

The translation applied in intersemiotic study

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ABSTRACT

The present research was a corpus-based descriptive qualitative content analysis of Shakespeare's *Macbeth*, based on Peirce's intersemiotic model. The drama was translated interlingually from English to Farsi and intersemiotically by Servati for stage performance. Regarding the first research question (Which signs (*iconical*, *indexical*, or *symbolic*) are more applicable to semiotic analysis of *Macbeth* performance?), the results of the analysis show that the intersemiotic translation of drama was not successful in transferring some iconic signs from page to stage. Iconic signs are more susceptible to inappropriate intersemiotic translation than indexical signs and symbolic signs. Considering Servati's adaptation, it can be judged that other aspects, namely, secondness and thirdness, are more manageable when translating drama into a stage performance. This finding, in this case study, contradicts the findings of some previous studies regarding the point that intersemiotic translation is a deeply iconic dependent process. The contradictory results may be related to cultural differences and different cultural signs of the two involved languages.



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1 INTRODUCTION

“Theatre translation” poses difficulties from certain aspects. On the one hand, it poses the problems of “literary translation” as “an original”. Literary translation is different from other types of translation in that it is an imitative text which tries to create the illusion of an original text in the target language while it is essentially different from its original model. The present’s three premises for “literary translation”. First, translation of literary texts produces literature that is different from the literary type of the ST [1][2]. Second, the reason for the first premise is that the translator of literary texts imitates both the ST as well as the strategies which the ST author used for creating the ST. Third, the translation of a literary text pretends that it is the original text written by the original writer. In this regard, the literary translator produces not only “an inferior imitation of a great text but a great imitative text that is qualitatively different from its model. The new literary creation comes to be the subject of multiple readings in the same way as the original literary work is.

The literary translator creates a new pattern in a different language, based on personal reading, research, and activity. This new creation in turn becomes the basis for multiple readings and interpretations. Besides the problems common to the translation of all literary genres that is creating “a different kind of literature” which needs to seem original for the target audience “theatre translation” poses the extra complexity of plurality of readings [3][4]. The texts do not have fixed inherent meanings rather every reading generates a new text. In theatre, for every performance of a text, several different readings of the same text are possible: “Playwrights, translators, stage directors, dress and set designers, sound and light technicians, as well as actors all, contribute to the creation of theatre text when they move into them and make them their own”.

The other problem associated with “theatre translation” is translating intersemiotically the already interlingually translated verbal signs. In “theatre translation,” the message and the signs of the verbal system should be encoded in nonverbal sign systems. Essentially, the dramatic text is “a network of latent signs, waiting to be brought out in performance” [7]. To fulfill the ends of “performability”, the verbal signs may need to be translated to multiple other sign systems, hence, the theatre translator is required to “pay attention to the complex set of other sign systems ... which make of every performance a unique act”. As far as theatrical performance is associated with “performer-audience transaction” whereby the message of drama should be imparted by actors to the audience, diverse sign systems come at work to produce and to communicate meaning in the performance. Five

semiotic systems are distinguished for making a theatrical performance which corresponds to five semiological systems: 1) the spoken text; 2) bodily expression; 3) the actor’s external appearance (gesture, physical features, etc.); 4) the playing space (involving the size of venue, props, lighting effects, etc.); and 5) non-spoken-sound. The written text is just one component among several components needed for a theatrical performance. Moreover, a theatrical performance may need a few or several different sign systems.

In a theatrical performance, whatever is presented on the stage can be regarded as a sign: set, props, actors, lighting, and sound (music, recordings, noise, and external sounds). Meaning is created and communicated via the combined use of diverse signs. The field of “theatre translation” is rich in signs and semiotic fundamental issues. As early as 1964, Roland Barthes referred to the “real informational polyphony” and the “density of signs” in theatre. Everything is a sign in a theatrical presentation”. The field is rich for semiotic studies: “the nature of the theatrical sign, whether analogical, symbolic or conventional, the denotation and connotation of the message—all these fundamental problems of semiology are present in the theatre”. However, even though *semiotics* has been used in many literary studies, it has been less used in theatre studies: “Theatre and drama, meanwhile, have received considerably less attention, despite the peculiar richness of theatrical communication as a potential area of semiotic investigation” [5][6].

Besides the problems of “literary translation” and intersemiotic translation related to “theatre translation,” more complexities are added to the field once theatrical signs are needed to undergo cultural adaptation for the target language audience. The purpose of this study is to explore sign variations once a drama is interlingually translated from English to Farsi and next is intersemiotically translated for stage and is ultimately undergone cultural adaptations. For such ends, William Shakespeare’s tragedy, *Macbeth*, was selected. The Farsi translated text was qualitatively contrastively analyzed versus its English original text. Taking the next step, both texts were compared with Servati’s theatrical performance based on Peircean three sign-function intersemiotic model to find if the *indexical*, *iconic*, and *symbolic* signs change in the processes of intralingual and intersemiotic translation. This study is the potential to suggest possible directions for future research on semiotics and cultural adaptation in “Theatre Translation”.

The tripartite division of different forms of translation, intersemiotic translation, or transmutation is “an interpretation of verbal signs employing signs of nonverbal sign systems”. The term “transmutation” echoes the process of transformation in intersemiotic translation. The process can involve translation

between two different media, for example, from the verbal medium into musical medium, into cinematographic medium, or text into illustration (in illustrated books). Intersemiotic translations not only recreate the literary and cultural values of the text but multiply those values into different cultural systems. Thus, intersemiotic translation increases the number of parameters of evaluation for translating activity.

The different components of theatrical communication. Elam focuses on the actor and different sign-vehicles connected to the actor's performance; like the costume, makeup, voice, and body. He also discusses the environment in which the actor performs: the performance space (stage) and the symbolic space (setting). This study additionally focuses on the realization of symbols of the stage performance through the actors' actions and stage props [8][9].

It has extended theatre semiotics theorists' discussion that written texts of drama are indissolubly linked to their theatrical performance. She explains a play text is full of gaps as it cannot be separated from the synchronic signs of its realization. From this perspective, the verbal elements are just one of the involving systems that make up the theatrical event. The prioritizes verbal sign system over other sign systems. It does not prioritize the verbal system. Pavis emphasizes the existence of two separate entities with two different semiotic systems; the *mise en sign* and the *mise en scène*, which are not interdependent but simultaneous. He also adds that translation for the stage goes beyond the interlingual translation of the dramatic text: "areal translation takes place on the level of the *mise en scène* as a whole".

The first phase of her work on the problems of translation for the theatre identifies the multi-semiotic nature of the play text as a fundamental issue in the labyrinth of "theatre translation". "gestural understructure" as a component of an ideal performance is one of the problems of "theatre translation". The translator is to recognize "gestural understructure" in the source text, decode it and re-code it in the target text. The second phase changes her position by moving away from the structural idea of "gestic subtext". She argues that a translator can't deduce any "gestural understructure" from the source text, because there cannot be one single grammar of performance embedded in a text. She explains that the translator should deal with textual signs or in other words with linguistic aspects and paralinguistic aspects of the text which are in essence "decodable and recordable".

The written text is not fundamental to performance rather it is one sign system of an eventual performance. It follows that the task of integrating the written text with other sign systems is not just the translator's job, but the outcome of the collaboration of the translator, playwright, and the director.

Even though the field of "theatre translation" is inherently rich in signs and theater communication utilizing different sign systems, theoretical and practical aspects of the field are relatively under-researched in Iran from semiotic viewpoints [10]. Moreover, due to the multiplicity of evaluative parameters involved in the intersemiotic translation of drama to the theatre, quality assessment studies are not well developed.

2 RESEARCH METHOD

The "multifaceted", "heterogeneous" and "multidisciplinary" science of semiotics is the systematic scientific study of signs and how signs produce meaning in society. The objects of semiotics study are diverse sign systems, codes, messages, and texts. Henceforth, semiotics is concerned with two processes of *signification* and *communication* "the means whereby meanings are both generated and exchanged". The current trend of semiology is indebted to two leading figures; Ferdinand de Saussure, "the father of modern linguistics" [11][12].

Peirce's semiotic model is based on a triadic relation between Sign, Object, and Interpretant (the effect on the Interpreter). That is Peirce's semiosis is the study of the relation constituted by these three connected elements. Peirce's semiotic model describes the process of signification as essentially triadic, dynamic, interpreter-dependent, and materially extended and is hence more encompassing than other models. Central to Peirce's different model of semiosis is his particular definition of a sign. A sign is something that is cognizable; that is it is specified by an object while it determines an interpretant. This triadic relation is considered by Peirce to be complex in the sense that it is not easily interpreted into any simpler relation or set of relations. He defines a sign as "...first which stands in such a genuine triadic relation to a second, called its object, to be capable of determining a third, called its interpretant. The triadic relation among sign, object, and interpretant are irreducible: it cannot be decomposed into any simpler relation. This is why the sign- object relationship cannot suffice to understand the sign- mediated process.

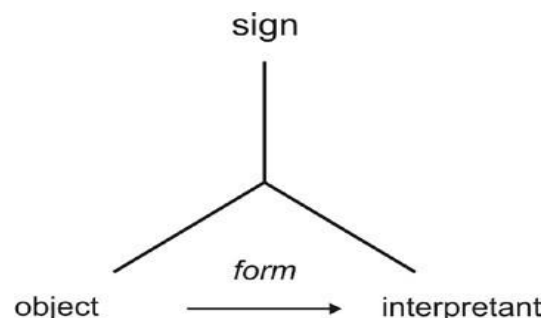


Figure 2. The graphic representation of Semiotic

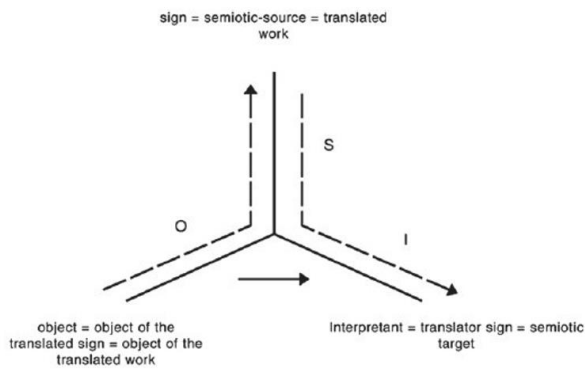


Figure 1. The interrelation of Sign, Object, and Interpretant

The model form is nothing like a thing. Form is something that is embodied in the object as regularity, a habit, a rule of action, or disposition. Hence, a sign is pragmatically defined as a medium for the communication to the interpretant of a form embodied in the object, to constrain, in general, the interpreter's behavior. The goal of sign transmission may be stated as a constraining factor of interpretative behavior. The form is defined as having the being of predicate and it is also pragmatically formulated as a conditional proposition, stating that certain things would happen under specific circumstances. The categories of signs correspond to icons (Firstness), indexes (Secondness), and symbols (Thirdness), which, in turn, match with relations of similarity, contiguity, and law between S and O (sign-object relation) in the triad S-O-I. Icons are signs that stand for their objects through resemblance, independent of the spatiotemporal presence of the objects since signs signify objects under characters of their own. In this case, a sign refers to an object in virtue of a certain quality that the sign and the object share. Icons play a central role in sensory tasks since they are associated with the qualities of objects [13][14].

Indexical signs were first introduced by Peirce and remain "his most important contribution to semiotics and sign theory. In the same way that an index finger refers to an object, indexical signs refer to an object or are an indication of it; like wet floor which can be an indication of rain. Peirce theorizes that the index "takes hold of our eyes, as it were, and forcibly directs them to a particular object of sense". Indexical signs are causally related to their objects [15]. In other words, objects and signs, in the case of indexical signs, are involved in a cause and effect relation: "The relationship between a sign and the object to which it refers lies not only in connotative mental associations between representation and referent but also in a direct denotative, existential or causal relation of the sign to its object".

Symbols are simply "conventional signs" or signs that are related to their objects through a determinative relation of law

or convention. Defined as such, most words in most linguistic verbal systems are symbolic signs as they refer to objects through a convention among language users. A symbol becomes a sign of some object mainly by the fact that it is used and understood as such. For example, the red rose becomes the symbol of love. It is crucial to point that Peirce's three sign categories are not necessarily mutually exclusive: a sign can be an icon, a symbol, and an index, or any combination. This study intends to analyze *iconic*, *indexical*, and *symbolic* sign alteration once the English drama, *Macbeth*, is interlingually translated to Farsi, once the Farsi drama is intersemiotically translated for a theatre performance, and once the theatrical performance is culturally adapted for Iranian audience.

The following procedure was followed. First, the English drama was contrastively compared with its Farsi translation. Second, the textual verbal productions were contrastively analyzed versus their non-verbal theatrical stage performance. Finally, the intersemiotic aspects were located, tabulated, and discussed in terms of the triadic constituents of the Peircean model. There are two competing analytical possibilities. (1) The sign is the semiotic-source. The object of the translated sign is the object of the semiotic-source and the interpretant (produced effect) is the translator's sign (semiotic target). (2) The sign is the semiotic target. The object of the sign is the translated work and the interpretant is the effect produced on the interpreter (interpretant). The analytical framework of this study is based on the two premises discussed that Intersemiotic analysis as a semiotic operation process; (ii) Intersemiotic translation as an iconic, indexical, and symbolic process. Based on this framework, the two processes first will be studied in the original text of the drama, and next, it will be discussed whether the two processes are reflected in an iconic-dependent way in the stage performance or not.

3 RESULTS

Inter-semiotic assessment of the performance Analyzing *Macbeth* from an inter-semiotic viewpoint, it can be found that weather, time, season, court, characters, speeches, acts, and a host of other objects and affairs can be considered signs. As a case in point, nature can be regarded as a combination of signs. In *Macbeth*, ambiguity is a special kind of signification in the sense that signs of the verbal system are manipulated to develop the sense of uncertainty and doubt in the reader. This is partly because the world of *Macbeth* is the arena of power struggle. In Shakespeare's vision, *Macbeth* (symbol of any setting where a power struggle is inherent) is a world of signs in which persons and things are ambiguous, that is, they have dual significations. Ambiguous verbal signs should be translated to acting signs and transferred, through theatrical performance, to the stage audience. The Weird Sisters and the

Macbeths are the sources of equivocation; the sense which should be imparted by the actors, via their performance, to the audience. The following signs can be found in the text of the drama. (1) The Witches and the phantoms they produce (the Apparitions with a bloody child, a crowned child, a show of eight kings, etc.) are signs of the devil's will or a certain will. (2) Weather, time, season, settings, strange happenings (unruly night with chimneys blown down, strange screams of death, feverous shaking earth, etc.), paradoxical realities, hearsay omens (moving stones, speaking trees, etc.), and other abnormalities are signs of the Supernatural Will [16][17].

Most characters have their wills inside and a different mask outside. Dual-faced characters throughout the drama make signs and interpret signs to fulfill their wills regardless of the dominant Supernatural Will. An example is when Macduff's young son tells his mother that if his father were dead, she'd weep for him; if she would not, it was a good sign that he should quickly have a new father. The child makes an ambiguous remark on the relationship between one's will and the sign one makes. The new father can be the old one - the returned Macduff - or the one his mother has newly married. Both interpretations are possible for the verbal signs of the drama.

Another level of duality exists since the human will is sometimes overcome by Supernatural Beings' Will which are manifested in natural and supernatural signs. In *Macbeth*, there are human and non-human signs as well as natural and supernatural signs. As human will interact with Supernaturals' wills, human signs also interact with non-human signs, henceforth ambiguity becomes inevitable. Another verbal sign in the original text is "the will to live" which can be divided into "the will to gain power" and "the will to survive". In the original text, the will to gain power dominates almost all scenes, since the main characters from the opening scene of the drama struggle to gain absolute power. Signs of "the will to live" [18].

Semiotic assessment of the performance the stage performance in this study is analyzed based on Peircean triadic sign-functions roughly corresponding to icons (Firstness), indexes (Secondness), and symbols (Thirdness). The following sections study firstness, secondness, and thirdness signs in the stage performance of *Macbeth*. Transferring firstness to the stage Firstness refers to the signs that stand for their objects through similarity, regardless of any Spatio-temporal physical correlation with an existent object. Firstness plays a central role in sensory tasks since they are associated with the qualities of objects. Thus, they exist in the sensorial recognition of external stimuli. One iconic sign to be transferred to the stage is the destruction shaped when ambition goes unrestrained by moral constraints. It exists in its utmost manner in two main

characters. Macbeth is an icon sign of a courageous Scottish general who is not naturally motivated to commit evil deeds, yet he cannot resist power. He kills Duncan for his better judgment and afterward flaps in guilty conscience and paranoia. In Servati's stage performance, Macbeth is entangled in frantic madness, and Lady Macbeth pursues her evil goals with tenacity. Also, the play holds the fact that she is less capable of surviving the consequences of her wicked acts [20].

However, comparing the original text with the stage performance and translation, the masculinity icon is not well reflected: The witches' prophecies spark Macbeth's ambitions and then encourage his violent behavior; Lady Macbeth provides the brains and the will behind her husband's plotting; and the only divine being to appear is Hecate, the goddess of witchcraft. Despite the scene is well described in the original text it is not intersemiotically translated for the stage performance. In fact, except for the two examples mentioned above, the theatrical performance merely stages iconic signs of manhood. Other examples of the failure of intersemiotic translation of verbal signs. The examples reveal that the translator-director was not quite successful in transmitting firstness aspects of the play to the stage. In other words, the iconic aspects of the passage were partially translated to the stage.

Transferring secondness to the stage. Secondness refers to the signs that refer to an object due to a direct physical connection. Because the sign should be determined by the object, both the sign and the object must exist as actual events. This feature differentiates iconic sign from indexical sign. Visions and hallucinations occur throughout the play and serve as indexical signs of Macbeth and his wife's guilty consciousness. The followings are examples of verbal indexical signs that were well transferred to the stage [19].

However, comparing the performance with the original text the following index was not well transferred to the stage. In later episodes of the original text, Macbeth sees Banquo's ghost sitting in a chair at a feast, perforating Macbeth's conscience by reminding him that he murdered his former friend. Another indexical sign is violence and murder. In the original text, most of the killings take place off the stage. In the play, accordingly, violent accounts are transmitted by the characters. It seems that the director and the actors were aware of the function of prophecies in the original drama and could intersemiotically transfer the signs related to prophesy to the stage. Transferring thirdness to the stage. Thirdness refers to signs that are related to their object through convention. A symbol becomes the sign of an object mainly by the fact that it is understood as such. Blood is one of the symbols fully presented as a symbolic sign both in the verbal system of the drama and in the non-verbal system of the theatrical performance [21].

In line with the original text, the director and the performers well managed to highlight blood as the symbolic sign of guilt which sits like a permanent stain on the consciences of both Macbeth and Lady Macbeth; crimes stained the Macbeths in a way that it can never be washed. Other examples of symbolic signs well transferred to the stage by the director are severe weather conditions, such as thunder and lightning that accompany the witches' appearances or the terrible storms that occur on the night of Duncan's murder; all symbolic signs of corruption in the moral and political orders.

4 DISCUSSION

Intersemiotic study of "theatre translation" can open fertile research grounds as the theatre is rich in signs. The theorizes that every basic unit of meaning, or sign, adds cumulatively to phenomena of seeing, hearing, and experiencing the reality of the stage or, for that matter, the reality in general. intersemiotic study of "theatre translation" may uncover the hidden layers of meaning of multifaceted plays. Regarding the next finding, it can be claimed that all levels of firstness (Icon), secondness (Index), and thirdness (Symbol), apply to semiotic analysis of the performance. Considering Servati's play, despite more inappropriate intersemiotic renditions of iconic signs, it can be claimed that, almost all three levels of signs were successfully transferred. The findings show that the form communicated from the object to the interpretant, employing signs, is different in each version. The interpretant (translated work) is determined by the object, through the sign (semiotic source). The translated work (I) is the effect produced by the object (O) (the semiotic-source's object) of the sign (S) (the semiotic source) in a relation mediated by it. The findings also show that it is possible to transfer all aspects of the paradigm of the Peircean model. Hence, the framework may have the potentiality to be adopted for translation assessment of verbal literary works to non-verbal sign systems such as music, painting, opera, and film.

5 CONCLUSION

Finally, focusing on the second research question (Based on Peircean model, which intersemiotic changes did occur while translating Shakespeare's *Macbeth* once as a drama from English to Farsi and the other time as a dramatic text for theatrical performance?), it should be noted that the adapted stage performance of a translated drama text is the outcome of a dynamic collaborative process between the dramatist, translator, director, and stage performers. In this process, theatre translators are co-authors, autonomous readers and creators of the stage adaptation of the text. This is the reason Sir John Denham sees the translator and the original writer as

"equals but operating in clearly differentiated social and temporal contexts". On the other hand, the director transforms the signs so that the *other's* language fits into the linguistic structures of the target culture. Drawing on concepts of "rewriting" and "patronage", it can be claimed that the theatrical event is created by rewriting the play text and suiting it to the target context. One of the pitfalls is that play texts when rewritten are manipulated. The notion of "patronage" has to do with the way the texts are carefully chosen to be produced. The choice and the very manipulation depend on dominant ideology, cultural constraints, and social context among many other parameters. However, overall, literary works are judged based on aesthetic and contextual aspects far beyond the level of verbal signs. The translators have to be aware of these aspects and be able to translate between the lines to transmit the semiotic aspects of the original literary work. This would increase the overall semantic correspondence of the original text with the target text produced exclusively for the stage. In other words, the prospective theatre translators should be able to distinguish between high and low-quality translated scripts in terms of the semiotic elements.

Conflict of Interest Statement

The authors declare no conflicts of interest related to the material presented in this article.

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