Using Illocutionary Force Types as Tools for Explicitation in Translation

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Abstract

The current qualitative study was carried out to investigate the illocutionary force of "Ya Ali" (a deeply culture specific term literally meaning Oh Ali) which is employed by Iranians in oral discourse. This research also aimed at finding out different functions of "*Ya Ali*" in different contexts and finding their corresponding equivalents in English according to Neubert's text-linguistic model. Data were collected in two phases: First, sixty Persian native speakers of different age groups ranging from 30 to 70, of both genders were observed in 90 natural situations such as daily interactions, gatherings, in public or private places as well as on local TV programs. Second, to corroborate the representativeness of samples, fifteen people were interviewed directly when they utter "*Ya Ali*" (i.e. think- aloud protocol was used). It was concluded that "*Ya Ali*" may be employed in either religious or non-religious contexts. Moreover, functions of "*Ya Ali*" can be used in eight different contexts with different functions. According to Neubert (1991) the translator must modify the source text using a variety of methods, including explicitation, deletion, and modulation in order to produce a more satisfactory and pragmatically adequate translation. The result revealed that explicitation was the most appropriate method for transferring the different meanings of "Ya Ali" from Persian into English.

Keywords: Illocutionary force, explicitation, "*Ya Ali*".

1. Introduction

The English language includes an interesting category of words and phrases called contronyms (also spelled contranyms, or referred to as autoantonymy), which depending on context, can have opposite or contradictory meanings. Terms of this type necessitate double enrichment in the process of translation and in the reproduction of text in a nother language which are intralingual explicitation (gain) and expansion (gain). Such words are found and used in Persian too. A well-known example is expressed by Rumi in a verse where he said:

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Än yekĬ ʃĬrast **kǍdam** mĬxorad	v Än yekĬ ʃĬrast kǍdam **mĬxorad**
That one is the *sheer* (lion) who eats man	and that one is the *sheer* (milk) that man eats

Contranymy is clear, but the same word has a *different* meaning (water tap), which is just *different*, and not contradictory. In other words, there are instances that are not fixed but may, as well, develop different functions of language in different contexts (contradictory and/or different). A British example is "yeah" with a rising tone, falling tone, or as a question, intended to mean *disagree* by one group (e.g. members of parliament facing the British prime minister), or intended to mean *agree* by another (e.g. the proponent members of parliament).

Referring to the view that the study of discourse is the study of language in use (Yule, l996), in the study of language, some of the most interesting questions are related with the way language is used rather than what its components are. Moreover, in speech-act theory, the speaker's intention in delivering an utterance can be called illocutionary force. In other words, the kind of illocutionary act that the speaker is performing is called illocutionary force (Austin, 1962). Van Vallin and LaPolla (1997) called it illocutionary function or illocutionary point and stated that illocutionary force "refers to whether an utterance is an assertion, a question, a command or an expression of a wish.

Exploring the illocutionary force of discourse procedurally might be taken for granted especially when the text is deeply culture-specific. Nida (2001, P. 13) stated that "Although language may be regarded as relatively small part of culture, it is indispensable for both the functioning and the preparation of the culture. Accordingly, competent translators are aware that ultimately words have meaning in terms of corresponding culture." In other words, novice translators should be aware of the interrelationship between culture and language in discourse texture.

According to Brown and Yule (1983), discourse can be long or short and discourse analyst is concerned with an investigation of language functions namely: transactional function, which is related with giving and getting information, and interactional function which is involved in expressing social relations and personal attitude.

Research into discourse elements like markers has developed in recent decades. Looking into these elements deeply and with regard to culture could enhance metalinguistic knowledge generally and could introduce these elements individually. This knowledge, in turn, could ease translation of culture specific elements (as texts). However, there are language elements that are used frequently and in different contexts in Persian. These culture specific terms could be really problematic in translation particularly when they link to religion. An example of these elements in Persian is "*Ya Ali*", a basically religious and generally it is an Iranian national expression. In practice, it is a multipurpose full text functioning differently in different contexts.

1.2. The Theoretical Framework of the Study

In this study, the researchers have used the text-linguistic model by Neubert (1991). This model of translation says that an original text and a translation are different not only because their sentences are different, but also because there are constraints operating at a level beyond the sentence and translation based on linguistic system cannot be an adequate one. According to Neubert (1991) the translator must modify the source text using a variety of methods, including explicitation, deletion, and modulation in order to produce a more satisfactory and pragmatically adequate translation. Translations in this model are more than duplications or restructurings of source language sequences.

In the text-linguistic model, meaning is not sentence-bound. Neubert (1991) stated that this model locates and distributes meaning equivalence throughout the text. What is actually carried over into the

target text during translation is semantic value and pragmatic function of the source text. Neubert called this theory "text-linguistic" because it includes translation studies in discourse analysis and pragmatics. It locates equivalence at a text and communicating level, not at the sentence and word level. In the text linguistic model, translation does not involve the transfer of meaning. It is, rather, the communicative values of the source text that are transferred. Frame of this model is the textual systems of two communicating societies. Textual systems are complex sets of expectations text users have about what texts should be like. Form translator's perspective, the target text is a text induced as a response to another text.

2. Review of the related literature

Regarding intercultural communication in the religious texts, translation of culturally-marked texts, especially words or expressions that lack equivalents in global discourse may cause misunderstandings and feelings of isolation, if the cultural barrier is not overcome in the translation.

Vermeer (1989, P. 222) stated that "language is part of a culture". Newmark (1988) in opposition to this view maintained that language is not a component of culture which to him is "the way of life and its [culture's] manifestations are peculiar to a community that uses a particular language as its means of expression" (1988:94). According to Kuryleva & Nikiforova (2012), "In spite of the fact that a given people dwell in a common physical space, their mentalities are often quite different."

Sharififar (2010) investigated the differences between English and Persian religious elements in the Pilgrim's Progress by J. Bunyan and its corresponding translation in Persian. More specifically, he looked into the way cultural elements in general and religious ones in particular were dealt with in the selected corpora. Moreover, he examined the suitability of the procedures proposed by Newmark (1988) for translation of those elements from English into Persian. Emphasizing religious cultural elements, he found no evidence of any consistent effort on the part of translator to use any

particular translation approach in the process of achieving adequate translation.

Given the importance and the precision required in the translation of religious texts, Jahanshahi and Kafipour (2015), analyzed the type and frequency of the errors occurring in the English translation of Islamic texts by Iranian translators and the possible cause of the errors. To this end, 9 Islamic texts and their English translations were selected. Then, using Morgan's sample selection table, the errors were categorized based on the classification of error types developed by Liao (2010). The results of the study revealed that the register category was the area with most frequent errors.

Bader and Mariam (2011) investigated the most serious problems that translators face when rendering cultural collocations in three religious texts namely, the Holy Quran, the Hadith and the Bible. The results of the study revealed that first, translators encountered difficulties in lexical and semantic collocations. Second, translators of religious texts should be deeply aware of the nature of lexical and metaphoric collocations, they should realize the disparities between Arabic concepts and beliefs and Western ones, and they should always avoid literal translation by taking the context into consideration.

Obviously, religions play an important role in shaping the language and life of a society. In addition to intercultural communication complexities one should be sensitive to intra-cultural delicacies among religious sects/denominations as well. Shieh sect of Islam follow religious leaders (Imams) as the successors of the prophet Mohammad (peace be upon Him), considering them divine, whose spirits are always there to help as the intermediators between people and God. Therefore, they commonly ask them for help by saying YA followed by the Imam's name. Ali, the first Imam is frequently called by the expression "*Ya Ali*" (literally Oh Ali).

Communication occurs in social life between people with a special culture and in certain situations such as coffee bar, office,

classroom, and public places. Therefore, we cannot speak without considering the social and cultural context. One question raises here: how should oral language be analyzed and translated with regard to the social and cultural context? In contrast to traditional way of dealing with oral language, discourse analysis provides a new window on knowledge about it. According to Cook (1989) discourse analysis is a set of skills which are essential to put knowledge into action and to achieve successful communication. This paper takes a perspective of conversation analysis within the field of discourse analysis, attempting to explore a culture marked expression "*Ya Ali*" in Persian and in real situations.

3. Methodology
3.1. Data collection procedures
 McCarthy (2002) pinpointed that as discourse analysis describes the interrelationships between language and its context, it needs natural or authentic material. For conducting this research, data were collected in two phases. First, sixty Persian native speakers of different age groups ranging from 30 to 70, of both genders were observed indirectly in 90 natural situations such as daily interactions, gatherings, in public or private places as well as on local TV programs. Second, in order to corroborate the representativeness of samples, fifteen people were interviewed directly and they were asked to talk about the situations, where they utter "*Ya Ali*" and where they expect to hear *"Ya Ali"* from other people. All these cases were written down. Finally these data were categorized for analyzing.

3.2. Data analysis procedure
 After collecting the required data, they were first written down and categorized in order to determine their function. Second, they were translated into English according to the text-linguistic model of Neubert (1991) and according to his explicitation method. Third, these data were analyzed qualitatively and closely to investigate examples, where *"Ya Ali"* was employed by the speakers in order to portray the functions performed by the illocutionary force in Persian.

4. Results and Discussion

After analyzing the collected data, eight major categories of religious and non-religious functions of "*Ya Ali*" in different contexts by different groups of people were identified. Some examples of different illocutionary force (IF) identified through explicitation are given briefly in the following examples and texts:

1). **Signaling the end and close of a talk**

   Situation: Two people are talking with each other, at the end of their conversation they say "*Ya Ali"* one after the other. Here "*YA Ali*" can be translated to *goodbye.*

Amin   (In Persian): Ma:ʃi:nət ro dorost kæ̆rdi:?

(Did you repair your car?)

Reza   Næ̆ hæ̆nu:z.Fæ̆rda: mibæ̆ræ̆məʃ tæ̆mi:rga:h. (Not yet. I am going to show my car to a mechanic tomorrow).

Amin   æ̆gə ka:ri: da:ʃti: mæ̆n dæ̆r xedmæ̆tæ̆m . (If you get something to do with me, I am at your service).

Reza   Ma:mnu:n. (Thanks).

Amin   *"Ya Ali".* (Goodbye).

Reza   *"Ya Ali*". (Goodbye).

   It should be mentioned that when two people say "*Ya Ali*" at the end of their conversation (on phone or face to face), in addition to bidding farewell they express wish for each other. It also implies Imam Ali (peace be upon Him) bless you because Shieh know Imam Ali as being assigned divinely as the successor of Prophet Mohammad. Therefore, to translate it into English based on explicitation procedure of Neubert (1991), the closest equivalent for preserving communicative value could be "Goodbye".

2). **Assertion and giving consent**

   Situation: A group of people are about to push a wrecked car or to pick up a heavy pot.

Driver   (In Persian) Roʃan nəmiʃə, yə dæ̆st bəgi:ri:n bezæ̆hmæ̆t.

                   (The car won't start, Please give a hand).

Passerby   xaheʃ mikonæ̆m. *"Ya Ali".*

         (Giving consent and ready).

Driver   "*Ya Ali".*

         (Giving consent and ready).

When people need assistance in doing something difficult, they ask for help. Often the addressee answers "*Ya Ali*". When so, it means he is giving consent and the help- seeker also follows by "*Ya Ali*" to assert that he is ready. However, if he in turn forwards the call to others saying "*Ya Ali*", he intends to summon and align a group to do it collectively. Here "*Ya Ali"* can be translated *would you give us a hand / let's do it*. Moreover, the illocutionary force of "Ya Ali" in formal and the same situation can be offering help for similar cases in future.

3). Asking to commence

   Situation: A person usually of higher status asking somebody to start an activity, (to get on with it) he/she may use *"Ya Ali"*.

Student   Osta:d, xeili Moʃkeleh. Mǣn nəmitoonam ǣndȝameʃ bədǣm.
          (Teacher, It's too difficult. I couldn't do it).
Teacher   Da:reh di:r miʃeh. *"Ya Ali"*.
          (Get on with it. It's getting too late).

   There are different situations where we use *"Ya Ali"* in the meaning of" to start an activity" for example, in gymnasium (zurkhaneh) when athletes utter *"Ya Ali"* they ask mentor to start singing traditionally.

4). Asking for help of God by resorting to Imam Ali

   Situation 1: In dramatic situations such as accidents or natural disasters including flood, earthquake and so on, Iranians utter *"Ya Ali"*. In fact they recourse to Imam Ali (peace be upon him).

   Situation 2: Old people who have knee problem or backache when they want to get up or do something, they hold their hands on to their knees or backs, and say *"Ya Ali"*.

5). Saying stand up by getting help of Imam Ali (peace be upon Him)

   Situation: When a baby wants to stand up for the first time, his/her parents take its hand and they tell to baby "Do *"Ya Ali",* indeed they

mean "Stand up by getting help of Imam Ali.

6). Making promise and accept to do something
 Situation: A few friends are working on a project, their contractor talks to them about the project's deadline. They put their hands on each other and they say *"Ya Ali"*. Here *"Ya Ali"* means *we will try our best*.

Contractor   (In Persian) Ma: ba:yæ̃d ta: a:xæ̃rə ma:h prod₃e ro tæ̃hvi:l bədi:m.

               (We must finish this project the end of month).
Workers   Tæ̃momeʃ mi:koni:m. *"Ya Ali"*.
              (We will finish the project; we try our best, we promise)

7). Asking someone to leave a place
  Situation: In a factory, the manager is disputing with one of workers, who has broken an expensive equipment because of his carelessness. The other workers are gathered around them to know what has happened. The manager cries what are you doing here? "*Ya Ali*", "*Ya Ali*". In this situation "*Ya Ali*" can be translated into *Go back to your work. Come on.*

 Manager   tʃera: Ind₃a: d₃æ̃m ʃodi:d? Zu:d bæ̃rgæ̃rdi:d sæ̃rə ka:rəton, "*Ya Ali*".

          (Why do you gather here? Go back to your work. Come on.)
Workers   (As nonverbal response, workers immediately came back and they were placed   in their posts.)

8). Suggesting to stop
 Situation: In classroom, at the end of a lecture or in a friendly social gathering, usually the teacher or the orator finishes his/ her lecture by uttering "*Ya Ali*", when he/she receives signals such as yawning or saying great job from the audience. Here "*Ya Ali*" could be translated into *shall we stop here.*

5. Conclusions

This paper aimed at investigating the religious cultural term "*Ya Ali*" that is used by Iranian in different contexts with different meanings, which might be problematic in translating from Persian into English. It was revealed that religious and non-religious functions of "*Ya Ali*" can be broken down into eight detailed functions: (1) Saying goodbye at the end of conversation; (2) Seeking help from others; (3) Asking someone to start an activity; (4) Asking someone to finish or stop an activity; (5) Seeking help from Ali (peace be upon Him); (6) Making promise to do something; (7) Using "*Ya Ali*" in the meaning of stand up; (8) Asking someone to leave a place. By analyzing observed situations, it was concluded that one cannot draw a borderline between people's religious lives and their social lives. Also it was concluded that translation of cultural terms especially religious terms needed a lot of explicitation because they were unknown for other cultures. According to Neubert (1991) the translator must modify the source text using a variety of methods, including explicitation, deletion, and modulation in order to produce a more satisfactory and pragmatically adequate translation. The result revealed that explicitation was the most appropriate method for transferring the different meanings of "Ya Ali" from Persian into English.

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