ORIGINAL RESEARCH PAPER

Poetry in Translation:
Can Self-translators Achieve the Desired Result?

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There is no shortage of translated texts; nonetheless, self-translations are quite scarce. Ignoring definitions from other disciplines, in the field of Translation Studies, self-translation refers to original works translated by the author themself, leading to the author and translator being the same person. Given the rarity of self-translations, research on such texts is understandably even rarer. To fill in this gap, a self-translated poetry book was selected as a case study in this article. On one hand, self-translations can be analyzed like any other translated text; accordingly, the selected poems were examined using Lefevere's approaches to translating poetry. On the other hand, Grutman's framework regarding the self-translator's bilingualism and the power dynamics between the two languages was also applied. It was concluded that, since this self-translator was also the poet and held intellectual property rights to the material, he had the deepest understanding of his content. Consequently, any changes he made during the translation process were justified.

Keywords: Self-Translation, Translated Texts, Poetry, Bilingualism.

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Introduction

Nowadays, as traveling has become increasingly more accessible, and as people have become interconnected through social media, translation (or interpreting for that matter) has grown to be of critical importance for effective communications. Even before the ease of access through online forums and frequent travels, translations were quite common. However, what is less commonly found among translated texts is self-translation.

Just like any other concept, before going any further, the term self-translation has to be operationally defined in order to avoid confusion because this term has been employed in Migration Studies as well to talk about all the ways in which 'writers' identities, their 'selves', are remolded by the move to a new country and the integration into a new language-culture, a physical 'translation' that can be accompanied or not by actual translations, in the conventional meaning of the word" (Besemeres, 2002, as cited in Grutman & Van Bolderen 2014, 1). In this regard, within the field of Translation Studies, self-translation occurs when the authors themselves translate their own original work into another language (Popovič, 1975).

At any rate, this paper aimed to explore the characteristics of poetic self-translations in a single case study. For the first objective, as a figurative rite of passage (since the translations were of poetry), it was interesting to discover translation strategies based on Lefevere's (1975, as cited in Ferdowsi & Sharififar, 2014) model of poetry translation. Secondly—a self-translator is inherently bilingual; hence, the state of the languages he speaks must be quite important—the self-translator and his translations were scrutinized in order to find out if he experienced an exogenous or an endogenous bilingualism, and if the languages he employed were on the basis of symmetric or asymmetric pairing (Grutman, 2013a, 2013b). Therefore, the research questions can be put forward as:

1. Do Lefevere's strategies correspond to the strategies employed by the self-translator?

2. Did the self-translator experience an exogenous or an endogenous bilingualism?
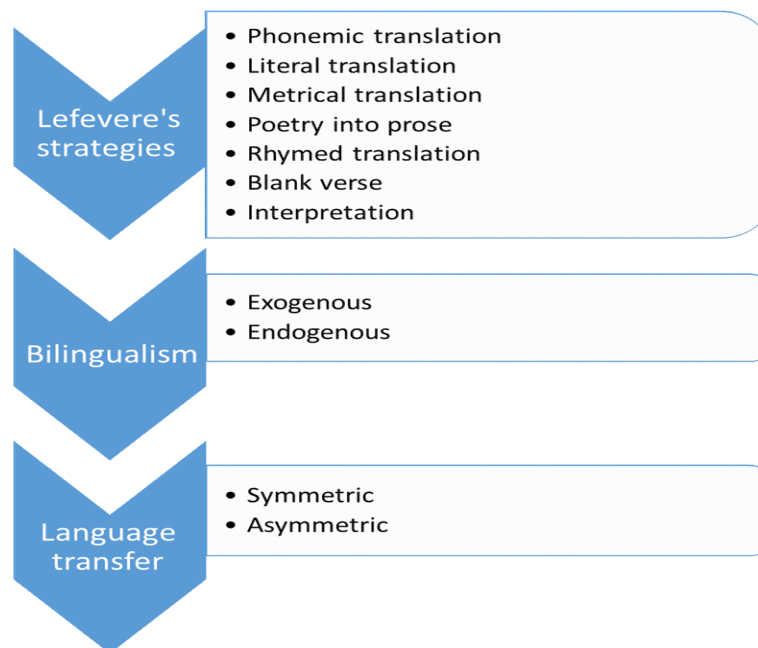
3. Was the transfer of language symmetric or asymmetric?

Figure 1. Theoretical frameworks in the current article

Self-translation

The notion of self-translation can be somewhat ambiguous since there are two ways of viewing it: first, the self may be the subject of textual production (aka the agent) where the author and translator are the same physical person; second, the self can be the object of translational process where the (writer's) self is translated. From the second perspective, it has been argued that any writer's literary writing in a non-native language is deemed as self-translation (Grutman & Van Bolderen, 2009; Wanner, 2018). The former, however, is the only subject of this article.

It seems that the discipline of Translation Studies has only recently caught up to investigating the concept of self-translation. One possible reason for Translation Studies being late to the party could be that the phenomenon of self-translation poses dilemmas for translation theories (Wanner, 2018). Under normal circumstances, there are two separate textual authorities in the translation process: the author and the translator; however, self-translation diverges from this binary code because the translator is the author, which makes the translation an original, not a target text (Hokenson & Munson, 2014).

On the account that self-translators are considered as authorities in understanding their own writings, they are seen by professionals or the patronage to possess more agency that is rarely granted to standard translators; plus, the end-product is also deemed as more authentic than standard translations (Grutman & Van Bolderen,

2009; Wanner, 2018). As a result, compared to other translators, self-translators feel freer when making decisions in the process of translation; they can allow themselves to make bold changes—that for any other translator would cause trouble more often than not— because they are given a poetic license when it comes to rewriting their own works (Grutman & Van Bolderen, 2009; Perry, 1981).

There is no denying that self-translators are inherently bilingual, but Grutman (2013b) made a distinction between two types of bilingualism: exogenous and endogenous. Grutman first introduced those self-translators who grew up in bilingual communities, who learned two languages in the same capacity, and later wrote and self-translated in this language pair: these people hold internal or endogenous bilingualism. He added that external or exogenous bilingualism was an attribute belonging to people who learned a second language on their own, for whom changing languages acts as crossing borders (either literally or figuratively).

Additionally, Grutman (2013a, 2013b) mentioned the concept of symmetric versus asymmetric language pairing. Symmetric language pairing is reserved for those languages that are almost equally widespread and established or hold almost equal power; if they do not, an asymmetric language pairing will be the result (Grutman, 2013b). Nevertheless, in self-translations the language pairing is not the only important factor; the transfer of language is also essential, so there should be symmetric versus asymmetric categories of language transfer. When self-translation is an individual venture, together with bilingualism being a voluntary achievement, the author enjoys the luxury of operating symmetrically; while, in situations where a power play between languages (usually minor and major) is a given, asymmetric transfer is at work (Grutman, 2013a, 2013b).

Methodology

Case Study

This study delved into a qualitative case study research design. According to Lunenburg and Irby (2008), in case study research design, some remarkable individuals and entities are studied: if the choice is made to focus on one person or thing, it is called a single-case design, but if different people or things are studied, a multiple-case design will be the result. Plus, Lunenburg and Irby continued, more likely than not, one needs to resort to purposeful sampling. Moreover, this design has subtypes of its own: extreme case, critical case, convenience case, typical case, and politically important case. The current paper used a purposeful sampling to find a convenient case—forming a single-case design—for a self-translated piece of writing working within the English-Persian language pair.

The literature on self-translated poems is not entirely lacking (Wanner, 2018), so this sort of investigation is not unprecedented. The examined case study was found in the researcher's personal library as she was gifted the book by the poet himself. It contained English and Persian poems by the same writer called *My puce rose* (Shariati, 2010). Some of these poems are originals and are not translated into the other language; some are English originals self-translated into Persian while some are Persian originals self-translated into English. Unfortunately, for the majority of self-translated poems, the poet has not identified which is the source and which is the target; therefore, it was hard to pick the objects of analysis. Through deducing

some notes on types of poems (like the case studies in this article whose English original poems were of the types Vers beaucoup and Rhyming couplets), the researcher could recognize several poems whose originals were in English, out of which she picked two to examine, titled *My beautiful rose* and *Lavishness.*

Data Collection and Analysis Procedures

After the intended poems were chosen, the researcher did a textual analysis on both the source and the target in order to recognize the essential elements related to poetry and its translation. Next, she found out according to which of Lefevere's seven strategies of poetry translation, each English poem was rendered. Finally, she looked into the items as self-translation and she spotted if they were the result of the self-translator's exogenous or endogenous bilingualism, and if these two languages were symmetrically or asymmetrically paired.

Results

Regarding Translation

In this section, the results of the textual analysis of the translations are presented. In both poems, the elements of music (rhyme, alliteration, assonance, and consonance) were taken from a model found in Dastjerdi, Hakimshafaaii, and Jannesaari (2008). Moreover, it is stated based on which of Lefevere's famous seven strategies of poetry translation (phonemic translation, literal translation, metrical translation, poetry into prose, rhymed translation, blank verse, and interpretation), the two poems were translated.

My Beautiful Rose

Table 1. Textual analysis of *My beautiful rose* and رز زیبای من

	Source text	Target text
Structure	Vers beaucoup[1]	Rhyming couplets [2]
Rhymes	Rose, repose, nose, close Drunk, trunk, spunk Relaxes, praxis, axis Enclose, rose	خفته، شکفته باهم، محکم دلیر، شیر طوافش، سلافش
Number of words	45	51
Number of lines	7	8
Assonance in each line	/aɪ/ my, lying /oʊ/ rose, repose, nose /oʊ/ so, close /ə/ the, lioness, a /ʌ/ drunk, trunk /ɪ/ Hypnos, with	/ɑ:/ زیبا، آرام /ɔ/ رز، خفته /ɑ:/ آرامش، مشامم /ɔ/ مشامم، شکفته /æ/ پلکش، نزدیک /ɑ:/ و /æ/ آمده، با هم /ɪ/ این، شیرزن

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[1] Vers beaucoup "is a 4-3-3-2 format with no more than 3 words per rhyme" (Shariati 2010, 100).
[2] Every two lines in the poem rhyme, such as AABB (Oliver, 1994).

	Source text	Target text
	/ɪ/ relaxes, this, is, praxis	/æ/ رب، وهم، است
	/oʊ/ enclose, rose	/ɑ:/ این ها، آداب
	/i:/ we, be	/i:/ این ها ، شیر
		/æ/ و، هر، است
		/æ/ در، وسط، د، طوافش
		/ɑ:/ ما، طوافش
		/æ/ هر، رنگ، مست، سلافش
Consonance in each line	/t/ beautiful, attracts	/z/ رز، زیبا
	/z/ rose, repose, nose	/r/ رز، آرام
	/r/ rose, repose, attracts	/ʃ/ آرامش، مشامم
	/k/ looks, drunk, trunk	/ʃ/ آرامش، مشامم، شکفته
	/s/ looks, stout	/d/ دو، نزدیک
	/n/ drunk, trunk	/m/ خمار، محکم
	/p/ and /n/ and /s/ Hypnos, spunk	/r/ رب، دلیر
	/s/ peacefully, relaxes, this, praxis	/h/ این ها، هر
	/r/ relaxes, her, praxis	/s/ و /t/ ستونی، وسط
	/s/ is, axis	/t/ وسط، طوافش
	/z/ enclose, rose	/r/ هر، رنگی
	/k/ enclose, color	/s/ مست، سلافش
	/w/ we, white	
	/r/ color, or, rose	
	/c/ enclose, color	

Regarding the form and music of the source and the target texts—as it is evident in Table 1—although the structure and meter of the target are different from that of the source, both texts are rich in rhyme, assonance and consonance (but there no alliterations in either). Concerning the translation, first, it is slightly longer than the original by the number of words, but the Persian has more lines because every line in English has not been translated into an exact corresponding line with the same exact information in Persian. Second, although there are faint meaning inconsistencies between the original and the target, they are inconsequential in the grand scheme of things because the overall meaning of the poem has remained untouched; however, the amount of information and its order have changed. Third, maintaining Lefevere's model, rhymed translation has been employed.

Even though a look at the appendices will prove that the overall meaning has remained unchanged, examples will help make it more transparent.

- My beautiful rose, lying in repose, attracts the nose

Eyelids are close,

رز زیبای من آرام خفته، در آرامش مشامم را شکفته، در پلکش آمده نزدیک با هم

Here, the structure is obviously different since the first line has been broken in two. Then, the target is more precise for the addition of the words *my* (nose), *his/her* (eyelids), and (close) *to each other*. Nonetheless, these minor variations do not make a big difference; the conveyed message stays the same.

- The lioness looks drunk, stout as a trunk

بود این شیر زن خمار و محکم

The minor differences between English and Persian are the verb choices, and the word *trunk* not existing in the translation. The former could be due to differences between the languages themselves since the Persian equivalent of *look* is not that common or appropriate for a poem. The latter is probably because the word *trunk* exists in the source to create rhyme, but this specific word is not necessary in Persian to make the meaning clear. Similar to the previous example, these faint alterations do not change the meaning dramatically.

Lavishness

Table 2. Textual analysis of *Lavishness* and زیاده روی

	Source text	Target text
Structure	Acrostic poem[1] Monorhyme[2]	Free verse[3]
Rhymes	Bender, fender, gesture, biter, teacher, ponder, master, punster, fonder, wonder	No rhyme
Number of words	37	26
Number of lines	10	10
Assonance in each line /æ/	/ə/ the, of, bender /ɪ/ lavishness, in /ə/ velocity, of, gesture /ə/ intensity, of, biter /ə/ severity, of, teacher /i:/ severity, teacher /ə/ amount, of, ponder /ɑ:/ hearty, ponder /ə/ nobility, of, master /ə/ eternity, of, punster	/e/ اسراف، میگساری /o/ زمختی، محافظ /e/ شتاب، اشاره /ɑ:/ شتاب، اشاره /æ/ سختی، نشتر /i:/ سختیف، نیش /e/ جدیت، معلم /e/ فکر، دلچسب /e/ و /ɑ:/و /æ/ نجاب‌ـــــــت، دانشمند /ɑ:/ جاوید، جناس /æ/ صفای، فرد /ɑ:/ صفا، مشتاق

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[1] "An acrostic poem is defined as a poem in which the first letter of each line spells out a word, or phrase, or motto" (Shariati 2010, 85).

[2] A poem in which all the lines rhyme together (literarydevices.net).

[3] A form of poem that does not have rhyme, rhythm, or meter (literarydevices.net).

	Source text	Target text
	/ə/ serenity, of, fonder	/æ/ در، حیرتت، نیارد
Consonance in each line	/v/ lavishness, in	/p/ و /σ/ اسراف، میگساری
	/d/ and /r/ acridity, fender	/ζ/ زمخت، محافظ
	/s/ velocity, gesture	/Σ/ شتاب، اشاره
	/t/ intensity, biter	/p/ هر، اشاره
	/t/ and /r/ severity, teacher	/τ/ سختی، نشتر
	/t/ hearty, amount	/v/ و /Σ/ نیش، نشتر
	/r/ hearty, ponder	/v/ نجابت، دانشمند
	/n/ amount, ponder	/δZ/ جاوید، جناس
	/t/ nobility, master	/φ/ صفا، فرد
	/t/ and /r/ and /n/ eternity, punster	/δ/ در، نیارد
	/r/ and /n/ serenity, fonder	/p/ در، حیرتت، نیارد
	/n/ not, wonder	

As it can be seen in Table 2, the source poem has a specific structure, rhyming pattern, and meter; yet, the translation is a free verse: in spite of being rich in assonance and consonance (though not quite as rich as the original), it has no rhymes or meter. With reference to the translation itself, the content of the poem has not been lost, and the order of the information doesn't seem to have been changed; plus, every line in the English version has a corresponding line in the Persian (i.e., the same number of lines), but by the number of words, the Persian version is a little shorter. Lastly, based on Lefevere's model, literal translation has been of use here.

Again, it is quite clear in the following example (and more so in the full version in the appendices) that the overall meaning in the translation has never really strayed from the original.

- Velocity of gesture
Intensity of biter
Severity of teacher

شتاب هر اشاره

سختی نیش نشتر

جدیت معلم

Regarding Self-translation

The facts of the poet's/self-translator's life are that he grew up in an Iranian community, which is not a bilingual community, so he learned English as a second language; this makes his bilingualism an exogenous one. Moving on to symmetric versus asymmetric categories of language transfer, this self-translation was a personal, voluntary, autonomous venture; the author chose to write both in Persian and English. Although English is a more widespread language than Persian, this book was published in Iran; the author was not forced by minimal reach of a minority language, or demands of power play; instead, this book seemed to be a site

of emotional and aesthetic self-exploration. Hence, the author must have enjoyed a symmetric configuration.

Conclusions

Aside from systematically evaluating the translation of these poems, or what kind of bilingualism and language transfer was at play, what was most important in a self-translation, as was also mentioned in the literature was that the self-translator knew best. This author/translator created these poems with these forms based on the content he had in his mind; he was the best person to know what content was supposed to be represented; he could rewrite his work however he wanted, making all the changes he deemed worthy, on the account that he had complete agency and authority over the message that he wished to be conveyed.

In the end, the results of this paper are consistent with Wanner (2018), who found that the works of two Russian poet/self-translators were practices of exploring and expressing the self, and reveling in different potentials of verse in different languages.

Appendices

My beautiful rose[1]

My beautiful rose, lying in repose, attracts the nose

Eyelids are so close,

the lioness looks drunk, stout as a trunk

Hypnos with spunk,

peacefully relaxes, this is her praxis

She is the axis,

whom we enclose, be color or white rose

رز زیبای من

رز زیبای من آرام خفته
در آرامش نشامم را شکفته
دو پلکش آمده نزدیک باهم
بود این شیرزن خمار ومحکم
که رب النوع خواب وهم دلیر است
و این ها هردو از آداب شیر است
ستونی در وسط، ما در طوافش
به هر رنگی بود، مستِ سُلافش

Lavishness

Lavishness in the bender
Acridity of fender
Velocity of gesture
Intensity of biter
Severity of teacher
Hearty amount of ponder
Nobility of master
Eternity of punster
Serenity of fonder
Shall not make you wonder

زیاده روی

اسراف میگساری
زمختی محافظ
شتاب هر اشاره
سختی نیش نشتر
جدّیت معلّم
میزان فکر دلچسب
نجابت دانشمند
جاویدی جناس گو
صفای فرد مشتاق
در حیرتت نیارد.

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شعر در ترجمه:

آیا خودمترجمان می‌توانند به نتیجه مطلوب دست یابند؟

فاطمه بدیع‌الزمان[1]

دانشجوی دکتری گروه زبان انگلیسی، دانشکده ادبیات و علوم انسانی، دانشگاه فردوسی مشهد،
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با وجود آنکه متون ترجمه‌شده از کمبود رنج نمی‌برند، خودترجمه‌ها در مقایسه بسیار کم‌شمار هستند.
با صرف‌نظر از تعاریف رایج در سایر رشته‌ها، در حوزهٔ مطالعات ترجمه، خودترجمه به اثری اطلاق
می‌شود که خود مؤلف به زبانی دیگر ترجمه می‌کند و این امر به ادغام نقش نویسنده و مترجم در یک
فرد منجر می‌شود. با توجه به کمیابی خودترجمه‌ها، پژوهش دربارهٔ این‌گونه متون نیز به‌تبع کمیاب‌تر
است. به‌منظور پرکردن این خلأ، در این مقاله یک کتاب شعر خودترجمه‌شده برای مطالعهٔ موردی
انتخاب شد. از یک سو، خودترجمه‌ها را می‌توان همانند هر متن ترجمه‌شدهٔ دیگری تحلیل کرد؛
بنابراین، اشعار منتخب براساس رویکردهای لفور در زمینهٔ ترجمهٔ شعر مورد بررسی قرار گرفتند. از
سوی دیگر، از چارچوب نظری گروتمن در خصوص دوزبانگی خودمترجم و روابط قدرت بین دو
زبان نیز بهره گرفته شد. در نتیجه، از آنجایی که این خودمترجم، شاعر اثر نیز بود و از حقوق مالکیت
معنوی محتوا برخوردار بود، بیش از هر کس دیگری بر محتوای آن اشراف داشت. ازاین‌رو، هرگونه
تغییری که وی در فرآیند ترجمه ایجاد کرده بود، توجیه‌پذیر به شمار می‌آمد.

واژه‌های کلیدی: خودترجمه، متون ترجمه‌شده، شعر، دوزبانگی.

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