

# **ANALYSIS OF FIGURATIVE ELEMENTS IN THE NOVEL THE DAUGHTER OF SMYRNA**

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The aim of this study is to determine the figurative language in the novel *Ateşten Gömlek* by Adivar and analyze the English translation of those elements. Of the figurative elements, hyperbole, irony, metaphor, personification, and understatement were included in analyzing the figurative language. The original Turkish version of the novel and its English translation by Khan (1938) were used as data collection tools. Following a detailed reading of the book in Turkish, figurative elements were determined by the researchers. In analyzing the data from the translated text, Kasar and Tuna's (2017) *Systematics of Designificative Tendencies* was adopted as the guide. As a result, in translating the novel into English, the cultural aspects of the source text were preserved figurative language-wise, however in very rare occasions there was over-interpretation in transferring the figurative elements. **Keywords:** figurative language, translation, over-interpretation, cultural elements.



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### INTRODUCTION

Translated literary works can be analyzed from various points of view and they involve multi-dimensional implications for both source and target cultures and languages. Especially when it comes to literary works that enjoy enduring popularity in different periods, it gets more important to touch upon these kinds of works and their translations deserve scholarly attention with a view to unveiling underlying characteristics. As Toury (2012) suggests that translating like any other communicational activity is teleological by its very nature, its future products should be taken as forming constraints of the highest order. That is to say that the translated literary works should be considered in terms of their place in the target cultural and literary system. Translation plays an essential role in the forming of a culture and contributes to target culture in various aspects. When elaborating on the translated literature, one can adopt a certain approach and decide to proceed the analysis based on a certain perspective.

In this study, the case is a novel by Halide Edib Adivar who is an outstanding figure in Turkish literary system and known for her novels dealing with the independence war of Turkey. The novel *Ateşten Gömlek* is one of her most known novels and tells the story of Turkish independence war, which makes it an important part of the Turkish literary system. The fact that the novel is about the independence war is notable in analyzing the novel since it includes numerous literary characteristics. The novel has features that are deeply related to the Turkish history and this makes it contextually unique and so for a reader from another culture it may pose certain complications in getting the right sense from the novel. In such a novel, the meaning of every small detail makes great difference in the whole construction of meaning. The characters, settings and scenes in the novel carry meanings that are beyond just surface reading. It takes a deep understanding for a reader to get the best sense of the novel. To this end, the figurative language in the novel becomes an important point in this study

because it is one of the various ways that an author uses to add artistic value to the novel. Therefore defining the features of figurative language and explaining their place in the novel is needed for a better understating of the source text and the implications of these features in the target text.

### **Figurative Elements**

The characteristics of the language used in the novel are of vital importance in analyzing the novel in the axis of source and target texts. Figurative elements are one of them to turn to as for the detailed framing of the language used in the novel. In that they add more than one layer to the meaning of the words or sentences, figurative elements are basic constituents of the meaning of the text. Peirce defines meaning as produced within the sign process itself, in the syntactical dimension: in Peirce's view, a sign signifies not by denoting a concept or a thing or an event outside the system, but by establishing a pattern of reference to other signs within the context of the message (in Wittig, 1974: 454). Therefore the meaning of the figurative elements used in the novel as signs are worth closer look in terms of their reference to other signs in the context. As the figurative elements mostly carry meaning beyond what is written or told, the definition of the underlying meaning gets pivotal in making any comment on the translated version of the text. Meaning may be seen as a network of references to different signs and no word or sentence in the text can be evaluated irrespective of their connotations.

The figurative elements that are included in this study are irony, hyperbole, metaphor, personification and understatement of meaning. These are used by the author of the novel quite often and serve as main constituents of the meaning in the text. The first figurative element included in the study is irony which is traditionally seen as a situation that contradicts the actual attitude of the speaker (Gibbs, 1994). Irony involves various layers of meaning and mostly makes reference to another sign rather than given words or utterances. Therefore it is crucial to expose the underlying meaning for the evaluation of both the source and target text. Another figurative element is hyperbole that inflates the discrepancy between what was expected and what ensues via an overstated description of what happened (Colston & Keller, 1998). Hyperbole is seen as a figure of bold exaggeration and holds a place in classical rhetoric (Preminger, 1974). Personification is defined by Melion and Ramakers (2016) as the rhetorical figure by which something not human is given a human identity. One other figurative element is metaphor which is used in literary works quite often and adds artistic value to them as well as forming a deep meaning in the text. Peirce defines metaphor as "an icon which represents the representative character of a sign by representing a parallelism in something else" (in Factor, 1996: 229). The last but not least, understatement is used in the novel various times, which adds to the meaning of given text and contributes to the artistic value to text as well as creating prospective implication for translation analysis. Understatement is defined as any decreasing or softening of the utterance meaning and hedging as the non-commitment of the speaker to the truth value of the proposition (Lakic, Branka and Vukovic, 2015: 98). The five figurative elements given above will be presented in later parts of the paper with examples showing source and target comparisons to provide a better picture of what this paper mainly handles as its problematic issues.

### **METHODOLOGY**

In this part of the research, data collection tools, data collection method and data analysis are included.

#### **Data Collection Tools**

In this study, the original Turkish version of the novel *Ateşten Gömlek* by Halide Edib Adıvar was read and analyzed. The novel is about the sufferings of the Turkish nation during the Great War and the events happening around the main character, named Ayşe, and her friends attending the military service. The original novel, which was read to find out the figurative elements used in the novel, and the English translation of it *The Daughter of Smyrna* by Muhammad Yakub Khan (1938), which was read to analyze the English translations of those elements, were used as data collection tools.

### Data Collection Method

All figurative elements which are in the scope of this study were determined by reading the original Turkish version of the book *Ateşten Gömlek* by Halide Edib Adivar. Translations of these elements in the target text were found and extracted. They were listed together with the figurative elements in the original Turkish novel to analyze them.

### Data Analysis

The figurative elements and the translations of them were analyzed in the light of Kasar and Tuna's (2017) *Systematics of Designificative Tendencies*. *Systematics of Designificative Tendencies* helps to see how competently the translators achieve to transmit to the target language the signs that constitute the universe of the meaning of the original text and it aims to provide a more objective basis for the process of evaluating translations, which is often rather observational and subjective in nature (Kasar and Tuna, 2017). To narrow down the scope of the study, among those tendencies *over-interpretation of the meaning* was taken into account while conducting this research. *Over-interpretation of the meaning* means producing an excessive commentary on the meaning of the original text or making explicit a meaning that is implicit in the original text and this results in excessive translation or excessive meaning in the target text (Kasar and Tuna, 2017). The figurative elements found in the source text were consciously written by the author and she wanted the readers to understand what she really meant with the help of their background knowledge. However, if the translator translates these elements through an excessive translation so that the readers of the target text will understand it easily without thinking and without a need of their background knowledge, this appears as an example of *over-interpretation of the meaning*. In this study, it was analyzed if the translations of the figurative elements found in the source text resulted in *over-interpretation of the meaning*.

### FINDINGS

After reading the Daughter of Smyrna closely, it was found that most of the figurative elements used in the source text were omitted in the target text. However; this is not the aim of this study. Therefore; among the translated figurative elements, some of them which are examples of over-interpretation of the meaning are shown below.

### Hyperbole

- "Alman imparatoru gelse sigaramın verdiği sükûnu bozamaz." (p.19)  
In this extract, it is felt that the peace resulting from the cigarette is so much that nothing in the world couldn't prevent him from enjoying it. Adivar used hyperbole in this sentence. Here is the translation of it:
- "The appearance of the Kaiser himself couldn't have taken away my mind from the sweet delight that the puffs at my golden cigar afforded me." (p.2)  
An excessive translation is seen on this example. Instead of the word "peace", the translator used "the sweet delight that the puffs at my golden cigar afforded me". He tried to explain details and over-interpreted the source text.
- "Yüzünün nasıl sarardığını, gözlerinin nasıl içinden yandığını, bu sert ve sakin asker vücudunun içinde nasıl bir volkan kaynadığını düşünüyorum." (p.58)  
By using the word "volkan" (volcano in English), the author hid what she really wanted to express and wanted the readers to think a little more and get what she meant. She meant that the soldier had so much suffering because of the war and wanted to have freedom so much that the desire of freedom was like a volcano in him. The translation of it was found as follows:
- "This grave dignified soldier had palish cheeks, sparkling eyes and a breast aglow with the fire of freedom." (p.37)  
The translator did not let the readers to think that much and feel what the readers of the original novel felt while reading the original text. He explicitly expressed what the author meant by using

the word "freedom" instead of "volkan". He again over-interpreted the figurative element in the source text.

### Irony

- "Evela seni çok merak ettim. Fakat şimdi halamın evden çıkarmadığına inanıyorum. Sen de İstanbul çocuğu, tabii annenin sözünden çıkmazsın değil mi?" (p.66-67)  
Ayşe said these sentences in one of her letters to one of her friends. She actually complained, and worried, about not seeing him for two days and ironically asked this question. Khan translated this figurative element like this:
- "At first this made me anxious, but then it came to my mind that auntie must have forbidden you to leave the house and a man like you must implicitly obey his mother." (p.42)  
As you can see, no question was asked in Khan's translation and the irony disappeared. It seemed as if the real reason why he could not go out was that his mother did not let him do it. We see another example of over-interpretation of the meaning in these examples.
- "Hakkınız var Ayşe Hanım, zabıt vekili olmak için Ankara'ya talimgâha göndeririz; fakat daha evvel benim yanımda biraz kalsın, yeğeninizi öldürmemeye çalışırım." (p.95-96)  
The word "yeğen" is "nephew" in English but in Turkish this word is sometimes used instead of the word "cousin" and this is one example of that. The man who said this sentence and the cousin of Ayşe both love her but none of them revealed his feelings. However; the men had the feeling of a rivalry when it came to Ayşe. Therefore one of them said "yeğeninizi öldürmemeye çalışırım" ironically, which means "I will try not to kill him". Here is the translation of this sentence:
- "I will see that your cousin keeps at a safe distance from death." (p.74)  
This translation does not include an irony and makes the readers feel like he will protect Ayşe's cousin from the enemies. The translator over-interpreted the figurative element and caused a semantic shift.

### Metaphor

- "Cemal "şark" diye kalın çizmelerini çarptı, katı pençesiyle arkadaşının eldivenini, zarif bir edayla çıkardığı beyaz elini sıktı:" (p.23)  
In this extract; a metaphor that is the word "şark" was used. "Şark" represents a sound that is heard when a soldier clicked his heels swiftly. Cemal is a soldier and this information was given to the readers through this metaphor. Furthermore, it was written that Cemal had a "claw", "pençe" in Turkish. Adivar used another metaphor here to introduce Cemal to the readers as a soldier again. By using that metaphor, she really wanted to express his strength. The translation of this sentence was found as follows:
- "As usual Jamal clicked his heels, stretched himself to military erectness and shook the new-comer by the hand." (p.7)  
Both metaphors could not be seen in the translation and the translator over-interpreted the metaphor "şark" as "clicked his heels, stretched himself to military erectness". Because of this over-interpretation of the meaning, the readers of the translation did not need to pay attention on any words.
- "Çünkü bütün şapkalılar Cemal ve İhsan'a garip garip bakıyor?" (p.24)  
The metaphor used here is the word "şapkalılar" which means "people wearing hats" in English. The author wanted to express people who were not Muslim by using the word "şapkalılar" because in those times Ottoman men were wearing fez. Khan translated this figurative element like this:
- "Here the waiters and others looked with amazement at my two soldier companions." (p.9)  
The translator over-interpreted the metaphor again and made it disappear. He translated the word "şapkalılar" as "the waiters and others". Therefore, the readers may not be able to understand if they are Muslim.

### **Personification**

- "Bunu kağıt kokuları ve daire söyledi, Ayşe!" (p.50)  
An example of personification is seen here. "kağıt kokuları ve daire" means "smell of papers and a state office" in English and it was expressed in this sentence that they said something. We knew that the person who said this sentence is a state officer and he wanted to inform that he meant something else. Here is the translation of this sentence:
- "I know they were due to my association with the office papers." (p.27)  
It is seen that the figurative element was removed again in the translation. Khan explained it clearly by over-interpreting the meaning.
- "16 Mart, Salı sabahı İstanbul garip bir hisle uyandı." (p.67)  
In this sentence, Adivar expressed that İstanbul woke up feeling something strange. She used personification for İstanbul. The translation of this sentence was found as follows:
- "When on Tuesday, March 16, people woke up in the morning, they found the metropolis present a strange spectacle." (p.43)

The translator removed the personification again by over-interpreting. Instead of the word "İstanbul", he used "people". The feeling was also replaced with a situation that the city experienced.

### **Understatement**

Half of the understatement usages in the source text were removed by the translator in the target text. Among the rest of them which were translated, no example of over-interpretation was found.

## **DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION**

In this paper, the figurative elements in the novel *The Daughter of Smyrna* and their translations were evaluated in accordance with over-interpretation of meaning in *Systematics of Designificative Tendencies* by (Kasar and Tuna, 2017). The study focused on five figurative elements that are presented above and the examples of the translations of these figurative elements which can be seen as over-interpretation of meaning are presented with their implications with regard to the cultural and meaning-wise features of the target text. The systematic structure of designificative tendencies helped considerably in providing terms for the analysis of the figurative elements. In the analysis of the translated figurative elements, some examples of over-interpretation were detected and it can be deduced that these examples may have negative effects on the reception of the target text by the readers of target culture. It is also notable that translated text may lead to some loss of meaning with over-interpretation. However, this kind of a comparative analysis should not be seen as an endeavor to expose what the translated work misses. Rather, as Tuna (2017) suggests, the aim comparative analysis is not to detect "errors" or weaknesses in translated texts but it is to create awareness of the possibility of transformations of meaning to enable future translators to avoid unintended transformations of meaning (Tuna, 2017: 684). Translation analysis of the novel in this paper is also carried out with such an aim in mind and the comments made about translated text are expected to serve this purpose. Moreover, translation can always change something and create a different universe of meaning. That is to say, translating itself can be seen as a new product based on a version in another language so any change, so-called positively or negatively. The awareness translators may get via this kind of study is also important in that it may allow translator to make decisions more consciously and thus be able to explain the rationale behind their decisions (Tuna, 2017: 684).

As it comes to the transfer of meaning to target text, the main focus may be on the pleasure or insight that the readers of both the source and target text from what they read. As one can expect, in translated literature they may always be some changes and a translation that is the same as its source can be seen as an utopia. As famous philosopher Paul Ricoeur (2007) puts forwards, the dream of perfect translation amounts to the wish that translation would gain, gain without losing. Therefore, we cannot assume a translation that is without any loss. What is important to note here is that translated works creates a place for themselves in target culture and can be seen as a



contribution to it. In this study, the figurative elements analyzed were noteworthy in that they are essential constituents of the source text and the perception of meaning by the readers is affected greatly by how these elements are translated in the target text. The form and meaning of texts are of crucial importance for the understanding of the text so the cases of over-interpretation may contribute to the possible changes observed in the form and meaning of the target text. The findings of the paper shows us that there are certain cases where the over-interpretation of meaning poses changes in the target text in terms of both form and meaning. This can be seen a natural process as mentioned above with reference to Ricoeur so what needs to be said will probably be about the possible implications of over-interpretation.

In conclusion, despite the impossibility of a perfect translation and the difficulties of translating a literary work especially a novel that is highly context-bound and includes various figurative elements, we can say that the translated text preserves the cultural aspects of the source text. The pleasure the reader of the target text may naturally differ from the target text reader. However, as far as the scope of this study is involve, it can be said that over-interpretation of meaning may have changed the meaning and form of the source text and the signs addressed with each figurative element may be differed and the meaning it holds and its reference to another sign system can be said to have shifted due to over-interpretation of meaning. Future research on issues similar to this paper's may contribute to the conception of translation and the role of meaning and form in constructing the whole text. Also, they may help wipe out the misconception that the changes in translated works are loss of meaning or factors that make a translation erroneous.

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