Catford's Translation Shifts in Translating Vocabulary-Learning Books from English to Persian[1]

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Abstract

The present study investigates the realization of Catford's translation shifts in translated English vocabulary-learning books by determining their frequency of occurrence. For this purpose, seven popular vocabulary books were selected, and 210 ST-TT pairs were chosen and analyzed according to Catford's Taxonomy of translation shifts. The obtained data revealed that the Structural Shift is the most frequent translation shift and the Level Shift is the least common type of Catford's shift in the selected translations. The study indicates that only 11.90 % of the selected translations had undergone Class Shift; that means English and Persian can offer equivalents of the same part of speech. Unit Shift occurred in 43.33% of the translated sentences, most probably because translations of English vocabulary-learning books tend to be explanatory and transparent. 69.52% of the shifts were mainly Intra-System Shifts because the translators tried to avoid foreign structures that sound weird to Persian speakers. It is noteworthy that the previously conducted studies generally focused on text-types such as psychology and literature. This study contributes to the translation field by shedding light on a different text-type and context using Catford's translation shifts.

Keywords: Catford, Translation shifts, Vocabulary books

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Introduction

Translation shifts are small linguistic changes occurring in the translation of ST to TT (Munday, 2008, p. 55). Many scholars have worked on translation shifts and introduced their variations or different types of shifts to the translation field. For example, Vinay & Darbelnet, (1995) used the term procedure to talk about the concept of shift. The term translation shift, however, was first introduced by Catford (1965), when he proposed two different types of shifts, i.e., (1) Level Shifts and (2) Category Shifts that are subdivided into Structural Shifts, Class Shifts, Unit Shifts, and Intra-System Shifts (pp. 73–82). Other scholars also added different shift-types, including expression shift (Popovič, 1970), purpose shift (Reiss and Vermeer, 2015), and cohesion and coherence shift (Blum-Kulka, 2004).

Catford's translation shifts appeared in the book entitled Linguistic Theory of Translation. Catford defines translation shift as departures from formal correspondence in the process of going from SL to the TL (1965, p.73).

Definitions and examples of each shift-type are presented below. The examples are all part of the data analysis except for the level shift, for which there have been no instances of occurrence in the analyzed data.

Level shifts: "By a shift of level, we mean that a[n] SL item at one linguistic level has a TL translation equivalent at a different level" (Catford, 1965, p.73). In other words, a shift of level is "something which is expressed by grammar in one language and lexis in another" (Munday, 2008, p. 60).

An example of Level Shift taken from Munday (2008) is the Russian verb 'sigrat', which is translated 'to finish playing'.

Structural shifts: According to Catford (1965), "these are amongst the most frequent category shifts" (p. 77). Structural shift "involves mostly a shift in grammatical structure" (Munday, 2008, p.60). For example, "I like salad" =

"subject pronoun + verb + direct object". Here is a translation of the above sentence in Persian: "*man salad dustdaram* = من سالاد دوست دارم" = "subject pronoun + object + verb".

Class shifts: A class-shift occurs when there is a change "from one part of speech [in the SL text] to *another* [in the TL text]" (Munday, 2008, p.61). For example, "It is symptomatic of some newspapers" translated into Persian as "*in vizhegie bazi az ruznamehast* = این ویژگی بعضی از روزنامه‌هاست". In the above example, the "adjective *symptomatic* is translated by the noun *vizhegi* = ویژگی".

Unit shifts or *rank shifts*: Catford (1965) states that "by unit-shift we mean changes of rank" (p. 79). According to Munday (2008), in this context, rank "refers to the hierarchical linguistic units of a sentence, clause, group, word, and morpheme" (p.61). For example, the word platitude in the sentence of "one often hears the platitude" is a one-word unit in English, but it is translated as "*jomleye kilishei* = جمله کلیشه‌ای" in Persian, which contains two words.

Intra-system shifts: Catford (1695) uses the term intra-system shift "for those cases where the shift occurs internally, within a system; that is, for those cases where SL and TL possess systems which approximately correspond formally as to their constitution, but when translation involves the selection of a non-corresponding term in the TL system" (p.80).

Examples of intra-system shifts are related to plural/singular forms and article systems of English and Persian.

In the English sentence, "someone with 30 years' experience", the word "years" is a plural English noun, which is translated as "*sal* = سال" or a singular noun in Persian. The sentence is translated as "*fardī bā sī sāl tajrobeh* = فردی با سی سال تجربه", in Persian.

Purpose of the Study

There are several reasons for inquiring about the nature of translated vocabulary texts using Catford's shifts. First, these shifts provide novice translators with useful information on translating vocabulary-learning books by familiarizing them with different possible techniques for translating in language-learning context of the vocabulary books. Second, by investigating the frequency of Catford's shifts in the translation of vocabulary books, the study evaluates Catford's theory, which claims that structural shifts are the most common shifts in translations (Catford, 1965, p.77). Third, the theory of Catford's shifts has been used as a framework to study many different text-types, such as psychology, literary, medical, religious, etc. (Khanmohammad & Mousavinasab, 2014; Khorshidi, 2010; Rezvani & Nouraey, 2014; Vossoughi & Pourebrahim, 2010). However, to the best knowledge of the researcher, there are no studies on translating vocabulary-learning books from English to Persian applying Catford's translation shift theory. Thus, the other purpose of this study is to shed some light on the translation of this text-type, which is less studied in comparison to other text-types. Hence, there would be some data to compare the translations of vocabulary books with that of other genres.

Research Questions

The two major research questions of this study focus on translation shifts and their frequency in translated vocabulary books from English to Persian. The two specific questions are:

1. What sorts of shifts have been used in the translation of vocabulary books from English to Persian?

2. What is the frequency of different Catford's translation shifts in these translations of vocabulary texts?

Study of Catford's Shifts in Iran

Up to now, Catford's translation shifts have been studied by many researchers in Iran (e.g., Akbari, 2012; Hossein-Massum & Shahbaiki, 2013; Khanmohammad & Mousavinasab, 2014; Khorshidi, 2010; Rezvani & Nouraey, 2014; Vossoughi & Pourebrahim, 2010). Iranian researchers have worked on Catford's translation shifts in various genres, text-types, and other aspects of Catford's shifts theory.

In a study conducted by Khorshidi (2010), the translation of Oliver Twist's book is used for studying Catford's shifts theory. The study focused on Category Shifts and literary genres to find the areas where Persian and English are different concerning Catford's shifts.

Another study was conducted by Vossoughi and Pourebrahim (2010), in which they investigated the realization of Catford's shifts in the translation of psychology books from English to Persian. The study aimed at answering two main questions. First, what kinds of Catford's shifts occurred in the translation of the psychology books? Second, what are the most and least frequent shifts in those translations? The study results revealed that the translators of the psychology books used all types of Catford's shifts. Moreover, the Structural Shifts proved to be the most frequent Catford's shift in translating psychology books from English to Persian.

Akbari (2012) studied Catford's shifts from a different perspective. She focused on the frequency of different types of structural shifts from English to Persian. The genre she worked on was children's literature. In her study, Structural Shifts were classified into (1) Addition, (2) Omission, (3) Arrangement, (4) Sift of Voice, and (5) Shift of Tense. Ten bilingual children's literature books were selected. Parts of the English source texts were compared with their Persian translations. She concluded that 'arrangement' is the most frequent subtype of Structural Shifts.

Moreover, 35.43 % of Structural Shifts in this study occurred due to the nature and characteristics of Persian, the target language, and 27.16 % of the shifts were based on translators' style or preference. 20.87 % of the Structural Shifts proved to help compensate the meaning, and 16.54 % of the Structural Shifts happened for explication of meaning.

In another study conducted by Hosseini-Maasoum (2013), Catford's Category Shifts of the Persian translation of a novel by Charles Dickens, named 'A Tale of Two Cities', were focused on. The study concluded that shifts were unavoidable in translation because languages have different natures, and translators have to use different structures from the source text.

Rezvani and Nouraey (2014) used Catford's shifts to analyze the Quran's translations. To this end, seven English translations of the Quran were selected. The seven translations were done by seven different translators, namely Arberry, Pickthall, Irring, Sarwar, Saffarzade, Shakir, and Yusef Ali. The first thirty verses of 'Surah Yusuf' in these translations were selected. The selected translated texts were compared with their corresponding original texts. This study demonstrated that Shakir's translation of the Quran enjoyed higher number shifts, compared with the other six translations. Furthermore, it showed that 'Unit Shift' and 'Level Shift' are the most common shift-types used by English-Arabic translators.

In a study conducted by Khanmohammad and Mousavinasab (2014), the frequency of Catford's shifts was investigated in the translations of medical texts from English to Persian. Five books were selected from different branches of medicine. Two chapters were chosen of each of the five books, and 10 percent of the sentences in them were analyzed according to Catford's framework of translation shifts. The study showed that Structural Shift had been used in all of the 320 selected sentences. Class Shifts were used in 4.06 % of the sentences. Unit Shifts involved 5.31 % of the shifts. 7.81 % of the shifts were Intra-System Shifts. The

study concluded that a lower number of shifts in translations of medical texts means that transliteration is the preferable approach for translating medical books. Besides, the researchers figured out several translation errors in the selected medical texts, which can be indicative of lack of translation expertise among the translators of the selected medical books. Thus, this research questioned the translators' success in conducting good translations of medical texts in Iran. The researchers also noticed that being a good doctor does not necessarily mean that you are a good medical translator, too.

Despite the efforts made on examining the realization of Catford's translation shifts in various genres and text-types, as mentioned above, no studies have been conducted to analyze the translation of vocabulary-learning books based on Catford's translation shifts in Iran.

Method

Based on Holmes's (1988) map of Translation Studies, the present study falls under the category of Product-Oriented, Descriptive studies. According to Holmes (1988), Descriptive Translation Study has three branches, i.e., product-oriented, process-oriented, and function-oriented. The main objective of DTS is to describe the phenomena of translation (Munday, 2008). Product-oriented DTS deals with the examination of existing translations, which can involve "the description or analysis of a single ST-TT pair or a comparative analysis of several TTs of the same ST." (Munday, 2008, p.10).

More particularly, this study could be considered as a type of Corpus Studies. According to Williams and Chesterman (2002), *corpus studies* use a wide range of textual data, containing many instances of whatever is being analyzed (p.66). Tognini-Boneli (2001) stated that in a corpus-based study a pre-existing theory is the starting point of the research, which is examined by corpus data (as

cited in Saldanha & O'Brein, 2013). As mentioned by (Bowker & Pearson 2002, as cited in Saldanha & O'Brien, 2013), a corpus is assumed to be "a representative sample of a particular language or subset of that language."

Since this paper aims to determine the frequencies of Catford's translation shifts (1965) in translated vocabulary-learning books in Iran and some well-known Persian translation of vocabulary-learning books were used as the data source for this research, it could be regarded as corpus-based study.

The selected English-to-Persian translated books were among the most popular vocabulary-learning books in Iran. English sentences with Persian translations are provided in the books. All of the selected translations were published within a 6-year-period from 2008 to 2014 with the hope that they would represent the most recent trends in translation styles. The selected books are Essential Words for the GRE (2010), 1100 Words You Need to Know (2013), 504 Absolutely Essential Words (2005), Essential Words for the TOEFL (2014), 601 Words You Need to Know to Pass Your Exam (2005), 4000 Essential English Words, Book 5 (2009) and 4000 Essential English Words, Book 6 (2009).

Results

The frequency of Catford's translation shifts for all of the selected books is provided in this section. The information gathered from all the seven vocabulary-books and the frequency of Catford's (1965) translation shifts used in their translations are presented in the tables below.

Table 1. *The Frequency of the Catford's Shifts in the Translated Vocabulary Books*

	Level Shift	Structural Shift	Class Shift	Unit Shift	Intra-system Shift
Essential Words for the GRE					

	0	30	6	16	23
1100 Words You Need to Know	0	30	1	11	22
504 Absolutely Essential Words	0	30	4	13	24
Essential Words for the TOEFL	0	30	2	14	19
601 Words You Need to Know to Pass Your Exam	0	30	7	17	20
4000 Essential English Words (Book 5)	0	30	2	10	16
4000 Essential English Words (Book 6)	0	30	3	10	22
Total	0	210	25	91	146

Table 1 shows the number of sentences that have undergone each of the five Catford's shift for the seven selected vocabulary books. Table 1 also provides the total number of all Catford's shifts for the seven books in the last row.

The percentages of different Catford's shift-types for each of the seven books are also provided in Table 2. The total percentages of the frequency of different Catford's shifts in the translated vocabulary-learning books are also given in the last row of Table 2.

Table 2. *The Percentage of Different Catford's Shifts in the Translated Vocabulary Books*

	Level Shift	Structural Shift	Class Shift	Unit Shift	Intra-system Shift
Essential Words for the GRE	0.00%	100%	20%	53.33%	76.66%
1100 Words You Need to Know	0.00%	100%	3.33%	36.66%	73.33%

504 Absolutely Essential Words	0.00%	100%	13.33%	43.33%	80%
Essential Words for the TOEFL	0.00%	100%	6.66%	46.66%	63.33%
601 Words You Need to Know to Pass Your Exam	0.00%	100%	23.33%	56.66%	66.66%
4000 Essential English Words (Book 5)	0.00%	100%	6.66%	33.33%	53.33%
4000 Essential English Words (Book 6)	0.00%	100%	10%	33.33%	73.33%
Total	0.00%	100%	11.90%	43.33%	69.52%

As can be seen in the Table 2, Structural Shift and Level Shift are respectively the most and the least frequent shifts in selected sampled sentences of the seven translated English vocabulary-learning books. 69.52 percent of the sentences had undergone the Intra-system Shift, 43.33 percent the Unit Shift, and the Class Shift was used in 11.90 percent of the sampled sentences of the selected vocabulary-learning books.

Discussion

There were 210 sampled sentences in this study, some of which have undergone a certain shift-type more than once. For example, there is a sentence in unit 49 of the book Essential Words for the GRE in which several Intra-System Shifts have occurred in a row.

The English sentence:

Linda seems to take home every abandoned pet in the town; she now has an incredible menagerie of dogs, cats, turtles, rabbits, and other animals

The Persian translation:

به نظر می رسد «لیندا» هر حیوان دست‌آموز رها شده در شهر را به خانه‌اش می‌برد، او الان مجموعه‌ای باورنکردنی از حیواناتی نظیر سگ، گربه، لاک‌پشت، خرگوش و سایر حیوانات دارد.

The words 'dog, cat, turtle, rabbit' are used in their plural form in the source text, while the translator had to use the Intra-System Shift and translate them as singular words into Persian. The reason for such a shift is a linguistic feature of the Persian language, which requires the singular form of the nouns for such purposes, though the plural forms of the nouns also exist in Persian. This type of Intra-System Shift is common in English to Persian translations and vice versa. This shift happened four times in the sample sentence.

This study did not investigate the number of shifts in a single sentence and was exclusively interested in determining whether a certain shift-type had happened in the sampled translated sentences or not. Thus, the above sample sentence was labeled "Yes" for the Intra-System Shift, which means it took place in the translation no matter how many times. It is good to mention that most sentences have undergone a certain type of Catford's shifts. Take Intra-System Shift as an example, only once or twice at a time, so the above-translated sentence with five Intra-system Shifts was an exception and unique among its kind.

The first research question is, "what types of Catford's shifts have been used in the translation of vocabulary books from English to Persian?"

All Catford's shift-types have been used, apart from the Level Shift. The reason that there have not been any instances of Level Shifts is possibly the fact that Level Shifts only occur in the translations, where the source and target languages belong to very different language family-group. For example, a translation from Native American languages into Persian, which is an Indo-European language may include such shifts. Since both Persian and English belong to the Indo-European language family, the 210 sampled translated sentences have not undergone the Level Shift.

To recap, all Catford's Category Shifts, including Structural Shift, Class Shift, Unit Shift, and Intra-structure Shift were used by the Persian translators of the

selected English vocabulary learning books. Furthermore, there was no Level Shift used in the translation of the 210 sampled sentences.

The second research question seeks to figure out the frequency of different Catford's translation shifts in the translations of the selected vocabulary books. To this end, Table 1 was prepared in the Results Section to illustrate the number of sentences that had undergone each Catford's shift-type.

The figures of Table 1 show that the most frequent Catford's shift was the Structural Shift. Structural Shifts happened as the most frequent shift in the translations of language pairs that had different word orders. As mentioned by Meyer (2009, p36), there are six possible word orders in human languages. The six-word orders include SOV, SVO, VSO, VOS, OVS, and OSV. English follows a subject-verb-object word order, while Persian has a subject-object-verb one. For example, if you translate the sentence, 'Ali loves orange juice' into Persian, the word order would be like 'Ali orange juice loves'. In other words, the English SVO word order has to be changed into the Persian SOV. Logically, almost all Persian to English translated sentences would undergo this form of Structural Shift. That is the reason why Structural Shift is the most common Catford's shift-type in this study.

Level Shift, on the other hand, had the lowest frequency of occurrence in this study. It did not occur in any of the sampled translated texts. As mentioned, the reason for the lack of this shift is possibly related to the closeness of English and Persian as they belong to the same language family, named the Indo-European language.

Intra-system Shifts were proved to be the second most frequent Catford's shift-type in this study. A common form of Intra-System Shift between English and Persian happens when Persian translators use the singular form of a noun, while the noun in the source text is plural. Although the plural form also exists in Persian, a fluent and natural translation requires the selection of a non-corresponding linguistic

feature. For example, in the translation of a sample sentence in 601 Words You Need to Know to Pass Your Exam, lesson 40, the English plural noun 'ears' was translated as a singular noun 'ear' in Persian.

Moreover, the article system of English does not similarly exist in Persian. Thus, every time a definite article is used in the source text, translators should use a preposition with the article function. In other words, the translators have to translate the text by using a non-corresponding linguistic feature, which is the use of prepositions to create the meaning of articles.

Unit Shifts were the third most frequent Catford's shift-type in the studied books. In a sample sentence of the Essential Words for the TOEFL, lesson 16, the word 'zenith' was translated into Persian by two words 'اوج موفقیت.' Such shifts happen when a one-word equivalent does not exist in the target language or when the translators want to avoid confusion by emphasizing. Some unit shifts occur due to stylistic preferences, while others are optional. For example, the word 'mud' in the translation of 601 Words You Need to Know to Pass Your Exam, lesson 5, was translated as 'گل و لای'. Although the word 'گل' is enough to convey the meaning, ' گل و لای' was stylistically preferred by the translators.

Class Shifts turned out to be the least frequent shift-type among the four category shifts of Catford. This kind of shift occurs when the part of speech of a source word is changed in the translation. For example, in the Translation of 504 Absolutely Essential Words, the English adjective 'patriotic' was translated as a Persian Adverb 'وطن پرستانه'. This study as well as other similar studies indicate the class shifts are not as common as other shift-types between English and Persian which proves the capacity of the Persian language to provide equivalents of many words with the same part of speech as the English words.

Conclusion

The frequency of Catford's (1965) translation shifts in the translation of vocabulary-learning books from English to Persian could be regarded as to be similar to most text-types considering, Structural and Level Shifts due to the linguistic features of the Persian language. However, the frequency of the other shifts may differ from one text-type to another, probably due to the difference in the purpose and function of each text-type. The high frequency of Intra-System Shifts also indicates the translators' attempt to produce natural, easy-to-read Persian texts. Unit Shifts, on the other hand, were used for both stylistic and explanatory reasons meaning that the translators probably intended to avoid confusion and create natural Persian texts. The lower frequency of Class Shifts also indicates that Persian and English are often capable of having equivalents with the same part of speech.

The results of this study revealed that the most frequent Catford's translation shift in the translation of vocabulary-learning books from English into Persian was the Structural Shift. The Persian SOV sentence pattern made this translation shift inevitable for English-to-Persian translators. The second major finding was that none of the sampled translated sentences had undergone Level Shift. The fact that both English and Persian are from the Indo-European language family could explain this.

Only 11.90% of the sampled sentences had undergone Class Shift. The reason is probably related to the fact that Persian is capable of creating many words with the same part of the speech as their English equivalent. 43.33% of the sentences had undergone a unit shift. Since this study is on vocabulary-learning books, the translations in such books possibly tend to be clear-cut and explanatory. Consequently, many English words had been translated into two or more Persian words. Finally, 69.52% of the sentences had undergone Intra-system Shift. In order to create a fluent Persian translation, the translators probably had to use the Intra-System Shift so that the text would be read easily and sound natural from a Persian's viewpoint.

Broadly, this study shows that the hierarchy of different Catford's translation shifts in the translation of vocabulary-learning books from English into Persian is similar to the findings of some other studies, which examined other text-types such as psychology and medicine. However, if we consider the exact figures and percentages, we can conclude that vocabulary-learning texts tend to undergo more shifts compared to technical text-types. It is mainly because transliteration is a common approach in the translation of technical books that means many words are not translated at all, which results in fewer Unit Shifts. However, in the case of the vocabulary-learning books, the main purpose of most readers is to learn a foreign language, so transliteration does not suit the readers' need.

Lastly, this study, like most studies, managed to propose some ideas and potential research topics. Possible future studies can be undertaken using the same design on the translation of other text-types. It is highly recommended that researchers investigate other aspects of translation and language learning and figure out how they could benefit L2 learners. It is suggested that researchers conduct studies on translation and vocabulary learning from non-linguistic perspectives, too. Researchers can study common errors in the translation of vocabulary-learning books by conducting translation quality assessment research. The pros and cons of using vocabulary-learning books for language learning, and the students' attitudes toward such books could be interesting topics for further studies.

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تبدیلات کتفورد در ترجمۀ کتاب‌های یادگیری واژگان از انگلیسی به فارسی [1]

محمد آقائی[2] و شبنم مختارنیا[3]

چکیده

تحقیق پیش رو تبدیلات کتفورد در کتاب‌های یادگیری واژگان ترجمه شده را با تعیین میزان فراوانی آنها، بررسی می‌کند. به این منظور، هفت کتاب یادگیری واژگان انگلیسی انتخاب شده و ۲۱۰ جمله به همراه ترجمه آنها بر اساس طبقه‌بندی شیفت‌های ترجمه کتفورد بررسی شدند. داده‌های به‌دست‌آمده از تحقیق نشان داد، تبدیلات ساختاری بیشترین و تبدیلات سطحی کمترین تعداد تبدیلات را در ترجمه‌های مورد نظر شامل می‌شدند. این تحقیق نشان داد تبدیل مقوله تنها در ۱۱٫۹۰ درصد از ترجمه‌های بررسی شده رخ داده است. این بدان معناست که بین زبان انگلیسی و فارسی قابلیت ساخت معادل با نقش دستوری یکسان وجود دارد. تبدیلات واحدی در ۴۳٫۳۳ درصد از نمونه‌ها اتفاق افتاده و به احتمال زیاد حاکی از آن است که ترجمه‌های کتاب‌های یادگیری واژگان گرایش به شفاف و توضیحی بودن دارند. ۶۹٫۵۲ درصد از تبدیلات درون‌ساختاری بودند، زیرا مترجمان سعی کردند از به‌کارگیری ساختارهای زبان بیگانه اجتناب کنند تا ترجمه‌هایشان برای فارسی‌زبانان غیرعادی نباشد. شایان ذکر است، مطالعاتی که در گذشته انجام شده است معمولاً روی انواع مختلفی از متن، مانند متون روانشناختی، ادبی و غیره متمرکز بودند. این تحقیق با بررسی نوع دیگری از متون ترجمه‌شده، به افزایش دانش ما از این رشته کمک می‌کند.

واژه‌های راهنما: کتاب‌های یادگیری لغت، تبدیلات ترجمه، کتفورد

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