

Gender and Social Issues in Persian Translation: A Case Study of Jhumpa Lahiri's "The Namesake"

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Abstract: Recently Translation studies has focused on the role of translators in cultural communications and emphasized on the translator's gender as one of the factors which impacts the work of translation. This paper has examined Jhumpa Lahiri's novel entitled *The Namesake* and its two Persian translations one done by a female, Gita Garakani and the other by a male, Amir Mehdi Haghighat to investigate the role of gender in terms of social status and cultural meaning. This is a mixed method research which with the use of manipulation strategies tries to find out to what extent each translator is loyal to the source text. Data illuminate the female translator has been more faithful to the source text than the male one.

Key Words: Gender, social status, cultural meaning, translation, fidelity, manipulation

INTRODUCTION

According to Federici and Vanessa (2013) gendered writing has been one of the examples of cultural identity to gain prominence in the linguistic, social and political fields over the last decades. Simon (1996) asserts that thinking about gender occurs in cultures where gender configurations, as the social meaning systems that encode sexual differences, endure changes. Since roles of gender appear to shift in just about every period of time in relation to all kinds of factors, it is often a major focus of thought and writing in practice and in theory. That is why Jhumpa Lahiri's "The Namesake" which is translated to Persian by two translators—a male and a female—are taken into consideration. It was a famous novel in 2003 and published in *The New Yorker* in America. This novel is about a family life of Indians who live in America. Gender studies explore the general significance of gender to structures of literary and cultural representations. Gender is a representation; it represents not an individual but a social relation which belongs to a class, a group and a category (Lauretis 1987). Gender is now realized as social status, a personal identity and a set of relationships between women and men (Butler 1990). It refers to the ways of representing people and situations based on sex difference. It is an achieved status that which is

constructed through psychological, cultural and social means (Money, 1974). It is a social or cultural category influenced by stereotypes about the behavior of female and male that appears in our attitudes and beliefs which often said to be 'culturally produced' or 'constructed' (Goodman, 1996).

The aim of the study is to investigate whether gender in terms of social status and cultural meaning has any effects on the fidelity of its Persian translations.

Literature review: In this part those related concepts and terms used in this study will be defined—first the concept of gender, its relation to language and translator and later the concept of fidelity along with manipulation theory.

Gender: The term gender has emerged in the late 1960s and 1970s, appearing in the professional literature of the social sciences. It distinguishes those aspects of life that were more easily understood to be of social rather than biological origin.

According to Lauretis (1987) gender is not sex but the representation of each individual in terms of a particular social relation which pre-exists the individual and is predicted on the conceptual opposition of two biological sexes. Besides Butler (1990) states that there is no sex that is not always already gender. All bodies are gendered

from the beginning of their social existence which means that there is no natural body that pre-exists its cultural inscription. This came to conclusion that gender is not something one is it is something one does as an act, a verb rather than a noun, a 'doing' rather than a 'being.' Doing gender means creating differences between women and men that are not natural or biological (West and Zimmerman, 2009). More specifically, gender is a concept that expresses how societies ascertain and manage sex categories; the cultural meanings attached to men and women's roles; and how individuals understand their identities including being a man, woman and other gender positions. Gender involves social norms, attitudes and activities that society deems more appropriate for one sex over another (Bussey and Bandura, 1999).

In the present study, the researchers have focused on gender as social status (Butler, 1990's) and cultural meanings (Bussey and Bandura, 1999's).

Social Status: Simply defined, a status is a socially defined position in a group or a social system, such as male, female, student, teacher, mother, father etc. Status is also used as a synonym for honor or prestige, when social status denotes the relative position of a person on a publicly recognized scale or hierarchy of social worth (Linton 1936). By status, Linton (1936) means a position in a social system involving designated rights and obligation; while social status is the amount of honor and prestige a person receives from members of the community and from the larger society in a stratification system. According to Linton (1936), social status of a person is categorized in two concepts: Ascribed status: statuses given to a person at birth (such as age differences, sex dichotomy, kinship, race, caste and social factors). These are assigned to a person by society without regard for the person's special talents or characteristics. And Achieved status: a social position which a person attains through his own efforts individual choice and competition. This is secured through one's ability, performance and possibly by good or ill fortune (such as property, occupation and education, division of labor, political power, marital relations and achievements).

Cultural meanings attached to men and women's roles: Concerns about culture are frequently raised in relation to initiatives gender studies in development cooperation. Expectations about attributes and behaviors appropriate to women and men are shaped by culture. Gender acts as an organizing principle for society because of the cultural meanings given to being male or female. Culture determines gender roles and what is masculine and feminine but it may vary from one culture to the next, from

one group to another. But every culture has gender roles- they all have expectations for the way women and men should dress, behave and look (West and Zimmerman, 2009).

According to West and Zimmerman (2009), when people adopt cultural meanings associated with their sex, culture gets inside the person. While gender norms are broadly reinforced culturally, it is within the household that children first learn about gender roles, equating maleness with power and authority and femaleness with inferiority and subservience. Consequently, gender socialization entails learning how to perform the behaviors that are consistent with one's gender (West and Zimmerman, 2009). In this study, cultural meanings are considered as expectations about attitudes and behaviors appropriate to men and women.

Numerous researchers have described women's language as being different from that of men's. Holmes (1995) also stresses that women and men talk and write differently.

Gender and language: Language and gender are connected to each other through the individuals' participation in the daily social life. Gender is without doubt a cultural construction but first of all it is conveyed through language (Federici and Vanessa, 2013). Language as a significant part of man's identity linked to gender and developed through man's participation in every day social practice (Holmes, 1995).

Since the product of man's language, it must have the same characteristics of that language. Therefore, it can be said translation reflects the characteristics of its translator's the language (Shafiee and Rabeie, 2011). According to Simon (1996) translation is one of the most typical representations of language use among different societies and various cultures and therefore, the identity of translators as special users of language is very effective. She concludes that the translator transfers her/his own cultural perspective regarding gender and illuminates his or her cultural position (Shafiee and Rabeie, 2011).

Gender and translation: The academic relationship between Gender Studies and Translation Studies is anything but new. Translation is considered as an essential factor in the development of different societies all over the world. The concept of translation, however is not just the mechanical act of transferring meaning from one language into another. The translator, as the re-creator of the work has her/his own intention in translating the text and when intention in the process of re-creating a text is at work, the translator's 'ideology' plays a crucial role in revealing her/his intention (Shafiee and Rabeie, 2011).

Translation is a discursive practice that forms and transforms gender identities and helps reconsidering the notion of sexual difference. Translation no longer seen as a bridge between cultures and cultural entities but as a creative cultural activity and languages are seen as a part of the process in which identities are formed. Because of the powerful influence of language in applying and enforcing a society's notions about gender, gender expectations and gendered behavior and in producing, creating and manipulating texts in translation, the two areas of study developed a productive overlap from the late 1970s onward. It reveals the translator's gender as one of the factors which impacts the work of translation (Simon 1996).

Flotow (1997) states gender questions apply to research on translation in two major ways-Gender in macro-analyses of translation and Gender in micro-analyses of translation:

Gender in macro-analyses of translation: According to Flotow (1997) in the first analysis, focusing on gender leads to revisionist work, starting from the finding that women have been presented natively in the linguistic and literary histories of Itures. It covers topics such as women writer and translations in Renaissance or the translation of homosexual materials in Russia to examine the influence of gender in translation across a wide range of society (Gambier and Doorslaer, 2010). The focus of this level is on the cultural and socio-political aspects.

Gender in micro-analyses of translation: Flotow for definition of gender in micro-analyses of translation asserts that gender is used as a lens focusing on the details of language that may reflect or hide gendered as well. The fidelity in translation has been defined in aspects of language use. This kind of analysis explores the connection between a writer and their translators and sitioning uthors, ranslators and researchers ruggle over the power to interpret meaning. It is ocused linguistic level (Gambier and Doorslaer, 2010).

Fidelity and translation: A review of translation history indicates that various debates about the issue of faithfulness to translation terms of gender and sexual drives (Chamberlain, 1998; Baker, 1998). Its principle was first introduced into Skopos theory in 1989 in order to explain the culture-specificity of translation concepts. It refers to the attitude or behavior of the translator during the process of translation.

Fidelity, to start with, is to convey source text content accurately and honestly, with no distortion of it or omission at will. It refers to the limits to which a given human translation work precisely depicts the underlying message or meaning of the source text without distorting

it, without intensifying or weakening any part of its context and otherwise without subtracting or adding to it. Besides, fidelity also refers to the similarity in writing style in both two languages. The standard fidelity in translation calls for an unchanging of sentence's meaning, no overmuch omission (Zhang, 2012). Translations that have high fidelity are classified as "faithful" translations.

The fidelity is relevant to the translator's play of subjectivity. Traditional fidelity in translation is somehow an ideal model for translator in translation practice as linguistic factor in textual meaning. The differences in culture, language and the translator subjectivity in translation cannot be avoided in the case of which absolute fidelity cannot be achieved in translation work. Today, faithfulness is not only a problem in the comparison of textual meaning but also involves something like reader's demand, translation target, market demand, especially the translator's subjectivity and translational style (Zhang, 2012). According to Beekman and Callow (1989) a faithful translation renders the dynamics, mobility and the meaning of the target text. They assert "a translator can be faithful to the target text when she/he correctly understands its message". In fact faithfulness shows to what extent the Target Text (TT) reconstructs the Source Text (ST) (Moghaddas, 2013).

Manipulation and translation: Although translation scholars already started researching the real concept of manipulation back in the 1970s, no comprehensive and equal definition, description or conceptualization of it has been offered as yet. Indeed various scholars realized this phenomenon differently. They always have tried to describe it, both its positive and negative aspects (Dukate 2007; Arbabi, 2014).

The approach to translation as manipulation is most often associated with the Descriptive Translation Studies or the Manipulation School. The Manipulation School represents an approach to translation as manipulation or as rewriting of texts for a specific target audience in conformity with target language norms and under various constraints. According to Hermans (1985), the theory was proposed by Lefevere and Bassnett (1992) who has tried to study translation from a sociological perspective, that is, how translational activities the target society. Lefevere (1992) presented the theory of rewriting and manipulation. Lefevere's theory of manipulation places translation within a social, political and cultural context and allow observing the way in which translation nteract with the target environment. He state that translation, historiography, criticism and editing are all different forms of rewriting. According to Lefevere, 'any work is not translated in vacuum but manipulated or rewritten in a certain form for a certain reason.

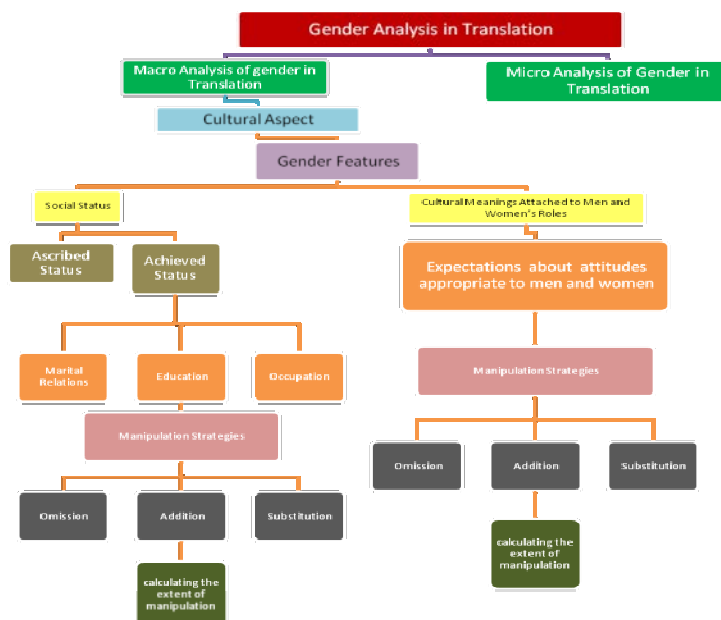


Fig. 1: Research method chart

Providing Lefevere’s theory of manipulation and in order to examine the amount of fidelity of both translators (male/female) to the ST, the researcher worked on the most frequent use of manipulation strategies such as substitution, omission and addition. In terms of addition, Lefevere discusses that ‘This fact is most apparent in the passages various translators insert in their translations, passages that are most emphatically not in the original’ (Lefevere, 2004). He states that translators would add some extra information in their translations because of different situations to present the source text or the image of the source text to the target readers. In Lefevere’s view translators omit passages, expressions or words of the source texts under certain constraints which include ideology, poetics and patronage. However, those constraints are hardly noticeable because they are lying behind the texts, for most of the time (Zhang, 2013). Through substitution, ‘some irrelevant or tenebrous information of the source texts can be weakened or even ignored during translation, while, some culture-oriented information related to the source language texts is highlighted, or at whiles, the original information is even replaced by culture-oriented information (Zhang, 2013).

MATERIALS AND METHODS

This is a mixed method research. In order to do this study based on macro analysis by the use of qualitative method gender features include social status and cultural meanings attached to men and women’ role are found in the source text and compared with the two translation of male and female by the use of manipulation

strategies-addition, omission and substitution through quantitative method. Each social status and cultural meanings index found in source text is compared separately to female and male translation to find out the different strategies of addition, omission and substitution used by each translator in order to understand the amount of fidelity each translator achieved. According to Luise von Flotow, gender analysis in translation is focused on cultural aspect; hence the researchers tried to find gender features in the source text which based on social status (Butler, 1990) and cultural meanings (Bussey and Bandura 1999) related to men and women's roles. As discussed earlier, the social status has two categories such as ascribes status and achieved status. Occupation, education and marital relations are considered as achieved status and focusing on ascribed status is not the concern of this research. In terms of cultural meanings expectations of behavior and attitude that society deems more appropriate to men and women are taken into consideration. It is remarkable to note that to some extent the narrator directs the reader to find out the expectations of behavior of each gender in Indian community living in America. The following chart makes the conducted method of this research crystal clear: (Fig. 1).

RESULTS

To examine the role of gender in Persian translation of ‘The Namesake’ the indexes of social statuses and cultural meanings are concerned.

Table 1: Facts of Social Status in ST, FT and MT

Source Text	FT	MT	Applied manipulation strategies	Social status
unfaithful wife's	Hamsare bivafayash	Zan e khlaniat karash	FT: No Changes MT: Substitution	Marital Status (Role of wife)
From the beginning he feels useless. Moushumi makes all the decisions does all the talking	Az haman aval ehsas mikonad vojoudash bi fayed east. Moushumi hameye tasmim ha ra migirad, hame ye harfhara mizanad	Gogool az haman saniye aval ehsase betalat mikonad. Aghlab saket ast va sedash dar nemiayad	FT: No Changes MT: Omission and Addition	Marital Status (Role of wife and husband)
Moushumi is invited to give a paper at a conference at the Sorbonne	Moushumi baraye eraeye maghalee dar conferanci dar Sorbone davat shode	Seminari dar Sorbone bargozar mishavad va Moushumi baraye eraeye maghale davat shode	FT: No Changes MT: No Changes	Education (as a PhD student)

Social Status: In terms of social status the researcher focused on marital status, education and occupation as achieved status and ascribed status are not considered in the current study. The following Tables describe some facts of social status found in the novel. It should be noted that in all Tables “FT” and “MT”, stand for female translation and male translation respectively.

Table 1 Indicates the examples of social status that appeared in the ST and translated by two translators-a male and a female. In the first item of Table 1, the phrase 'unfaithful wife' shows the marital status (as achieved status) and used as a gendered feature. The male translator translated “unfaithful” as “disloyal”. He over emphasized the inappropriate behavior of the wife whereas no changes appeared in the female translation.

The second example (2) of Table 1 indicates marital status as a social status. The male translator has omitted the sentence ‘Moushumi makes all the decisions, does all the talking.’ and instead he added the sentence/Aghlab saket ast o sedash dar nemiayad/ means /he is often silent and doesn't speak/ in his translation of that sentence. It seems that manipulation strategies used to decrease or hide Moushumi's power and confidence in her marital life. It shows that Moushumi (as a wife and also female) is stronger than Gogol (as a male and husband) and she makes all the important decisions of their common life. In translation of the same sentence, the female translator has not changed it at all.

And the last example in Table 1 displays education as an achieved status in the sentence ‘Moushumi is invited to give a paper at a conference at the Sorbonne.’. None of the translators have manipulated this sentence.’ The sentence expresses Moushumi as a female achieved high position in terms of education, that’s why she was invited to give speech in a conference in Paris.

The total number of social status found in the novel and the manipulation occurred in both translations are described in the following Tables separately: Table 2 Indicates the number of gender features in social status (as marital relations, education and occupation) that

Table 2: The number of Social Status found in ST

Social status	Marital relations	Education	Occupation	Total
Total number	9	3	5	17

found in the source text to examine and compare the manipulation strategies applied in each translation by both translators.

There is no manipulation strategy used by the female translator in social status. But in Table 3 shows that addition strategy is used 24%(4 frequencies), substitution strategy 18% (3 frequencies) and omission strategy is applied 11% (2 frequencies) by the male translator in social status. And also 47% (8 frequencies) in the cases of social status are not changed by the male translator at all; while 53% (9 frequencies) of the cases are manipulated.

Cultural meanings: According to West and Zimmerman (2009), when people adopt cultural meanings associated with their sex, culture gets inside the person and it determines what is masculine and feminine. According to Bussey and Bandura (1999) culture forms expectations about behaviors that are appropriate to women and men. But it should be said that those gender roles would change from one culture to another.

Table 4 Points at how women’s family changed after marriage-‘There were her last moments as Ashima Bhaduri, before becoming Ashima Ganguli.’ As this Table shows no manipulation strategies have used either in Female Translation (FT) or Male Translation (MT).

In second example it is shown that how the male translator has used addition strategy in translating of 'Maxine is open about her past'. He has translated it as “rahat va bi molaheze” meaning “comfortable and inconsiderate” to show that her behavior was weird and rude. It is unusual that a girl talks about her previous relationships to her new boyfriend/husband.

Finally the third instance (3) of the Table 4 reveals that it was forbidden for Indian girls to date with boys in the teenage years. The male translator has omitted the age of the person (teenage) in his translation but the female translator did not change and manipulate that sentence.

Table 3: The frequencies and percentages of Manipulation applied in MT based on social status

MT	Addition	Substitution	Omission	Total of used Manipulation strategies	No changes in social status	Total of cases in social status
Frequency	4	3	2	9	8	17
Percentage	24%	18%	11%	53%	47%	100%

Table 4: Facts of Cultural Meanings in ST, FT and MT

Source text	FT	MT	Applied manipulation strategie	Cultural meaning attached to men and women
There were her last moments as marriageAshima Bhaduri before becoming AshimaGangul	Akharin lahzehayee ou be on va ne Ashima bahaduri bud, pish az as anke be ashima Gaungli mishod Tabdil shaved	Akharin lahzehaee bood ke Ashima Bahaduri be bad bud;azan Ashima be bad Ashima Gaungli mishod	FT: No changes MT:No changes	changing the last of a woman after marriage
Maxine is open about, her past showing, him photographs of her ex-boy friends in the pages of a marble-papered album speaking of those relationships without embarrassment or regret	Maxine rahat az be ou gozashteash harf mizanad, ax haye doost pesare sabeghash radarsafahatealbumib akaghghazemarmamameshanmi dahad. Azanravabetbedoon narahatiy apashimani. harfmizanad	Maxine az gozashteash rahat o bi molaheze harf mizanad. Ax e doos pesarhayee sabeghash ra dar yek album varaghmarm arineshane Gogol midahadv amogheharfzadan azanhanadaspache astnahasratmikhorad.	FT: No changes MT: addition	Talking about ex-boyfriends is not appropriate and acceptable especially for an Indian girl
She had been forbidden as a teenagerto date	Dar nojavaniazvadeyemol aghatgozashtanbapesparah man shode bud	Ezajenadashtbahichpes arighararbozzarad	FT: No changes MT: omission	It was forbidden for a girl to date with boys in the teenage years

Table 5: The number of cultural meanings found in ST

Cultural meanings	Expectations about behaviors that are appropriate to men and women in the society
Total number	17

The total number of cultural meanings found in the novel and the manipulation occurred in both translations are described in the separate tables briefly:

Table 5 Indicates the total number of gender features in cultural meanings (as expectations about attitude and behavior that are appropriate to men and women) that found in the source text to examine and compare the manipulation strategies applied in each translation by both translators.

As revealed in Table 6, the female translator just used substitution strategy as 5% (1 frequency) in cultural meanings' cases that found in ST. No other manipulation strategies applied by the female translator in this gender feature and so 5% (16 frequencies) in cases of the cultural meanings translated without any changes or manipulation by the female translator.

Table 7 In the percentage of applied addition strategy in gender feature as cultural meanings by the male translator is 17% (3 frequencies) and the percentage of applied substitution strategy is 30% (5 frequencies) and the percentage of the last used manipulation strategy as omission strategy is 5% (1 frequency). Therefore 52% (9 frequencies) in cases of cultural meanings are manipulated by the male translator and 48% (8 frequencies) of the cases translated with no changes and manipulation.

Based on findings, it is revealed that although some of the sentences in both gender features as social status and cultural meanings translated with no changes and manipulations, however the male translator applied more manipulation strategies both in social status and cultural meanings than the female translator. Hence it can be said that the female translator with less manipulation was more faithful to the source text than the male one.

Several researches have surveyed the role of translation in transmitting new social, cultural and political ideas focused on gender and their literary expression across cultural boundaries. Torabi (2011) studied on the extent of gender interference with manipulation strategies in translation of literary texts. Torabi found out the dominant manipulation strategies such as substitution, addition and deletion that applied by both translators. In Torabi's paper, after comparing and analyzing the data, it was concluded both translators' most prevailing manipulation strategy was substitution, although it seems that the male translator has shown more interest in applying the substitution strategy. While in the present study, the researchers focused on gender in two gender features such as social status (based on Butler's statement) and cultural meanings attached to men and women's roles (based on Bussey and Bandura's statement) and worked on the extent of manipulation strategies applied by both translators-male and female. In the study, the manipulation strategy used by male translator in cases of social status was mostly Addition

Table 6: The frequencies and percentages of manipulation applied in FT based on cultural meanings

FT	Addition	Substitution	Omission	Total of used manipulation	No changes in cultural meanings	Total of cases in cultural meanings
Frequency	0	1	0	1	16	17
Percentage	0	5%	0	5%	95%	100%

Table 7: The frequencies and percentages of manipulation applied in MT based on cultural meanings

	Addition	Substitution	Omission	Total of used Manipulation strategies	No changes in cultural meanings	Total of cases in MIFT cultural meanings
Frequency	3	5	1	9	8	17
Percentage	17%	30%	5%	52%	48%	100%

and no manipulation strategy used by the female translator in these cases. Although the most used manipulation strategy by both translators in cases of cultural meanings was substitution strategy.

As Holmes (1995,) designated the role of language as a significant part of man’s identity linking to gender and developing through man’s participation in every day social practice. It is proved through various investigations that the language of men and women are different. Closely related to the Holmes’ statement, the present study has reached to the point that there are differences in man’s and woman’s language based on the analysis of their translations.

CONCLUSION

To sum up, the total results of research indicated that the female translator was more faithful to the source text than male translators the result of using less manipulation in her translation.

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