The Study of Persian Equivalents for Words Ending in Suffix "–ism"

L'ETUDE DES EQUIVALENTS PERSANS DES MOTS FINISSANT EN SUFFIXE "-ISME"

Ehsan Panahbar[1,*]; Ahmad Moinzade[2]

[1]Department of Translation Studies, Isfahan University, Iran
Azadi Sq., The University of Isfahan, The Faculty of Foreign Languages, Translation Studies Department, Isfahan, Iran
[2]Ph.D. Department of Translation Studies, Isfahan University, Iran
Azadi Sq., The University of Isfahan, The faculty of foreign languages, translation studies department, Isfahan, Iran.
Email: moin@fgn.ui.ac.ir
*Corresponding author.
Email: epanahbar@yahoo.com

Abstract

The challenges at the level of morphemes and words have been the preoccupation of many theorists and practitioners so that they introduce the best equivalents of them in the TL. In the present study, it was attempted to investigate the procedures adopted by Persian translators and lexicographers and see that which procedures were the most applicable to translation of words ending in the suffix "–ism". On the other hand, it also tried to identify the Persian equivalents for the suffix "–ism" suggested by the Persian translators and lexicographers. The data consisting of words ending in suffix "–ism" were collected from two encyclopedias and the glossary part of a translated book all of them belong to the sociopolitical register. The results showed that the translators and lexicographers' most favorable procedures were expansion and equivalence and they were less inclined towards the use of calque, borrowing and literal translation. The low percentage of the adoption of literal translation might be caused by the different Persian and English linguistic and cultural values. The results also identified ten different equivalences for the suffix "–ism" suggested by the Persian translators and lexicographers.

Key words: Equivalent; Translation procedures; Translation; Suffix "–ism"; Sociopolitical register

Résumé

les défis au niveau des morphèmes et les mots ont été la préoccupation de nombreux théoriciens et praticiens afin qu'ils introduisent le meilleur d'eux les équivalents de la TL. Dans la présente étude, on a tenté d'enquêter sur les procédures adoptées par les traducteurs Persique et lexicographes et voir ce qui les procédures ont été les plus applicables à la traduction des mots se terminant par le suffixe «-isme». D'autre part, il a également tenté d'identifier les équivalents persans pour le suffixe «-isme» suggéré par les traducteurs et lexicographes persans. Les données constituées de mots se terminant par le suffixe «-isme» ont été recueillies à partir de deux encyclopédies et la partie du glossaire d'un livre traduit tous d'entre eux appartiennent au registre sociopolitique. Les résultats ont montré que les traducteurs et les procédures de lexicographes» étaient les plus favorables d'expansion et de l'équivalence et ils étaient moins enclins à l'utilisation de calque, d'emprunt et littérale pourcentage translation. The bas de l'adoption de la traduction littérale pourrait être causé par les différents persan et en anglais valeurs linguistiques et culturelles. Les résultats ont également identifié dix équivalences différentes pour le suffixe «-isme» suggéré par les traducteurs et lexicographes persans.

Mots clés: Equivalent; Procédures de traduction; Traduction; Suffixe «-isme»; Inscrire sociopolitiques

INTRODUCTION

When a new term entersalinguistic community, it would be compatible somehow to the linguistic and cultural

values of that community. If it cannot be compatible to those values, or the language reformers insist that that term is going to corrupt their language, or worse the speech community does not accept that term, it cannot win the day and after a moment will be forgotten. But if the term would be accepted in its community, and would be translated to the other languages, here the problem of finding an equivalence becomes cumbersome in many cases because that term is compatible to the linguistic and cultural value of a different speech community and in different culture finding an equivalence matched to that culture's values is a different story.

The problem of finding equivalence is more troublesome in case of political and sociological terms because they are stuck to the culture and world views of the source culture. For example, if a social or political event occurs in a certain society, a term would be coined in order to name that event or phenomenon specific to that society. However, in another society which is different in both linguistic and sociopolitical background and any equivalence would be unfamiliar to the target culture to some extent since they have not experienced that sociopolitical event.

According to Newmark (1988) the translation of sociopolitical terms are classified into institutional translation and he distinguishes it from technical translation: "technical translation is one of specialized translation; institutional translation, the area of politics, commerce, finance, government etc., is the other" (p.151). He also asserts that the institutional translation is cultural "unless concerned with international organizations." (ibid).

The words ending in suffix "–ism" are in many cases classified into institutional translation that bear specific translation strategies and procedures. Therefore, the present study tries to investigate which procedures the Persian translators and lexicographers have used for finding equivalence for these words and terms. On the other hand, this study tries to identify the equivalents that these translators and lexicographers shave suggested for the very suffix "–ism" attached to different bases in different registers.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK AND LITERATURE REVIEW

1. What is Equivalence?

Jakobson, in his article "On linguistic aspects of translation" tries to approach to the notion of equivalence from a linguistic point of view. He uses the notion of signifier-signified relation of Saussure and asserts that "there is ordinarily no full equivalencebetween code-units, while messages may serve as adequate interpretations of alien code-units or messages" (Jakobson, 2000, p.114). according to Jakobson, there are many linguistic terms

to which we are only familiarbecause we have linguistic acquaintance with them. For example, he puts it that the term cheese is something which is different from the term syr in Russianbecause the Russian code-unit' semantic field is different from the English term cheese (ibid). For making equivalence between these two terms we should add another term, here cottage, to the Russian term in order to be equivalent. Therefore, Jakobson asserts that equivalence as "substitutes messages in one language not for separate code-units but for entire messages in some other language" (ibid).

Nida (1964) tries to categorize two kinds of equivalence which he defines them as follows:

1. Formal equivalence which "focuses attention on the message itself, in both form and content" (p.159).

In this kind of equivalence, the translator should pay attention to the ST formal features and the SL cultural factors.

2. Dynamic equivalence in which the focus is on the linguistic and cultural expectations of the SL receptor. In fact, the naturalness is fundamental factor for dynamic equivalence (ibid. p.166).

Baker (1992), in her book, *In Other Words*, argues that for finding equivalence, the translator should consider the meaningful elements of a single word because "an orthographic word may therefore contain more than one formal element of meaning, but the boundaries of such elements are not always clearly marked on the surface" (p.12). In fact, a single word may have several morphemes which help the translator in finding the better equivalence.

Baker (ibid) also introduces common problems in finding equivalence at word level which some of them that are related here areas follows (pp. 21-25) [the examples is mine]:

1. When the ST word has cultural elements which is unknown to the TT receptor. The elements may be religious, sociopolitical, ethnic customs and etc. For example the word کدخداگری which has no equivalent in English.

2. When the word's elements are familiar to the TT receptor but the word is not lexicalized in the TL at all,e. g. the word *chauvinism* which is known by the Persian speaker but is not lexicalized in Persian.

3. When the word is semantically complex, not necessarily morphologically complex, e.g. the verb fetch has two meaning within itself as go to *somewhere and bring something* which in Persian the equivalent is
به جایی رفتن و آوردن چیزی.

4. The SL and the TL make different distinction to the meaning elements of a word. Some languages make different distinctions to the gender of word but some other not, e.g. English suffixes as act*or* and act*ress* which there is no counterpart in Persian as such.

5. Idiosyncrasies in defining semantic fields of words between languages as the SL has the superordinate or general words but the TL has not the identical semantic

field level or vice versa, e.g. English Under *jump* we find more specific verbs such as *leap, vault, spring, bounce,dive, clear, plunge, and plummet*, but Persianhas only پریدن.

6. Differences in physical or interpersonal perspective liketake *an exam* which in Persian *take* is literally translated to give امتحان دادن.

7. Differences in form which some prefixes or suffixes in SL has no direct equivalence in TL. There are other forms of affixes such as infixes which can be troublesome. For example some meanings of suffix "–ism" have no suffix counterpart in Persian, e.g. mystic*ism*' Persian equivalent is عرفان which in Persian is considered as a single word without any known suffix.

8. The word may have equivalence in TL but in different level of frequency of use. English, for instance, uses the continuous -*ing*form for binding clauses much more frequently than other languages which have equivalents for it but in Persian despite having the continuous role (می) but is unusual in binding two clauses.

9. The use of loan word in ST causes problems for the finding equivalence in the TT because using that word may be unusual in the register of the ST or SL at all, e.g. *chauvinism* is a English loan word from French but finding an equivalent in Persian becomes cumbersome. Therefore, Persian translators have suggested loan word in Persian as شُووینیسم

2. Making Equivalence

2.1 Translation Shifts for Making Equivalence

Catford (2000) tackles the problem of making equivalence by suggesting the notion of translation shifts by which he mean "departures from formal equivalence in the process of going from the SL to the TL" (p.141). By formal correspondent he means "any TL category (unit, class, element of structure, ect.) Which can be said to occupy, as neatly as possible, the "same" place in the "economy" of the TL as the given SL category occupies in the SL" (Catford, 1965, p.27) therefore he suggests textual equivalent in which any portion of text (e.g. morphemes or words) "to be the equivalent of a given SL text or portion of text."

2.2 Vinay and Darlenet procedures

Because this study focuses on the translation at the level of word and morpheme the model suggested by vinay and Darbelnetis considered appropriate. They introduce two general strategies for translation as **direct translation** and **oblique translation**.

They subcategorize direct translation into three procedures:

1. Borrowing (transference): in borrowing the SL word transferred into the TL with least change or modification. They argue that this strategy is the simplest one among other strategies (Vinay & Darbelnet, 2000, p.85).

2. Calque (through- translation): "A calque is a special kind of borrowing whereby a language borrows an expression form of another, but then translates literally each of its elements" (ibid).

3. Literal translation: in literal translation the translator transfers the TL text word -for –word which is grammatically and idiomatically appropriate to the TL structure (ibid, p.86). This strategy is more practicable for units above words but in some case is suitable for word level as well.

Vinay and darbelnet, then subcategorize the oblique translation as following procedures:

1. Transposition (shift): the word class or part of speech of the word is changed without modification of meaning.

2. Modulation: defined as "a variation through a change of viewpoint, of perspective and very often of category of thought" (Vinay&Darbelnet as cited in Newmark, p.88).

3. Equivalence: "retaining the same situation in different terms" (ibid, p.90).

4. Adaptation: the change of cultural reference in situations unfamiliar to the TL culture (Vinay & Darbelnet, 2000, p.90).

2.3 Other Procedures Suggested by Newmark

Naturalization: it adapts the borrowed word to the expectations of the TL first with respect to both morphologically and phonologically.

Cultural equivalence: "this is an approximate translation where a SL cultural word is translated by a TL cultural word" (Newmark, 2000, p.82).

Functional equivalence: in this procedure, the translator tries to explain the function of the cultural word in the SL to the TL reader. And according to Newmark, it is the most accurate way of translating (ibid, p.83).

Descriptive equivalence: here the translator only describes the attributes of the word.

There are some other procedures suggested by Newmark, because this study concerns with translation at the morpheme and word level, and those procedures are more concerned with finding equivalence at levels higher than word, therefore; they are neglected.

2.4 Proposing Equivalents for the Suffix "–ism" in Persian

After the upheaval in Western sciences especially in Humanities and make them equal in scientific rank to the natural sciences, the new terms and paradigms were introduced to the scientific fields. Among producing new terms, the role of affixes in attaching older bases and fulfilling the requirements of new paradigms in new sciences is of utmost importance. The suffix "–ism" is one of productive derivational affixes which attached to different word-classes as noun, adjective and verbs to make nouns.

2.5 The Origin and Meanings of Suffix "–ism"

According to Merriam- Webster's Collegiate Dictionary 10th edition (2002), this suffix is originates from Latin, -*ismus*, and Greek -*ismos* whose meaning could be categorized into:

1 a: act :practice: process ‹criticism› ‹plagiarism› b: manner of action or behavior characteristic of a (specified) person or thing ‹animalism› c: prejudice or discrimination on the basis of a (specified) attribute ‹racism› 'sexism›

2 a: state: condition: property ‹barbarianism› b: abnormal state or condition resulting from excess of a (specified) thing ‹alcoholism› or marked by resemblance to (such) a person or thing ‹giantism›

3 a: doctrine: theory: religion ‹Buddhism› b: adherence to a system or a class of principles 'stoicism›

4: characteristic or peculiar feature or trait ‹colloquialism›

In Persian, different equivalences are suggested by different professional translators. For instance, According to Nafisi (2010), the suffix گری –, گرائی- and other derivations related to these equivalences firstly were introduced by Arianpour, the translator of some scholarly books on humanities (p.78).

On the other hand, Fouladvand (1998) in preface to his translation of *The Open Society and Its Enemies*, disagreeswith using the suffixes گرائی -.گری – for equivalence of –ism in some words because they cannot fulfill the real meaning and register of the text involved. For instance, he proposes the separate word "اصالت" for the equivalence of – ism in the word "*historicism*" to respect the philosophical register of the text in translation of the open society and its enemies.

METHOD

The appropriate method to collect words ending the suffix "–ism" which is the purpose of this study, would be to gather as many instances as possible in appropriate encyclopedias and glossary of translators and lexicographers. Two encyclopedias as *English-to-Persian encyclopedia of Politics*compiled by Ashuri (2007) *An*

*introduction encyclopedia of sociology*compiled by Saroukhani (1997) as well as the glossary part belonging to translation of the book *The open society and its enemies*compiled byFouladvand (1998)were chosen for gathering data. For the first step, in each encyclopedia the words ending in the suffix "–ism" were extracted and their parts of speech and meaning were identified.

The next step was to provide records or data cards for the gathered data. So, all the instances of words ending in suffix "-ism" and their Persian equivalents were written on separate note cards. Then, the words were compared and contrasted to their Persian equivalents in order to identify the procedure(s) adopted for finding equivalents.

After that, the Persian equivalents were investigated closely and precisely in order to identify the equivalents that Persian translators and lexicographers proposed for the suffix "–ism". The results of these steps are as follows.

RESULTS

Among data first we select those of reduction and expansion to investigate that the Persian language has a one to one equivalence in the level of morpheme to the English word or not.

Table 1
Percentage of Reduction and Expansion Procedures Used by the Participants

Procedures	Frequencies	Percentages	Examples
Reduction	9	3.9	Reactionism ارتجاع
Expansions	125	54.34	Followism دنباله رو مآبی
Total number of data	230	100	

From this table it becomes clear that the Persian language in order to find a good equivalent requires expanding the word to two or more words.

OTHER PROCEDURES

Table 2
Percentage of Other Procedures Used by the Participants

Procedures	Frequencies	Percentages	Examples
1.Borrowing (transference)+naturalization	22	9.56	Liberalism لیبرالیسم
2.Calque (through- translation)	12	5.21	Autodynamism خود پویایی
3.Transference-equivalence	7	3.04	parliamentarianism پارلمانداری
4.Literal translation	16	6.9	Dualism ثنویت
5.Transposition (shift)	34	14.74	Institutionalism گرایی‌نهاد
6.modulation	1	0.43	Nomadism چادر نشینی
7.Equivalence (synonymy)	112	48.69	Hedonism لذت گرایی
8.Adaptation	0	0.0	-----------
9.Cultural equivalence	3	1.3	Utopianism آرماشنهر طلبی
10.Functional equivalence	2	0.86	Feminism زنان مکتب دفاع از حقوق
11.Descriptive equivalence	0	0.0	--------------
Total number of data	230	100	

It should be noted that some words bear more than one procedures, in fact, as Newmark (1988) maintains, **couplets**, **triplets**, and **quadruplets** respectably may blend two, three or four of these procedures (p.91). For example, in making Persian equivalent for word such as **conventionalism** three procedures of **transposition**, **expansion** and **equivalent** are involved.

Conventionalism ⟶ اصالت عرف
1. *Conventional* (adj)   عرف(*n*)
Transposition of adjective to noun
2. *Conventionalism* (morphologically as one word) (morphologically as two words)اصالت عرف
3. Finding a near **equivalent** (عرف) for the base convention.

This is the reason why the sum of the number of words which bear procedures are different from the total number of data collected.

Discussion 1

In fact these tables and data show the most active procedures among others in case of making Persian equivalents for words ending in morpheme "- ism". As it is clear from the table, the procedures **expansion** and **equivalent** are the most active procedures. This shows that the translators have tried to find Persian equivalents for the words even in case of sacrificing economy. For example, *followism* as a word with two phonemes (*follow*+*ism*) has been translated and expanded into دنباله رو مآبیwhich has five morphemes as(ی)دنبال+ ه+رو+مآب. Hence, they expand the words to two or more morphological words in order to avoid **borrowing** and **calque** which maintain economy in sacrificing accuracy in these cases.

On the other hand, because the words ending in suffix "–ism" are more frequent in philosophical, medical and sociological texts, they can be categorized as technical terms. Therefore, in these kinds of texts accuracy is more important than economy and the translator in one hand tries to find an near equivalent in the TT and on the other hand he should make the equivalent as accurate as possible in the register concerned.

Among the procedures, the most favorable one which fulfills both accuracy and economy is literal translation which according to Newmark (1988) is the basic translation procedure (p.70), and is good translation (Vinay and Darbelnet, as cited in Munday, 2001, p.57). But as the results show the translators and lexicographers have been less intended to use this procedure than **equivalence**, **transposition** and even **borrowing** that is the most inaccurate translation procedure.

There is an extra procedure called as **transference-equivalence**identified in this study which translators and lexicographers use where they transfer some parts of the SL word into the TL and the other parts filled by TL elements (Shaghaghi, 2008, p.130). For example, the word parliamentarianism is translated into پارلمانداری in which the first part (پارلمان) is borrowed from the SL and the second part (-داری) is from TL.

Discussion 2

Persian translators and lexicographers have been trying to find accurate as well as economical equivalents for each word or neologism which enters the TL. Suggesting each equivalent requires sufficient investigation in both linguistically and culturally in order that the equivalent suggested in the given register fulfills the message in ST as much as possible.

Among the data gathered the following equivalents are suggested by Persian translators and lexicographers for the suffix "–ism":

1. -گری، -گرائی، - and their derivations
2. ـیت
3. -ی، -گی
4. اصالت◇
5. -نگری
6. ◇بودن
7. اعتقاد به◇،-باوری
8. طرفداری از ◇
9. ـآیینی
10. -اندیشی، -انگاری

CONCLUSION

Making equivalents is very cumbersome for translators and lexicographers because every word or term which enters TL has many socio-cultural and linguistic values which are specific to the SL and these values in many times are not compatible to the TL's. On the other hand, the register, in many cases, determines the meaning of the terms or affixes.

Therefore, with respect to the different meanings of the suffix "–ism" in different registers such as medicine, sociology, politics, philosophy and other registers, the Persian equivalents for this suffix should be appropriate to the text type and register involved. Hence, introducing only one or two Persian equivalents for it seems inadequate in transferring the close meaning of the suffix. As the results of this study show, Persian lexicographers and translators have suggested different equivalents which in some cases are morphologically different from the SL suffix counterpart. It means that because the linguistic properties of English and Persian are different form each other, it seems that translator and lexicographers forced to use a separate word instead of using suffixes and literal translation. On the other hand, the different cultural and linguistic values may force the translators and lexicographers to incline toward the use of three procedures namely transposition, expansion and equivalent which are less accurate than literal translation that seems most accurate as well as economical procedure among others. But for languages of close culture and

linguistic properties it may appropriate to use literal translation.

LIMITATIONS AND SUGGESTIONS FOR FURTHER STUDIES

As it mentioned, this study focuses on the words ending in the suffix "–ism" limited in socio-political register and the results are only limited to this register. As a result, the other registers as medicine, psychology, philosophy and etc. may be investigated in order to see whether the results from these registers would be different from the results of this study.

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