Sa’di as a Translator in *Gulistan* [Flower Garden] of Persian Literature

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Extended abstract

1. Introduction
In recent years, thanks to efforts made by such scholars as Maria Tymoczko, translation studies has started a movement towards reacting to Euro-centrism in the discipline. The movement stresses the necessity for internationalization of translation theory and the significance of taking into account translation traditions all over the world. The authors of the present paper do believe that if we, too, as the Iranian, are going to play a decent role in the expansion of the translation theory and development of translation studies, then we should first achieve a comprehensive knowledge of translation traditions all through the Iranian cultural history. In line with the necessity for such type of research, we have tried to show that Sa’di in his book, *Gulistan* [Flower Garden], besides being an author and a poet, has functioned as a translator as well. In so doing, the paper has been inspired by the theoretical framework of ‘micro-history’ in order to provide appropriate answers to three essential questions: (1) Has Sa’di ever made use of the art of translation in his *Gulistan*? (2) If yes, what translation strategies have been employed by him and is it possible to compare such strategies with recent achievements of translation studies as a modern discipline? And (3) Is Sa’di’s translation approach in conformity with the dominant translation norms of the time?

2. Methodology
The present study is qualitative in nature as inspired by the analytical framework of micro-history. In order to understand Sa’di’s responses to cases of linguistic hybridity throughout the text of *Gulistan*, all Arabic expressions, sentences and poems have been studied in full to see if such hybrid forms have anything to do with translation.

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3. Discussion
Based on the data collected, we have argued that there are 4 different types of interlingual translation in Gulistan: (1) zero translation, (2) hidden translation, (3) free translation, and (4) source-oriented translation. ‘Zero Translation’, as intended in the paper, involves some verses of the holy Quran as well as expressions and poems that Sa’di has preferred or has been obliged to keep them in their original Arabic form without any Persian translations. We may possibly attribute Sa’di’s zero-translation strategy to the high frequency of occurrence of such Arabic expressions in the Persian language community of the time resulting in the intertextual familiarity of the target readers in question, so as to say that, Sa’di has felt no need for rendering such expressions into Persian. Some cases of zero translation in Gulistan refers to Quran verses and Nabavi Hadiths where such a decision may be attributed to Sa’di’s observation of the past literary, religious, and cultural tradition, on one hand, and his being in line with literary and cultural norms agreed by some influencing figures of literature of the time, on the other. In an attempt to find a solution for resolving the religious or normative impasse of translation of holy texts, Sa’di resorts to another strategy labeled as ‘Hidden Translation’ where the original form of the Quran verse or the Nabavi Hadith is absent and Sa’di has only mentioned its translation. Hidden translation, as intended in the paper, refers to any fragment that has passed through the filter of translation but its target version has been hidden by any reason(s). In other words, in hidden translation, there is a source text but there is no formal co-occurrence of the two texts (i.e., the source and target texts) involved. The third type of translation in Gulistan is ‘Free Translation’. We have found out, through analyzing the data, that the most frequent translation tendency in Gulistan has been free translation; a finding that can be analyzed within the scope of ‘self-translation’ framework. Self-translation is a text “authored by a writer who can compose in different languages and who translates his or her texts from one language into another” (Hokenson & Munson, 2007, p.1). And finally, the last type of translation employed in Gulistan is what we have labeled as ‘Source-oriented Translation’. In this type of translation, Arabic expressions have been translated into Persian through a formally and semantically close rendering in a way that Sa’di has not only sufficed to the transfer of the themes in question but has also recreated as precisely as possible the meaning of each and every single Arabic expressions in the form of Persian equivalents and even Persian grammatical structures.

4. Conclusion
As stated earlier, Sa’di has experienced different translation strategies in rendering Arabic expressions and sentences. In limited cases, he has adopted a more faithful approach to the source text resulting in a ‘source-oriented’ translation while in most cases, he has resorted to a ‘free translation’ method, more specifically in
rendering his own writings within a self-translation process. The co-existence of both plain, uncomplicated prose translations as well as magnificent rhymed translations in \textit{Gulistan} provides sufficient evidence that Sa’di, as a translator, has always taken into consideration his own high-level standards of authorship. What we may acquire by examining Sa’di’s translations, more specifically his unique source-oriented translations from Arabic to Persian or vice versa, shows that a distinguished translator can potentially and simultaneously pay attention to both the source and the target systems without decreasing the quality of the resulting work. This capability is exactly why one may rank Sa’di as a top global translator all through the history of translation.

\textbf{Key Words:} Sa’di, Gulistan, translation, microhistory.

\textbf{References}


