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ABSTRACT

Comics are considered as one of the most popular books because authors and illustrators of such books combine sounds, images, and words in a creative manner to lead readers' thoughts to the specific storyline. Although the translation of sounds such as onomatopoeias and interjections is of great significance, translators sometimes encounter considerable difficulties in conveying them from one language to another. Concerning translation quality assessment, the present research was conducted to investigate and analyze the translation quality of onomatopoeias and interjections in comics.

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Classification: DDC Code: 495.681 LCC Code: PL685

Language: English



London
Journals Press

LJP Copyright ID: 573333
Print ISSN: 2515-5784
Online ISSN: 2515-5792

London Journal of Research in Humanities and Social Sciences

Volume 22 | Issue 8 | Compilation 1.0



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Translation Quality Assessment of Sounds in Comics: A Comparative Study for Analyzing Onomatopoeias and Interjections in Persian Translations

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ABSTRACT

Comics are considered as one of the most popular books because authors and illustrators of such books combine sounds, images, and words in a creative manner to lead readers' thoughts to the specific storyline. Although the translation of sounds such as onomatopoeias and interjections is of great significance, translators sometimes encounter considerable difficulties in conveying them from one language to another. Concerning translation quality assessment, the present research was conducted to investigate and analyze the translation quality of onomatopoeias and interjections in comics. To this end, six issues of an English comic entitled the Walking Dead were selected to assess both onomatopoeias and interjections. The sounds applied in the aforementioned comic were rendered into Persian by two translators and the website. In consequence, three different translations were utilized to perceive how well and efficiently the translators were able to translate the sounds from English into Persian. According to the specific rating scale, three raters evaluated the equivalents to determine which translation had the highest quality. Lastly, inter-rater reliability and descriptive statistics were utilized to indicate the quality of all three translations. The results of this study demonstrated that Akhtari's translation surpassed Sohrabi and TWDfans, and the lowest quality appertained to Sohrabi's translation. Despite the fact that Sohrabi's translation had the lowest quality, it was not greatly inferior to TWD fans.

Keywords: comic book, sound, onomatopoeia, interjection, translation quality assessment.

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I. INTRODUCTION

From a holistic point of view, translating comics or other books is one of the streamlined methods to disseminate information among people all over the world. However, translators often experience great difficulties in conveying the meaning of words, expressions, idioms, sounds, or many others from the source text (ST) to the target text (TT). To put it simply, translating comic books or other texts sometimes place translators in a dilemma. Guillaume (2015) states that the restricted space of speech bubbles and the interaction of words and images are considered as particular problems for translating comics. Valero Garcés (as cited in Gore, 2017) mentions that the main limitation is that generally translators can only get involved in the textual parts of comics, hence they have no control over images.

According to Suryoalam (2011), there are various problems like non-equivalent at the word level in translating the ST, hence translators require effective solutions. Moreover, Tomášek (2009)

opines that the context of comic books is made not only by the sentences or the subtle connection but also by the untranslatable units. Thus, translators must consider and incorporate them in the process of decoding and recoding. This means, untranslatability of words or terms is one of the problems in comics that requires a great deal of attention. Overall, selecting both proper strategies and correct equivalents is a must for all translators.

On the other hand, a wide variety of onomatopoeias and interjections are utilized in comics; therefore, finding the appropriate and precise translation for them is of great significance. Furthermore, sounds, for example onomatopoeias and interjections, which convey certain meanings in one language may not convey the same meanings in another. Thus, translators must make modifications and adjustments to transfer them from the source language (SL) to the target language (TL). Kokko (2013) mentions that in the translation of comic books, it is significant not only to convey the written text to another language but also to adapt the pictorial material and all other information to the environment of the target culture. Pertiwi (2015) believes that onomatopoeia is an imitation of the sound, and it is exceedingly affected by the culture of speakers. Agustina (2013) maintains that different onomatopoeias are a significant problem in comics, and these onomatopoeic words are located inside bubbles and in the animation. In general, they tend to be used by a specific country, hence they may have no meaning for the readers of other countries.

To sum up, utmost attention to onomatopoeias and interjections in comic books can impact on the quality of translations tremendously. In fact, the translators' work becomes more laborious when the comic comprises various sounds, and a need for every translator is to utilize correct and suitable equivalents for them. Based on the aim of this study, six issues of the comic entitled *the Walking Dead* were selected to evaluate the translation quality of onomatopoeias and interjections. In this regard, three translations were compared with each other to determine

which translation had the highest quality based on the three raters' views.

II. METHOD

In the present research, the descriptive analysis design was adopted to investigate and analyze the translation quality of sounds in comics. In addition, this study attempted to compare three translations with each other to ascertain which translator applied the appropriate equivalents for conveying onomatopoeias and interjections from the SL to the TL. In consequence, a comparative study was performed to determine which translation had the highest quality based on the raters' opinions.

III. CORPUS

To conduct this study, the comic named *the Walking Dead* written by Kirkman (2003) was opted owing to having three translations. Consequently, purposive sampling was utilized in the present study. Since only six issues of this comic had three Persian translations, this research was not able to examine onomatopoeias and interjections in more issues. Although this comic book is proper for adult readers, it can be pursued by different age groups due to the desired topic and the engrossing story.

The *Walking Dead* is comprised of 193 issues, and it has different genres such as horror, action, adventure, and zombies. This comic was published for a number of successive years. Indeed, it was produced from 2003 to 2019. Additionally, the issues used for analyzing the sounds were translated into Persian by Sohrabi (2013), Akhtari (2016), and TWDfans (2018).

IV. FRAMEWORK OF THE STUDY

An analytical framework was provided both to contrast three translations with each other and to indicate which translator utilized better equivalents for rendering onomatopoeias and interjections into Persian. In this regard, certain items were specified for translation quality assessment based on various criteria proposed for a good translation. Larson (1998) stated that the ideal translation is the one that applies the normal

language forms of the readers, conveys the same meaning of the ST, and maintains the dynamics of the original source language text. Nida (2000) suggests four basic requirements of a good translation. The requirements are composed of "making sense, conveying the spirit and manner of the original, having a natural and easy form of expression, and producing a similar response" (p. 134).

Tytlar (as cited in Newmark, 2009) mentions three rules of a good translation. The first one is the translation should present a complete transcript of ideas of the ST. The second one is the style and manner of writing should be of the same character as the original work, and the third one is the translation should consist of all the ease of original composition. Forster (as cited in Nida, 2000) maintains that a good translation is "one which fulfills the same purpose in the new language as the original did in the language in which it was written" (p. 131). Lewis (2000) states that "a good translation should be a double interpretation, faithful both to the language/message of the original and to the message-orienting cast of its own language" (p. 268).

Massoud (as cited in Abdellah, 2002) determines the criteria of a good translation. First, it is easily comprehended by the readers. Second, it is fluent and smooth. Third, it is idiomatic. Fourth, it transfers the literary subtleties of the ST. Fifth, it distinguishes between the metaphorical and the literal. Sixth, it reconstructs the cultural/historical context of the original. Seventh, it makes explicit what is implicit in abbreviations, and in allusions to sayings, songs, and nursery rhymes. Eighth, it transfers the meaning of the ST.

El Shafey (as cited in Abdellah, 2002) recommends three criteria for a good translation. First, translators should have knowledge about the grammar of the SL, they should have knowledge of vocabulary, and they should understand the original text. Second, translators should be able to reconstitute the given text (SL) into the TL. Third, the translation should capture the style or atmosphere of the ST, and it should have all the ease of the original composition. In

addition, Gui (as cited in Babae, Wan Yahya, & Babae, 2014) states that translation is fundamentally a creative activity, and it is not merely the process of transforming a source text into a literal text. He opines that a good translator should be creative, and the work of a translator is like a painter or a writer.

Based on the aforementioned criteria, the specific items were utilized in the rating scale to assess the quality of all three translations. These items are: The number of translated sounds, the number of correct translations, the number of erroneous translations, naturalness of translations, conveying the same message of original sounds, comprehensibility of translated sounds, closeness of translated sounds to their intended meaning, and translators' creativity for translating sounds.

V. DATA COLLECTION PROCEDURE

As mentioned earlier, all onomatopoeias and interjections were extracted from six issues of *the Walking dead* to analyze them. The equivalents used in three translations were specified and examined. The present work introduced eight items for translation quality assessment, and the rating scale was prepared to request three raters to scrutinize the translation quality of sounds. Further, two experts, with impeccable academic credentials, assessed the rating scale, and they confirmed that it was appropriate for this study. More accurately, these experts, with a PhD in Translation Studies, are eminent university professors and multilingual translators who are capable of translating both written texts and audiovisual products. As a consequence, they were competent enough to examine the rating scale.

VI. DATA ANALYSIS PROCEDURE

This research aimed to conduct a careful examination of the Persian equivalents used for onomatopoeias and interjections. As a result, the unit of analysis was sound. After the rating scale had been provided, the raters evaluated the sounds and their translations. Also, they contrasted onomatopoeias and interjections with their equivalents to assess the performance of each translator. Afterward, the rating scale was

	Akhtari	آخخ!	(back translation: oof)
YAHHH!!	TWDFans	اوى!!	(back translation: cry out in pain)
	Sohrabi	آى!!	(back translation: cry out in pain)
	Akhtari	آهههه!	(back translation: cry out in pain)

The next table (Table 3) is associated with interjections used in the comic book. Table 3 shows that TWDFans, Sohrabi, and Akhtari did not leave the interjections in the original form, thus they could translate both of them.

In addition, the rating scale was provided based on what the theories suggest to be the characteristics of a good translation (see Appendix). This scale consisted of eight items, among which item three is reversed scored. Each

of the three raters evaluated the translations, namely TWDFans, Sohrabi, and Akhtari, and filled out the rating scale. The data was entered into SPSS to check the inter-rater reliability and to assure that the analysis is not based on a single rater's unverified judgment. The results of the inter-rater reliability analysis conducted using two-way random absolute agreement intraclass correlation coefficient (ICC) are reported in Table 4.

Table 4: Intraclass Correlation Coefficient

		Intraclass Correlation ^a	95% Confidence Interval		F Test with True Value 0			
			Lower Bound	Upper Bound	Value	df1	df2	Sig
TWDFan	Single Measures	.798 ^b	.501	.950	13.545	7	14	.000
	Average Measures	.922	.750	.983	13.545	7	14	.000
Sohrabi	Single Measures	.857 ^b	.608	.966	17.258	7	14	.000
	Average Measures	.947	.823	.989	17.258	7	14	.000
Akhtari	Single Measures	.842 ^b	.586	.962	19.097	7	14	.000
	Average Measures	.941	.809	.987	19.097	7	14	.000
Two-way random effects model where both people effects and measures effects are random.								
a. Type A the intraclass correlation coefficients using an absolute agreement definition.								
b. The estimator is same, whether the interaction effect is present or not.								

The results in Table 4 clearly suggest that the raters' judgments were sufficiently accurate and systematic, rather than biased and haphazard, because the average measure of ICC for all the

translations, whether offered by TWDFans, Sohrabi, or Akhtari, was consistently higher than .70, which is considered to be the conservative cut-off point.

To discern which translation was the best according to the raters' judgments, the raters' responses to the items of the rating scale were averaged into the overall quality score, and then descriptive statistics were examined. Moreover, to be confident whether the differences observed in the descriptive statistics are significantly important or not, one-way ANOVA between the translations was conducted. Before getting to the

comparison of the results, it must be mentioned that in the following tables N is equal to three (N=3) because the eight items of the rating scale were averaged into the overall translation score which is fed into the analysis, and since three scores from three raters were collected for each translation, naturally three overall translation scores should exist.

Table 5: Descriptive Statistics on the Quality of the Translations

	N ¹	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error	95% Confidence Interval for Mean		Minimum	Maximum
					Lower Bound	Upper Bound		
TWDFan	3	3.2083	.19094	.11024	2.7340	3.6827	3.00	3.38
Sohrabi	3	2.9583	.07217	.04167	2.7791	3.1376	2.88	3.00
Akhtari	3	4.0000	.21651	.12500	3.4622	4.5378	3.75	4.13
Total	9	3.3889	.49389	.16463	3.0093	3.7685	2.88	4.13

The descriptive statistics (Table 5) suggest that Akhtari's translation excels the others ($M_{Akhtari}= 4.00$, $SD= 0.21$). On the other hand, Sohrabi's translation was of the lowest quality, according to

the raters' report ($M_{Sohrabi}= 2.95$, $SD= 0.07$). The means plot schematically represents these results (Figure 1).

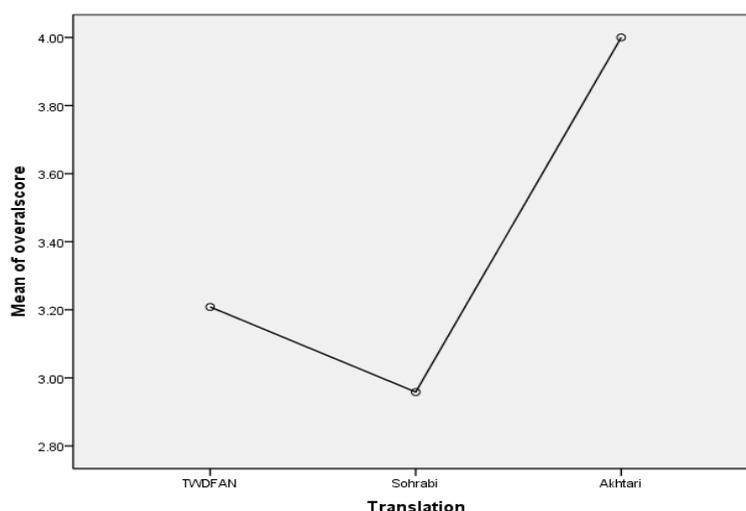


Figure 1: The quality of the translations

Although the descriptive statistics show the raters' opinions about the quality of the translations, it is appealing to run an ANOVA test to see whether

the differences found between the translations are statistically significant or not. Homogeneity of variances is known to be an important

prerequisite of ANOVA, hence the Levene's test was run on the data before the ANOVA was proceeded. The Levene's test was insignificant ($p=.185$), thus it can be understood that the

variances were equal. The main ANOVA suggests that the difference between the quality of the translations was statistically significant ($F(2, 6)=30.05, p=.001$).

Table 6: Post Hoc Analysis

	(I)Translation	(J)Translation	Mean Difference (I-J)	Std. Error	Sig.	95% Confidence Interval	
						Lower Bound	Upper Bound
Bonferroni	TWDfan	Sohrabi	.25000	.14027	.375	-.2111	.7111
		Akhtari	-.79167*	.14027	.004	-1.2528	-.3305
	Sohrabi	TWDfan	-.25000	.14027	.375	-.7111	.2111
		Akhtari	-1.04167*	.14027	.001	-1.5028	-.5805
	Akhtari	TWDfan	.79167*	.14027	.004	.3305	1.2528
		Sohrabi	1.04167*	.14027	.001	.5805	1.5028

*. The mean difference is significant at the 0.05 level.
 The post hoc analysis, reported in Table 6, indicates that Akhtari's translation significantly surpasses TWDfan and Sohrabi. Sohrabi's translation, notwithstanding the difference found in descriptive statistics, is not significantly worse than TWDfan's translation ($t(1)=-0.25, p=.37$).

VIII. DISCUSSION

The purpose of this research was to assess the translation quality of onomatopoeias and interjections in comics. In this regard, three raters were designated to analyze the equivalents used in the translations. Furthermore, inter-rater reliability and descriptive statistics were applied to demonstrate which translation had the highest quality. The results obtained indicated that selecting proper equivalents for onomatopoeias and interjections used in comics can boost the quality of translations, thus translators should put considerable emphasis on sounds. Further, if translators disregard onomatopoeias or interjections, they may not provide an acceptable translation. Although finding the exact Persian equivalent for sounds is sometimes a formidable task, acquaintance with translation strategies can assist translators in transferring the meaning of sounds from the ST to the TT. Based on the findings of this study, Akhtari is more successful

in translating onomatopoeias and interjections. Therefore, the two other translations were of inferior quality.

In the translation field, various studies were carried out to evaluate the translation of sounds from one language into another. Flyxe (2002) examined the translation of onomatopoeias from Japanese into Swedish. This researcher believed that sound symbolism in Swedish is not as coherent and well-structured as Japanese. The results of this study showed that attempting to find an equivalent for a Japanese onomatopoeia runs the risk of missing nuances expressed in the Japanese word. This research also demonstrated that the translation of Japanese onomatopoeias is possible, and if it seems impossible, an alternative way should be used in order to obtain the meaning.

Moreover, Cuenca (2006) attempted to analyze the expressive secondary interjections in the film

entitled *Four Weddings and a Funeral* in order to find their equivalents in the Spanish and Catalan dubbed versions. Finally, Cuenca demonstrated that the strategies used by the translators were different. Literal translation was much more frequent in the Spanish version than in the Catalan version. This indicated a less natural result in Spanish which could be related to the translator's failure in recognizing the grammaticalized nature of this kind of interjection. Adhedia (2012) carried out the study to assess the meaning of expressive interjections, the translation accuracy and acceptability of expressive interjections, and the techniques used by the translator in *the Very Best Donald Duck*. Regarding the number of English and Indonesian interjections, Adhedia concluded that English interjections are more than Indonesian interjections because some English interjections are sometimes translated into one pattern of Indonesian interjections, and some of them are borrowed. Most interjections were accurate (73, 01%) and acceptable (69, 33%). The writer also showed that adaptation was the most common technique, and borrowing was the next frequent technique for translating expressive interjections.

As indicated in findings of the above-mentioned research studies, a wide variety of sounds were perceived and applied in different languages; however, the quantity and the use of sounds in one language may not be the same as in another. As a result, translating various sounds in each language is of considerable significance. Since selecting suitable equivalents for onomatopoeias and interjections greatly affect the quality of translations, translators should pay particular attention to these types of sounds while they are translating them from the SL into the TL.

IX. CONCLUSION

On the whole, the translation of sounds is not only so important in comics but also in other texts, such as stories, novels, and poems. Further, it is highly significant in the audiovisual media, for instance movies, series, and cartoons. Consequently, translators should always strive to transfer their meaning with pinpoint accuracy. Although onomatopoeias and interjections are an

indispensable part of comic books, translators cannot occasionally find a suitable meaning for them, or they erroneously translate these sounds. If translators intend to present high-quality work, they must take notice of sounds in various contexts. On the other hand, selecting appropriate equivalents can exert considerable influence on the quality of translations.

The findings of this research indicated that Akhtari's translation was vastly superior to Sohrabi and TWDfans. In spite of the fact that the lowest quality pertained to Sohrabi's translation, there was not a substantial difference between his translation and TWDfan's translation. According to the results of this research, it is entirely reasonable to conclude that creativity and innovation in the translation of sounds, especially those sounds that are directly related to the SL and its culture, are of considerable significance. To put it another way, translators must be creative to discover the proper equivalent that is close to the intended meaning of the ST.

This study focused on the translation quality of onomatopoeias and interjections in comics. Accordingly, one of the major implications is related to the selection of appropriate equivalents for sounds. Stated differently, the translation of onomatopoeias and interjections in comics exacts great attention, and this study has shown that using proper and accurate equivalents for sounds can impact on the quality of translation work enormously. The principal items proposed in the rating scale can expand translators' knowledge, and these items can also aid translators in finding proper equivalents; therefore, they have a substantial effect on the quality of their translations.

Concerning the limitations, this study only worked on a number of onomatopoeias and interjections. In other words, as solely three translations were available for six issues of this comic book, this research could not evaluate onomatopoeias and interjections in more issues. As a consequence, the sample size used in this study was limited. For analyzing the quality of the translations, this study was not able to employ models introduced for translation quality

assessment, and it only assessed the sounds based on theories suggested for a good translation. The last limitation was associated with the rating scale and the raters. In the current study, only some general items were utilized in the rating scale, and three rates were determined to analyze the sounds.

In addition, further studies can be conducted with regard to the translation quality assessment of sounds. The translation quality of sounds can be assessed in other texts. Another study will be performed to examine the role of translators' creativity in transferring sounds from the SL to the TL. Also, the effects of translators' errors on the translation quality of sounds and the derivation of these errors can be investigated in various texts.

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APPENDIX

The Rating Scale for Evaluating the Translation of Sounds in the Walking Dead

Rater:	Translation: a) TWDfans <input type="checkbox"/> b) Sohrabi <input type="checkbox"/> c) Akhtari <input type="checkbox"/>				
Item	Scale				
1. In this translation, what percentage of the sounds is translated?	NONE 0-10 1 <input type="checkbox"/>	2 <input type="checkbox"/>	SOME 40-60 3 <input type="checkbox"/>	4 <input type="checkbox"/>	ALL 90-100 5 <input type="checkbox"/>
2. In this translation, what percentage of the sounds is translated correctly?	NONE 0-10 1 <input type="checkbox"/>	2 <input type="checkbox"/>	SOME 40-60 3 <input type="checkbox"/>	4 <input type="checkbox"/>	ALL 90-100 5 <input type="checkbox"/>
3. In this translation, what percentage of the sounds is erroneously translated?	NONE 0-10 1 <input type="checkbox"/>	2 <input type="checkbox"/>	SOME 40-60 3 <input type="checkbox"/>	4 <input type="checkbox"/>	ALL 90-100 5 <input type="checkbox"/>
4. How familiar do the translated sounds seem to your mind/ear as a native speaker of Farsi?	Exotic 1 <input type="checkbox"/>	2 <input type="checkbox"/>	Relatively Familiar 3 <input type="checkbox"/>	4 <input type="checkbox"/>	Native-like 5 <input type="checkbox"/>
5. How consistently do the translations mirror the intention beyond the sounds in the source language?	No Consistency 1 <input type="checkbox"/>	2 <input type="checkbox"/>	Relative Consistency 3 <input type="checkbox"/>	4 <input type="checkbox"/>	Thorough Consistency 5 <input type="checkbox"/>
6. In general, how easily can you figure out the meaning of the translated sounds?	Non-comprehensible 1 <input type="checkbox"/>	2 <input type="checkbox"/>	Comprehensible with some difficulty 3 <input type="checkbox"/>	4 <input type="checkbox"/>	Easily Comprehensible 5 <input type="checkbox"/>

7. How close are the translated sounds to their intended meaning?	Very Close 1 <input type="checkbox"/>	2 <input type="checkbox"/>	Relatively Close 3 <input type="checkbox"/>	4 <input type="checkbox"/>	Distant 5 <input type="checkbox"/>
8. How much creativity do you see in the translation of the sounds?	Non-creative 1 <input type="checkbox"/>	2 <input type="checkbox"/>	Relatively Creative 3 <input type="checkbox"/>	4 <input type="checkbox"/>	Highly Creative 5 <input type="checkbox"/>

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