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Expansion and reduction in translation: a case study of hyperbole in the persian translation of euripides's andromache and medea

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ABSTRACT

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Hyperbole is one of the most widely used figure of speech in heroic texts, a long neglected form of non-literal language. The present study set out to determine the extent of expansion and reduction in the translation of hyperbole in Euripides's dramatic texts, *Andromache* and *Medea* from English into Persian. In order to investigate the objective of this study, all hyperbolic expressions in English texts, which were considered hyperbolic in Persian as well, were identified. Then, they were classified based on the most recent classification of hyperbole in English by Claridge (2011), into three categories; namely, single-word hyperbole, phrasal hyperbole, and clausal hyperbole. To control the issue, English classification was carried out twice, and also a Persian Language and Literature expert confirmed Persian hyperbolic expressions twice. The first set of analysis examined the frequency of each category in both languages, and to check whether the extent of expansion and reduction in translation of hyperbolic expressions is significant, Chi-square test was performed via SPSS 21. The obtained results did not show any significant differences between English and Persian hyperbolic expressions in terms of expansion and reduction.

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1. Introduction

Hyperbole, a large neglected form of non-literal language, is used in diverse sources as Encyclopedia Britannica mentions love poetry, sagas, tall tales, classical mythology, political rhetoric and advertising as texts containing hyperbole. Furthermore, hyperbole is not only an arcane rhetorical figure but rather, it is a common feature of everyday language use (Leech 1983). According to Clarks, hyperbole can be seen as a violation of the maxim of quality, which gives rise to conversational implicature (1996). When the literal utterance violates the maxim of quality as in hyperbole, the reconstruction of the intended meaning, based on the difference between what is said and what is implicated is through up or downscale the assertion to accord with reality (McCarthy and Carter 2004). Norrick (2004) makes the point that extreme case formulations involve violation of the quality maxim, whereas non-extreme hyperboles do not. He bases this view on Gibb's (1994) argument that listeners expect utterances only to resemble but not perfectly match the speaker's beliefs. In contrast, Claridge (2011) argues that this distinction is not very convicting as a dividing line for the application of the quality maxim, and Gricean approach can be made use of in the elucidation of hyperbole, but in a different way than investigated by Grice. If we look at the quality maxim from an addressee perspective, we may not deal with clear true-false opposition, but with the degree of credibility of an utterance (Claridge 2011). Allan (2000) presents a credibility metric with eleven values ranging from 'undoubtedly false' to 'undoubtedly true' which a hearer can attach to a given message. The credibility metric can be taken to refer to the contrast between the hyperbolic and a literal expression, which is part of the definition of hyperbole. Fogeline (1988) believes that a hyperbolic statement is uttered with the intention of having the extreme, and the role of the context is crucial in the interpretation of hyperbolic statement. According to Claridge (2011), what is an exaggeration in one case, does not have to be in the other. Claridge (2011) recently proposed a general and comprehensible classification of English hyperbolic expressions. Nevertheless, very little research has compared hyperbole in different languages to check the extent of similarity or differences of languages in terms of hyperbolic expressions. Therefore, it is becoming increasingly difficult to ignore this knowledge gap. Epic literature such as Euripides's dramatic texts – *Andromache* and *Medea* – contains countless figures of speech such as hyperbole. Therefore, in the current study Claridge's (2011) classification is used to check the extent of expansion and reduction in hyperbolic expressions of Euripides's dramatic texts from English into Persian.

2. Background of the study

2.1. Unit of translation

In traditional analysis, words in literal expressions denote what they meant according to common or dictionary usage while words in figurative expressions connote additional layers of meaning. When one receives the message, the mind must interpret the data to convert it into meaning. This involves the use of a cognitive framework, which is made up of memories of all the possible meanings that might be available to apply to the particular words in their context. This set of memories will give prominence to the most common or literal meanings, but also suggest reasons for attributing different meanings, e.g., the reader understands that the author intended it to mean something different (Catford 1965). Apart from translating isolated words, "the most typical example of translating on the level of the combination of words is the translation of phraseological units" (Catford 1965, p. 44). As Catford (1965) comments that, the phraseological units should not be considered as the only possible translation units on the level of combination of words and Larson (1984) points out that to make a good translation figure of speech are specially challenging. In all translating processes loss of a number of figures of speech are inevitable and some of them can be gained in the process (Nida & Taber 1969). Vinay and Darbelnet (2000) believe that the best strategy to translate figures of speech due to convey the same sense and image is equivalence. Generally, translating figurative speech must be done through conscious finding and replacement strategies, regardless of the unit shifts and make attempt to convey the same sense and image.

2.2. Loss and gain of information

As there is no exact equivalent in two languages, a translator can adopt different strategies to translate in a very natural way. However, the phenomena of loss and gain of information in the process of translating is inevitable. Nida (1975) proposed the concepts of loss and gain and states that each language possesses certain distinctive characteristics, which give it a special character, e.g. words, building capacities, unique patterns of phrase orders and special types of language such as poetry, proverbs and expressions. Furthermore, formal equivalent concerns with the message in the receptor language and culture in compare with SL to determine the standard of accuracy and correctness (Nida, 1975). Therefore, in the process of translating, the translator may add some information with the hope that the translation does not contradict the message of the sentence. In addition, the translation of SL items into TL may have some addition or extra information. Klaudy (1998) states the technique of explicitation as make explicit information in TT that is implicit in ST, in general, therefore, it seems that any kind of expansion in translation must be applied at least number and carefully with respect to the context of situation. Yet, omission in translation normally considered unfavorable, because during the process of omission, some information or effect in the ST will be omitted and there for lost. According to As-safi (2006), loss may occur on all language levels: morphological, syntactic, textual, semantic and stylistic/rhetorical. There are two kinds of loss in translation: first, inevitable loss, which it is because of divergent systems of two languages regardless of the skill and competence of the translator. Second is an avertable loss, which occurs because of translator failure to find the appropriate equivalence. Both kinds of loss can be seen on all levels (As-safi 2006). Baker (1992) refers to deletion as omission of a lexical item because of grammatical or semantic patterns of the TL. She also states that in fact, this strategy does not harm translation in some context and if the meaning conveyed by particular item, there is no need to use lengthy explanations and simply could be omitted. Furthermore, in some cases omission is required to avoid redundancy in a text (Nida 1964).

2.3. Hyperbole

Overstatement can take various forms. The lexico-grammatical repertoire for hyperbole includes numerical expressions, expressions of spatial extent, intensifying and extreme adjectives and adverbs, comparatives and superlatives (Spitzbardt 1963). According to McCarthy and Carter, hyperbolic utterances often describe entities and events in the extreme way possible (2004). In both classical and modern rhetoric, hyperbole is seen as a device that can be used both to highlight or emphasize certain aspects and to convey and arouse specific emotions (Roberts and Kreuz 1994, Ueding 1998). Claridge adds that one of the advantages of hyperbole is that it can at the same time emphasize something and convey emotions. Claridge (2011) gives an overview of realizations of hyperbole. A first distinction that can be made is that between basic and composite hyperbole. According to Claridge (2011), basic hyperbolic expressions do not leave the domain of the corresponding intended expression. However, composite hyperbole is a domain-switching phenomenon and combines with another figure of speech such as metaphor. Claridge further distinguishes between the types of syntactic constituent that can be hyperbolic: hyperbolic expressions can be words, phrases or clauses. In single-word hyperbole, the exaggerated content is exclusively or principally found in one word of utterance, such as ages, loads. Phrasal hyperbole stay within the limits of one syntactic or functional constituent and can be sub-classified into noun phrase, verb phrase, adjective phrase, adverb phrase and prepositional phrase. Claridge (2011) argues, clause comprises everything containing more than one syntactic constituent within a clause and can go up to a complete sentence with several clauses.

2.4. Dramatic text translation

The translation of literary texts is a difficult task, and it requires talent, patience, linguistic and extra-linguistic knowledge. Newmark (1988) comes with a theory of translating a dramatic work. According to him, the main purpose of translating a play is to have it performed successfully. Therefore, a translator of drama inevitably has to bear in mind the better written and more significant the text, the fewer compromises he can make in favor of the reader and the works under certain constraints to explain puns, ambiguities, or cultural references, and try to not transcribe words for the sake of local color. Newmark (1988) suggests that a translator of drama in particular must translate into the modern target language if he wants his characters to 'live'. As Tatu (2011) argues, furthermore, drama translation compounds the

issue and claims, besides the translator's awareness of the dual nature that drama displays: a text written for an audience and performed on stage, or a text written for readers and laid down on page. This dual nature will necessarily be rendered in translation. Tatu, partially concluding that, over the last decades, drama translators have committed them to employing the cultural technique that actually bears the name 'drama translation'(2011).

3. Method

The source text of *Andromache* by Coleridge (1999) as well as, English text of *Medea* by Lushnig and Kovacs (2006) were selected. Then, the only two existing Persian translations of Euripides's dramatic texts, i.e. *Andromache* that was translated by Khatibi (2013) and *Medea*, which was translated by Nedāee (2012), were chosen.

The reason for the selection of these two dramatic texts is that the only available Persian translation of *Andromache* by Khatibi (2013) won a price in the first festival of translated plays in Iran. The Persian translation of *Medea* by Nedāee (2012) attempted to be in the closest structure and meaning of the STs as compared with its two most authentic English translations (Nedāee 2012). Secondly, Euripides, 480 BCE, along with Aeschylus and Sophocles, was one of the three leading ancient writers of tragic texts. However, his masterpieces became more popular than the other two as time went by. His greatest works are *Andromache* and *Medea* as well as *Alcestis*, *Electra*, *Ion*, etc.

3.2. Framework of the study

In recent years, there has been an increasingly interest in hyperbole as a separate phenomenon from irony, similie and other figures of speech. Therefore, Claridge in 2011 suggested a complete and general classification of different types of hyperbole in English. Claridge (2011) gives an overview of realizations of hyperbole; further distinction is between the types of syntactic constituent that can be: hyperbolic words, phrases and clauses.

Hyperbolic words such as: It was so cold that I was freezing!

Phrasal hyperbolic expressions such as: I avoid telephone like the plague.

When some hyperbolic phrases are in a sentence then, it is called clausal hyperbolic expression. For example: I am really, really, really changed dramatically from not eating very much to scoffing my face at every single available opportunity.

Claridge (2011) defines hyperbole base on the term 'expression' leaving it open to which forms of hyperbole uses, which cover a fairly wide range. It is the purpose of the present study to deal with the common function of hyperbole in both English and Persian languages, i.e. lexical and semantic repertoire employed with hyperbolic function.

4. Findings

The present study has compared and contrasted 91 instances of hyperbolic expressions, appearing in *Andromache* and *Medea* dramatic texts, which identified through Claridge's (2011) definition of hyperbole and classification of hyperbolic expressions. The following table shows the result of data analysis in which the frequency of occurrences of each English category in both *Andromache* and *Medea*, along with their total frequency of occurrences descriptively:

Table 4.1
Descriptive Statistics of Frequency of English Hyperbolic Categories.

Classification of Hyperbolic Expressions	Andromache Text	Medea Text	Total
Single-word Hyperbole	7	6	13
Phrasal Hyperbole	43	25	71
Clausal Hyperbole	7	3	10
Total	57	34	91

In Table 4.2, the frequency of occurrence of each Persian category in both Andromache and Medea, along with their total frequency of occurrence are presented:

Table 4.8
Descriptive Statistics of Frequency of Persian Hyperbolic Categories.

Classification of Hyperbolic Expressions	Andromache Text	Medea Text	Total
Single-word Hyperbole	4	7	11
Phrasal Hyperbole	46	25	71
Clausal Hyperbole	7	2	9
Total	57	34	91

According to Tables 4.1 and 4.2, three of the single-word hyperbolic expressions in Andromache expanded to phrasal hyperbolic expressions when translated into Persian. Yet, in the translation of Medea, reduction has happened; therefore, the frequency of occurrence of single-word Persian hyperbolic expressions has risen from six to seven.

As Tables 4.1 and 4.2 show, the frequency of occurrence of phrasal hyperbolic expressions in English texts of Andromache is different from its Persian translation, in that it has the expansion of three single-word hyperboles to phrasal hyperbolic expression through Persian translation. In contrast, one of the English phrasal hyperbolic expressions of Andromache has reduction to single-word hyperbolic expression. Therefore, the frequency of phrasal hyperbolic expressions of Andromache changed from 44 to 46. In Medea, one of the English phrasal hyperbolic expressions has reduction to Persian single-word hyperbolic expression and simultaneously one of the English clausal hyperbolic expressions reduced to Persian phrasal hyperbolic expression. Therefore, the frequency of phrasal hyperbolic expressions of Persian translation of Medea has not any change with its English text. It follows from Tables 4.1. and 4.2. that clausal hyperbolic expressions has no expansion or reduction through translating into Persian, in Andromache, but in Medea, one of the English clausal hyperbolic expressions was reduced to phrasal hyperbolic expression. Therefore, the frequency of occurrence of English and the Persian clausal hyperbolic expressions is the same in Andromache but in Medea has changed from 3 to 2. As Tables 4.1, 4.2, and the results of this study display, there was not any significant differences in all three hyperbolic categories through translation from English into Persian.

4.2.3 identified cases of expansion and reduction in andromache and medea

Here, expansion refers to lexico-grammatically expanded categories of hyperbolic expressions in which single-word hyperboles are changed to phrasal or clausal hyperboles. These two texts contain three instances of expansion, presented as follows.

Table 4.3

Descriptive Statistics of the Identified Expansions of the Two Texts

No.	English Texts	Persian Translations
1	Andromache	مرد مبارز
2	All-alone	تنهای تنها
3	madness	افکار جنون آمیز

According to Table 4.3, there are three cases of expansion, first, the name of "Andromache" which is a single-word hyperbolic expression, rendered through the expanded corresponding expression "مرد مبارز" (نام ملکه تروا). Second, the single-word hyperbolic expression, "all-alone" has been translated into "تنهای تنها", a phrasal hyperbolic expression. Moreover, "madness" as a single-word hyperbolic expression has been translated into a phrasal hyperbolic expression, "افکار جنون آمیز".

By the same token, according to Claridge's (2011) classification of hyperbolic expressions, reduction means a phrasal hyperbolic expression becoming a single-word hyperbolic expression or a clausal hyperbolic expression becoming a phrasal hyperbolic expression. Here there are three instances of reduction in Andromache and Medea dramatic texts, presented as follows.

Table 4.4

Descriptive Statistics of the Identified Reductions of the Two Texts.

No.	English Texts	Persian Translations
1	Lion's whelp	شیرزاد
2	Hard to get through	تحمل ناپذیر
3	In all the world, I am sure of it. By far the most lovely.	هیچ کجای دنیا نظیرش را نمی یابد.

In these three cases, reduction refers to translation of phrasal hyperbolic expressions into single-word hyperbolic expressions. As Table 4.4 shows, the phrasal hyperbolic expression "Lion's whelp" has been translated into a Persian single-word hyperbolic expression as "شیرزاد". Moreover, the phrasal hyperbolic expression "Hard to get through" has been rendered into a Persian single-word hyperbolic expression "تحمل ناپذیر". Finally, the clausal hyperbolic expression "In all the world, I am sure of it, by far the most lovely." has been translated into a Persian phrasal hyperbolic expression as "هیچ کجای دنیا نظیرش را نمی یابد".

The present study designed to determine the extent of expansion and reduction in hyperbole translation of dramatic texts- Andromache and Medea- from English into Persian. Claridge (2011) postulates that, shorter hyperboles are less complex, and may thus be easier to process and retain. According to her, longer and complex hyperboles need more effort to be repeated in the same form and with the same meaning. Among six English single-word hyperboles of Andromache three of them i.e. "panoply: رویین lion: شیر (خطاب به زن اسیر), and bull: گاو نر (خطاب به زن اسیر)" were translated as Persian single-word hyperboles with no expansion in translation. Also, three of the six English single-word hyperboles, namely; "Andromache: مرد مبارز (ملکه تروا), madness: افکار جنون آمیز, and all-alone: تنهای تنها" have expansion and changed to phrasal hyperbolic expressions in Persian.

According to Claridge (2011), phrasal hyperbole classification is subclassified into noun phrase, adjectival phrase, verb phrase, adverbial phrase and prepositional phrase. Therefore, the subclassified

phrasal hyperbolic expressions of Andromache and Medea were checked about occurrence and lexico-grammatical changes.

Among forty- four phrasal hyperbolic expressions, there were twenty- two adjectival phrases, eleven noun phrases, and eleven verb phrases. In twenty- two hyperbolic adjectival phrases of Andromache, just one of them, i.e. " ministers of death" changed grammatically to noun phrase as " باوران مرگ ", yet remains in the same classification. The rest of the twenty-one hyperbolic adjectival phrases have no change, for example: " hot fury: خشمی آتشین, a crafty net: دامی مرگ بار, evil plots: نقشه های شیطانی".

In hyperbolic noun phrases, again just one of them changed. In this case, the hyperbolic noun phrase changed in terms of classification and became a single-word hyperbole as " lion's whelp: شیرزاد". This change considered as reduction in translation. The rest ten hyperbolic noun phrases have no change including expansion or reduction or grammatical changes, thus remained as hyperbolic noun phrase, for example: " fancy of the hour: چیرگی بر زمان, a woman's venom: کینه زهرآگین زن, scourge crossed: تازیانه بلایا".

In eleven hyperbolic verb phrases, no changes observed, in terms of expansion, reduction or grammatical changes. Therefore, " many are the shapes: صورت های بیشمار دارند, the cloud of grief hath fallen: ابر انده بر آن ها فرو آمد, I will never allow have aught: ذره ای ارزش ندارد", and the rest of them remained as hyperbolic verb phrases.

In Andromache Persian translation all seven clausal hyperbolic expressions were translated with no expansion or reduction, for example: " of all women that have been or yet shall be the most unfortunate: تیره بخت ترینم میان تمام زنانی که زیسته اند و آن ها که در راه آمدن اند if she loses her husband's love, she loses her life therewith: اگر او عشق شوهرش را از دست بدهد, زندگی اش را همراه آن از کف داده است: set for his death the knots that no can loose: گره هایی بر آن افکنده ام که هیچ کس را یارای باز کردنش نیست".

As it is clear in the above tables, six single-word hyperboles found in English text of Medea. These six single-word hyperboles, i.e. " evil, bloodthirsty, inescapable, insatiable, unconquered, and lioness", were translated as Persian single-word hyperboles as " شیطان صفت, خون تشنه, گریزناپذیر, پایان ناپذیر, تسخیرناپذیر, (تو) بیبری". Moreover, as it is clear, one of the phrasal hyperbolic expressions of Medea, reduced to single-word hyperbole, in which " hard to get through" changed to " تحمل ناپذیر", therefore, the number of Persian single-word hyperboles raised.

Hyperbolic adjectival phrases of Medea were seventeen, which fifteen of them remained with no lexico-grammatical changes and three of them changed. Among three changed hyperbolic adjectival phrases of Medea, two of them changed grammatically to hyperbolic noun phrase, i.e. " like a rock or wave of the sea: همانند صخره ای سخت یا موج یک دریا, maddened heart: دیوانه از عشق", and just one of the hyperbolic adjectival phrases of Medea is reduced to single-word hyperbole.

There were five hyperbolic verb phrases in Medea in that, three of them maintained as Persian hyperbolic verb phrase as " secret sorrows flood into my mind: تو از خدماتت کوهی می سازی, you are made of rock or iron: قلبت از سنگ و آهن است, androgyne: اندوهی پنهان به درونم هجوم می آورد". In addition, two of five hyperbolic verb phrases of Medea changed grammatically as follows, the hyperbolic verb phrase " deeply felt anger and distemper" is changed to Persian hyperbolic adjectival phrase " خشم", " lighten my grief" changed to Persian hyperbolic noun phrase " آذرخش خشم" and " توفان را".

Finally, there were three hyperbolic noun phrases in Medea, which all of them remained through translation, for example: " blasts of your tongue-lashing: شراره های زخم زبان, inescapable arrows of love: پیکان فرار ناپذیر عشق".

Furthermore, three English clausal hyperbolic expressions of Medea become two, due to the reduction of " in all the world, I am sure of it, by far the most lovely" to a Persian hyperbolic phrases as " هیچ کجای دنیا نظیرش را نمی یابد". However, the other two English hyperbolic clausal expressions have no expansion or reduction, i.e. " the crown of gold around her head was spewing out an eerie storm of ravenous fire: تاج طلایی فورانی از آتش برگرد سرش گسترده بود, eating away the poor girl beautiful flesh: تن پوش تن گوشت تن لطیف دختر بیچاره را می بلعید". Altogether, six changes including three expansions and three reductions happened in the two texts.

As for the objective of the current study, comparing the frequency of Persian hyperbolic categories with their source hyperbolic categories and Chi-squared test of these recorded frequencies, contrary to the expectations, shows that the extent of expansion and reduction in translation of hyperbole from English into Persian is not significant.

Table 4.6
The Results of Chi-square.

Texts	df	Critical Value	X ²
Andromache and Medea	2	3.84	1.7298

Total Chi-square value of all categories was calculated as 1/7298, which is less than the critical value, 3/84. Therefore, it is concluded that there was not any significant difference among all the three English categories of hyperbolic expressions and their corresponding Persian categories of hyperbolic expressions.

5. Conclusion

In order to explore the extent of expansion and reduction in hyperbole translation in Andromache and Medea dramatic texts, the related literature was reviewed and Claridge's (2011) classification of hyperbolic expressions was chosen to compare and contrast the English and Persian hyperboles. The present study has compared and contrasted 91 instances of hyperbolic expressions. Analysis and discussion of the collected data entail that only three expansions and three reductions which were identified i.e. six changes, are not significant in translation of figures of speech specially hyperbole. Therefore, the modified presented classification of hyperbolic expressions can be used in both English and Persian languages. Taken together, these results suggest that the extent of expansion and reduction in translation of hyperbole in Andromache and Medea is not significant.

As mentioned before, Andromache contains 57 instances of hyperbolic expressions. Three phrasal hyperbolic expressions were expanded from English single-word hyperboles to Persian phrasal hyperbolic expressions and one of the English phrasal hyperbolic expressions was reduced to a Persian single-word hyperbole i.e. "شیرزاد". Therefore, the total frequency of English phrasal hyperbolic expressions was 44 and the total frequency of Persian phrasal hyperbolic expressions was 46. Moreover, clausal hyperbolic expressions indicated no expansion or reduction through translation.

In 34 hyperbolic expressions of Medea, one of the phrasal hyperbolic expressions of Medea was translated as a single-word hyperbole and the frequency of Persian single-word hyperboles rose. Similarly, one of the English clausal hyperbolic expressions was reduced to Persian phrasal hyperbolic expression.

These findings suggest that in spite of many changes in translation of figures of speech such as irony and metaphor as master tropes (Cano-Mora 2009), the extent of expansion and reduction in hyperbole is not significant. It seems possible that these results, according to Codoux (1941), are due to the honest and accurate translation, attempting to save the original image of exaggeration with the lowest amount of changes and transferring the author's meaning. Another possible explanation might be in line with Gharib's (2004) study, which concludes that hyperbole may not be problematic in translation of epic stories, and hyperbolic expressions may mostly be transferable in both Persian and English languages. These findings are in agreement with Omar's and Khalaf's (2009) findings, which showed linguistic context as well as other metalinguistic factors play a crucial role in the understanding and structuring of tropes such as hyperbole in languages. They also mentioned that there are similar patterned formulas in hyperbolic expressions of languages. This also accords with Cano-Mora's (2009) earlier observations, which indicated that common patterns for the expression of exaggeration are found via semantic fields. It appears that the similar range of linguistic choices and degree of exaggerations to express hyperbole is considerably wide in English and Persian languages. In analyzing hyperbolic expressions in Euripides's dramatic texts -Andromache and Medea- this study runs contrary to traditional beliefs that figures are embellishments of language and does not have cognitive value of their own (Pollio, et al 1990). It is in line with the view that figures, especially hyperbole, provide a similar part of the figurative foundation in languages (Spitzbardt 1963, Lakeoff and Jonson 1980, Gibbs 1994, Turner 1998, Cano-Mora 2009).

Altogether, it can be concluded from this study that through translating, one may be sure about the correct transference and translation of single-word, phrasal and clausal hyperbolic expressions image and meaning from English into Persian with the least changes.

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