islamic Guidance is the executive body of the Council to per-

form its policies and regulations. Within the Ministry, the Book Bureau (*Edareh-ye Ketab*) is charged with monitoring book publication. The Book Bureau examines the books submitted for publication and ensures that their contents do not oppose the political, ideological and moral values and standards of the society.

Based on Lefevere's categorization (1992), the patronage system in Iran falls under the 'undifferentiated' type. The Book Bureau in particular and the state in general control all the components of patronage in accordance with the regulations approved by the Supreme Council of Cultural Revolution. The dominant ideology restricts the 'choice and development' of any material that fails to conform to the regulations.

1. The Reformist administration

Nineteen years after the Revolution and following an eight-year war and a period of reconstruction, a reformist administration came to power, which focused on the political reconstruction of the country. Mohammad Khatami started his election campaign with the slogan of 'political development' and "opening the political atmosphere of the country" (Zibakalam, Afshari & Aslanzadeh, 1389: 73). He promised the "development of the civil society [and] freedom of speech" (ibid: 53), as well as "governmental accountability and transparency"

(<http://www.gloria-center.org/2001/09/samii-2001-1>).

The most successful functioning of Khatami's administration was in the area of foreign policy. He adopted a 'détente policy' and proposed the concept of 'dialog among civilizations' (Darvishi & Fardi, 1387: 124). This policy "managed to set Iran free of the political isolation it was entangled in and decreased the artificial atmosphere of tension and confrontation between Iran and the world countries" (ibid: 126, my translation). After his election a 'positive atmosphere' was created in the relations between Iran and other countries, particularly European countries (ibid). He "began an initiative to improve Iran's relations with the West,

advocating 'civilisational dialogue' and [...] calling for scholarly exchanges and other non-diplomatic contacts with the United States" (Gasiorowski, retrieved from www.worlddialogue.org).

There were more freedoms in the area of book publishing under Khatami's administration, too. Khatami himself had "served as minister of culture and Islamic guidance from 1982 to 1992, developing a reputation as a moderate, intellectually oriented Islamic leftist" (Gasiorowski, retrieved from www.worlddialogue.org). Mohajerani, who was Khatami's first Minister of Culture and Islamic Guidance, believed in a kind of "open-door policy in the area of publishing and books" (<http://vista.ir/article/205528>). He tried to make some changes in the structure of the Book Bureau, and reduced the strict measures against book publishing to the minimum (ibid). As one of the first measures he took, Mohajerani announced that books which had once been given a publishing permit did not need to apply for the permit for the second edition of the book, and that the publishing permit was permanent (ibid). About 100 publishing houses were allowed to take responsibility for what they published, without sending books to the Book Bureau for pre-publication examinations (ibid). Consequently, a huge number of literary works, both translated and domestically produced, were published in this period (ibid).

1. The Fundamentalist administration

When Mahmood Ahmadinejad started his election campaign in 2005, he promised 'fighting corruption' and 'improving people's lives economically' (<http://www.ipsnews.net>). "He campaigned as a man of the people fighting corruption" and made "promises of more jobs, better wages and lower prices"

(<http://www.pbs.org/newshour/bb/middle-east-jan>). He believed that "oil money was being misappropriated and wasted" and vowed to make changes in the status quo.

(<http://www.ipsnews.net>). He was supported by the fundamentalist and conservative forces in

the country and won the 2005 presidential election. His victory was the beginning of radical changes in the management system of the country. Being a fundamentalist, he was a severe critic of the Reformists' policies, and gave the Islamic Republic's foreign, cultural, economic and social policies a one hundred percent reversal. The policies that he adopted led to the "radicalization of Iranian politics" under his administration (Ansari, 2008: Introduction).

Immediately after winning the election, the president-elect announced that "moderation will be the policy' of his government on domestic matters"

(<http://www.pbs.org/newshour/bb/middles-east-jan>). "On the international front, he said he wanted good relations with any country that wasn't hostile to Iran, but he saw no need to pay special attention to relations with the United States" (ibid). He also underlined "Iran's right to pursue a nuclear energy program" (ibid). He demanded 'economic justice' and 'economic equality', and noted that "this society has to be on a greater degree of not just personal freedoms or social freedoms but a degree of economic opportunity being expanded" (ibid). In his election campaign in 2005, "Ahmadinejad made great play of the fact that he sought to inaugurate the 'third Islamic revolution' and return the country to the purity of the early days of [1979] revolutionary fervor" (Ansari, 2008: Chapter one). He considered "the period from 1989 onwards [...] the great betrayal of the revolution" (ibid) and talked about "going to the roots of the revolution"

(<http://www.pbs.org/newshour/bb/middles-east-jan>).

Ahmadinejad's foreign policy was based on "an idealist discourse" which "questioned international norms, adopted an aggressive approach towards the West, particularly the U.S. government, [and] challenged the world power policies" (Mansouri Moghadam & Esmaili, 2011: 284, my translation). He believed that the current international system was unjust, and called for changes in it (Jalali, 2012). He was "suspicious of international community and international treaties"

(<http://www.pbs.org/newshour/bb/middles-east-jan>). His ideals, however, were in some cases contrary to international practice and laws, and caused many problems for the country (Jalali, 2012). He urged, for example, that Israel should be wiped off the world map, and denied the Holocaust. "Robust, confrontational and given to bombastic rhetoric, Ahmadinejad drew condemnation from the West and praise from the Middle East street in almost equal measure" (Ansari, 2008: Introduction). His remarks on Israel and the Holocaust were immediately condemned by the international community and concerns grew over Iran's nuclear program. Ahmadinejad rejected the détente policy adopted by Khatami, and instead adopted an adventurous policy in its relations with Western countries. Iran's nuclear program and the troubles it had caused in the country's relations with the West made Ahmadinejad revise his policies towards relations with Western and European countries, and moved him towards strengthening his relations with Eastern countries, particularly Russia and China (see Mansouri Moghadam & Esmaili, 2011; Jalali, 2012). His foreign policy and his handling of the nuclear issue led to the approval of four resolutions by the United Nation's Security Council against Iran and its nuclear program, which in turn led to the approval of many sanctions against the country. The sanctions negatively affected the country's economy, and, consequently, Ahmadinejad failed to keep his economic promises.

One area in which Ahmadinejad's administration attracted widespread criticism was that of book publishing and censorship of books. "After Mahmoud Ahmadinejad was first elected president in 2005, the first thing his then culture minister Mohammad Hossein Saffar Harandi did was to revoke all the licenses issued under the previous president, Mohammad Khatami" (<https://iwpr.net/global-voices/books-stuck-irans-censorship-quagmire>). "Censors had to go through already published works as well as the never-ending flow of new ones, checking line by line to see whether they were compatible

with the ‘core Islamic values’ the new administration wanted to assert” (ibid). The result was the exertion of more restrictions on the choice and contents of books and the drawing up of new regulations about books already published.

Research Question

The present study attempted to find the answer to the following question:

What manipulative strategies were more frequently used in the novels translated and published in the 16-year period after the Revolution under the Reformist and the Fundamentalist administrations in power?

Methodology and data collection

Initially, a list of 200 Anglo-American novels was chosen to study both the text-external and text-internal manipulations in the novels (see Farahzad & Bolouri, 2014). Out of this list, eight novels were chosen from among the translated and published works. The novels were chosen on the basis of the date of their first edition. Two lists of novels were prepared on the basis of the original list, each of which held novels which had their first edition published under either of the above administrations. Out of each of the prepared lists four novels were chosen randomly to stand for the novels published in each of these periods. The eight novels selected for this part of the study were:

Sub-corpus 1 Novels published under the Reformist administration:

- 1) *Winesburg, Ohio* by Sherwood Anderson (1919).
 - 2) *The Catcher in the Rye* by J. D. Salinger (1951).
 - 3) *The Bell Jar* by Sylvia Plath (1963).
 - 4) *The Handmaid’s Tale* by Margaret Atwood (1986)
- Total: 1033 pages.

Sub-corpus 2 Novels published under the Fundamentalist administration:

- 1) *The Heart is a Lonely Hunter* by Car-

son McCullers (1940).

2) *A Tree Grows in Brooklyn* by Betty Smith (1947).

3) *Rabbit, Run* by John Updike (1960).

4) *A Confederacy of Dunces* by John K. Toole (1980).

Total: 1637 pages.

These novels then went through textual analysis and were compared with their original texts to find instances of textual manipulation in each one of them and see what manipulative strategies were most frequently used under each administration. In the present study, each taboo idea was considered as a unit of analysis. So a sentence might contain two or more than two ideas which are regarded as taboo. The deletion of each idea, then, counts as an example of deletion in this study. The number of occurrences of each kind of manipulation in the novels produced under each administration was added up to see what strategy was most frequently used in each period. Finally, the manipulations and the manipulative strategies were explored with regard to the political and social conditions which obtained under each of the two administrations in power. The study tried to see how the regulations concerning the book publication were interpreted and implemented during each period. It further tried to explain the manipulations, i.e. the handlings of texts to bring them in line with the target society’s ideology, with reference to the socio-political conditions of reception under each of the above administrations. The purpose was to see how the administrations interpreted and implemented the regulations of book publication, and how translated novels were manipulated under each administration.

Results and discussions

Discussion of the four novels published under the Reformists

In the four novels published under the Reformists, all four types of manipulation mentioned in Dukāte (2007) were found. In addition to these four types, another type of text manipulation

was also detected. In some cases, the language of the translation was less polite and more explicit than that of the original, a kind of manipulation which was called ‘intensification’ (opposite of attenuation) in this study. The total number of manipulations in this period was 223.

Attenuation of taboo concepts and words was the most frequent type of manipulation exerted in this period. 47.08% of the manipulated items in this period were attenuated and rendered in a softer, more polite language. This means that the Reformists’ main strategy with regard to the forbidden and taboo ideas in the translated novels was to have them expressed in a proper and decent language which does not sound offensive. Deletions comprised only 27.35% of the manipulations observed in the novels produced under the Reformist administration, which means that deletion of forbidden ideas was not among the manipulative priorities of this administration, and the administration only imposed amendments in the form of deletions when the expressed ideas were so rude and immoral that they could spark the society’s negative reactions. Translators seem to have been free to render taboo concepts as long as such descriptions did not violate the boundaries of decency and proper language. And when such boundaries were transgressed, the manipulated parts were most frequently attenuated, and were deleted or substituted in fewer cases. 16.59% of the manipulated items appeared in the form of substitution of the taboo concepts with different, more acceptable concepts.

Discussion of the four novels published under the Fundamentalists

In the four novels published under the Fundamentalists, all four types of manipulation in Dukāte (2007) were found. Moreover, two other types of manipulation which were less frequent

were also detected in the translation of these novels, which were called ‘borrowing’ and ‘generalization’ in this study. In one of the novels the translator uses borrowing as a means of speaking the unspeakable. Many of the taboo ideas are manipulated, but in a few cases they are transcribed into Persian as a means of keeping them. Two of the novels generalize the ideas expressed so that they sound less offensive to the censors. The total number of manipulations found here was 1055.

Deletions were the most common form of manipulation in this period, comprising 61.8% of the whole manipulations found. Substitutions were also frequently used (23.22%) to replace forbidden ideas of the novels. This means that 85.02% of the items manipulated were either deleted or substituted by other concepts, and were consequently eliminated in the processes of translation and pre-publication examination. Only in 12.89% of the cases such items were written in a softer, more polite language, and only one translator, whose translation had many instances of deletions and substitutions, used borrowing as a means of expressing some of the forbidden concepts. Generalization was not found to be a common strategy of manipulation in this period. No instances of intensification of the concepts expressed in the originals were spotted in these translations.

The study, thus, revealed that attenuation of the taboo ideas (i.e. expressing them in a softer language) was the main manipulative strategy resorted to under the Reformist administration, while deletion of the taboo concepts was the most frequent manipulation strategy used under the Fundamentalist administration. Substitution of forbidden ideas with totally different concepts was also frequently used under the Fundamentalists. Table 1 summarizes the data:

Table 1
Manipulations found under the two administrations

Administration	No.	Title	Deletion	Substitution	Attenuation	Addition	Intensification	Borrowing	generalization
Reformists	1	Winesburg, Ohio	-	3	2	-	2	-	-
	2	The Catcher in the Rye	18	16	51	1	15	-	-
	3	The Bell Jar	19	5	19	-	1	-	-
	4	The Handmaid's Tale	24	13	33	1	-	-	-
	Total			61 (27.35%)	37 (16.59%)	105 (47.08%)	2 (0.89%)	18 (8.07%)	0 (0%)
Total number of manipulations found: 223									
Fundamentalists	1	The Heart is a Lonely Hunter	36	20	30	-	-	-	1
	2	A Tree Grows in Brooklyn	218	57	11	6	-	-	-
	3	Rabbit, Run	249	46	22	6	-	-	1
	4	A Confederacy of Dunces	149	122	73	-	-	8	-
	Total			652 (61.80%)	245 (23.22%)	136 (12.89%)	12 (1.13%)	0 (0%)	8 (0.75%)
Total number of manipulations found: 1055									

The findings can be confirmed through the analysis of the translations of a single translator working under both administrations. The novels *The Handmaid's Tale* and *Rabbit, Run* were translated by the same translator, one under the Reformist administration and the other during the Fundamentalists' tenure. *The Handmaid's Tale*, which was translated during the Reformists' rule, contained 33 attenuations and 24 deletions, while *Rabbit, Run*, which was published under the Fundamentalists, had 249 deletions and only 22 attenuations. This also proves that translators adapt themselves to the expectations of the

state Bureaus which supervise the publication of books in the country. Whether such manipulations were directly imposed by the Book Bureau or were enforced by the translators themselves before submission of the book to the Bureau in the form of self-censorship is not very important here as the final product of a translator's work is brought in line with the policies and expectations of the administration in power.

Conclusion

The present study was an attempt to investigate the influence of the political structure of a coun-

try on its translated literature system. The administration which attempted to have better relations with Western countries, advocating the idea of ‘dialog among civilizations’, was more open to Western literature. It allowed the Anglo-American literature to enter the Persian literary system, though in a more decent and proper language. While the administration which adopted hostile, aggressive policies towards the West was less tolerant of the Western culture as manifested through its literature and frequently eliminated such manifestations. Consequently, it projected a very different image of Western literature, and deleted all those instances of the Western culture which appeared to be different from the Islamic culture they promoted at home. The administration frequently domesticated Western literary works, and did not allow the cultural Other to keep its differences.

The results of the analysis of the textual manipulations of the examined novels published under the Reformist and the Fundamentalist administrations revealed that although the regulations of book publication were the same, the final products were very different and the regulations were enforced very differently. A quick look at the Regulations of Book Publication (2001, 2010) reveals that the Reformists enforced the regulations more closely. The regulations never say that descriptions of sexual scenes, for instance, which were among the most deleted ideas at the time of the Fundamentalists, had to be completely deleted. The revised *Regulations of Book Publication* (2010) asserts that “expression of sexual relations and corruptions in a decent and non-provocative language, with educational purposes, or for transferring a positive message or showing the true face of the villainous characters” is allowed by the law. This seems to be exactly what the Reformists did. Whenever possible, they attenuated the originals to speak in a ‘decent and non-provocative language’ without unnecessarily mutilating the literary work. They respected the readers and allowed them to have access to the original ide-

as expressed in the novels, though in a more proper and decent language, which satisfies the requirements of the law and answers the expectations of Iran’s traditional society. The Fundamentalists, however, completely eliminated ideas that they found in contrast with their ideology, and seem to have allowed their personal tastes, rather than the law, to decide the fate of the books submitted to them.

The total number of manipulations in the novels published under the Fundamentalist administration was also more than the number of manipulations exerted under the Reformist administration. This shows that the Fundamentalists were more eager to have the Western literature manipulated and were less tolerant of the values it brought into the country.

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