

**The Translator's Habitus and Shifts:
a study on modulations in the Persian translations of Faulkner's
*The Sound And The Fury, Go Down Moses and
Absalom! Absalom!***

Maryam Taghavi
Freelance Researcher and Translator
Taghavimaryam1(a)yahoo.co.uk

ABSTRACT

The present study enquires into the fundamental issue of the translator's habitus (Bourdieu 1990). We take up John B. Thompson's synthetic translation of the concept of habitus (1991) while exploring descriptive explanatory interpretive hypotheses about the translator's text production activity. The knowledge underlying these hypotheses is derived from the domain of both conceptual and empirical research. The conceptual research involves accumulating knowledge from providing "logical connections" (Hewson and Martin 1991:23) between culturalist approaches to the study of translating activity. Heuristic approaches (Nida and Taber 1982, Toury 1995, Chesterman 1997, Nord 1997, Reiss and Vermeer 1984) and variable-oriented approaches (Bell 1991, Hatim and Mason 1997, Neubert and Shreve 1992) are reviewed to identify 'context variables' (Williams and Chesterman 2002) enlightening the translator's activity. It is concluded that within the cultural semiotic nature of the translating activity involving communicative turbulence (Hatim and Mason 1991), the occurrence of shifts in translations turns into a natural condition of the translating activity. Moreover, there is a need to consider the interaction of 'context variables' in shedding light on the study of the translating activity (Hewson and Martin 1991). The decision-making nature (Levy 1967) of the translating activity is established while pointing out the relation between the structuring and structured power of norms (Bartsch 1987) in forming the translator's habitus.

To incorporate our conceptualizations of the translating activity and the translator's habitus into a coherent whole, the role of textuality standards in denoting the text world pertinent to the translating activity is explored and exemplified. Moreover, Blum-Kulka's distinction between shifts in cohesion and shifts of coherence (1986/2000) is reviewed and exemplified to represent the relation between text-focused shifts of cohesion and reader-focused shifts of coherence. Various models of shifts analysis (Vinay and Darbelnet 2000, Popovic 1970, Van Leuven-Zwart 1984, Toury 1980 and 1995, Frank 1987) are assessed to determine the analytical tools of our study. Modulation (Vinay and Darbelnet 2000) is taken as a kind of shift which well represents the relation between text-focused shifts of cohesion and reader-focused shifts of coherence while shedding light on the translator's habitus. Accordingly our corpus analysis consists of two parts focusing on identification of modulations in the actual translations from the domain of English-Persian literary translation.

Part I of our analysis involves identification of modulations in the two different Persian translations of *The Sound and the Fury* (Faulkner 1929). One of the translators, Saleh

Hosseini, is known as a professional translator in the community of Iranian translators. There is 41 years difference between the earlier translation done by Bahman Shoelevar (1950) and the later translation produced by Saleh Hosseini (1991). The major concern of this part of the analysis is to redefine the concept of modulation and show its interpretive power in inferring descriptive explanatory hypotheses regarding the translator's text production activity and his habitus. These descriptions will be carried out by considering the translators' stylistic differences and choices. Accordingly, two types of modulation are distinguished namely obligatory vs. optional modulation as changes representing the translators' attempt to denote the text world pertinent to the translating activity for the TT readers and stylistic choices respectively. Comparison of the translators' choices of obligatory and optional modulations will yield regularities enlightening their translatorial behaviour.

Part II of the corpus analysis concerns analysis of two other Persian translations of Faulkner's novels by Hosseini to infer regularities of translatorial behaviour in terms of identifying optional modulations. These modulations will be called stylistic modulations as they represent the regularities of translatorial behaviour pertinent to the translating activity of a particular translator (Hosseini). The descriptive explanatory interpretive power of such regularities of behaviour will be concluded by reviewing current accounts of translation norms in Iran and the background to Hosseini's translatorial behaviour. The results of our analysis will be further confirmed by providing examples from translation critiques pertinent to the domain of literary translation in Iran while differentiating between the degree and manner of translator's manipulation of the source text.

KEYWORDS: communicative turbulence, context variables, culturalist approaches, habitus, John B. Thompson's synthetic translation of the concept of habitus, heuristic approaches, shifts in cohesion and shifts of coherence, modulation

Completion of thesis:

Place: University of Salford

Year: June 2007

Supervisor: Professor Myriam Salama-Carr