The Role of Research and Dramaturgy in (Re) Translation: A Review of Ghaderi’s Revisions and Retranslations of Ibsen’s Dramas

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Extended Abstract

1. Introduction
In the not so long history of translation studies, scholarship has always had pride of place in the act of translating. Essentially, the weight and authenticity of a translated work may be measured in the amount of research done about and around the work. In other words, the deeper the translator’s research on a work, the more vivid the essence of the text involved, including, among others, its meaning, content, and function. Translation is usually based on the common assumption that the source and target texts are, in one way or another, typically identical; yet, more often than not, translation fortified by scholarship may generate a translated text which may surpass the original, so much so that it may function quite independently. We may also come across translators who not only rely on research while translating, but also depend on research prior to translation. In this article, the author explores both the process and product in Behzad Ghaderi Sohi’s (re)translations of Henrik Ibsen’s dramas by focusing on two aspects of his work, namely, research and dramaturgy before, during, and after the translation process.

2. Methodology
The present study is qualitative in nature and means to show the role of research and dramaturgy in Ghaderi’s work. After a review of the translator’s authorial, scholarly background, interests, and attitudes, a specific categorization of three (interrelated) elements - para-textuality, intertextuality, and textuality has been contrived to be applied to a data-based exploration of his (re)translations of five Ibsen’s dramas, 1) The Wild Duck, 2) Ghosts, 3) Rosmersholm, 4) Little Eyolf, and 5) When We Dead Awaken, to eventually draw conclusions about the impact force of research and dramaturgy employed by the translator.

3. Discussion
Based on a close reading of the above mentioned texts, the author argues that paratextual parameters as employed by Ghaderi, can be divided into three sub-categories: a) introductions, b) criticisms, and c) footnotes. The first category

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includes comprehensive prefaces/introductions tagged to the texts by him (or, where necessary, other Ibsen scholars/translator) to promote his readership’s knowledge of Ibsen’s world, in general, and the translated work, in particular. Such detailed introductions typically cover literary analyses of each and every given dramas, with a view to establishing their dialectical relationships within the overall cycle of Ibsen’s plays. The second sub-category of paratextuality (i.e., criticism), refers to explanations and critical points made by Ghaderi within (or prior to) his own translations, sometimes also fortified by making references to other translators’ works. Being quite familiar with the art of dramaturgy, Ghaderi recognizes translation as a kind of performance, yet a linguistic performance. He has illustrated the linguistic processes involved and the problems ahead of the craft of translation as much as he can, aiming at sharing his readership the strategies and solutions he has already managed to apply to such problems. Such information can be beneficial to researchers and for educational purposes. Footnotes, as the third sub-category of paratextuality, have been further sub-divided, in their own rights, into two different forms: sometimes, the proper names appear in the footnotes while, at other times, potential readers have been provided with certain additional explanations.

At another level, Ghaderi’s translations further reflect the role of research and dramaturgy in terms of intertextuality. In a constant attempt to ensure reasonable reactions on the part of his readership, Ghaderi tries to (re)shape the given drama’s meaning by making frequent genealogical and prototypical references to other texts around it; in other words, he resorts insistently to intertextual analyses, be it inner or outer intertextuality. By “inner intertextual analysis”, the author means the interrelationships among different dramas written by Ibsen while "outer intertextuality" refers to the relations of Ibsen’s dramas with other writers’ literary works.

Finally, the last analytical layer used in exploring Ghaderi’s (re)translations has been labeled as textuality. An assessment of Ghaderi’s performance at text level displays his success in not neutralizing language varieties of the source texts at both macro and micro levels. Reflecting the informal and colloquial speech forms in writing, recreating language varieties at the two levels of language user and language use, achieving idiomatic renderings and emphasizing on performativity of the target dramatic texts rather than their mere literary aspects, among others, are the most important characteristics of Ghaderi’s translations at the level of textuality.

4. Conclusion

As stated earlier, the present article has been an attempt to show the role of research and dramaturgy in Behzad Ghaderi Sohi’s (re)translations of five Ibsen’s dramas. Ghaderi’s works reflect at least five different translation strategies employed in rendering Ibsen’s dramas. He has adopted a specific approach which does not necessarily result in so-called faithful renderings – he has his own views about faithfulness - but entails creating experience-driven translations, experiences
derived from the translator’s deep and close readings of dramatic literature, in general, and, of Ibsen’s dramas, in particular. The provision of introductions, criticisms, and footnotes as well as his unique, detailed explanations at the intertextual level offer sufficient evidence that he, as a translator, has always been anxious to consider the significance of research in translation. Bearing in mind the significance of such qualities as reflecting informal and colloquial forms in the written variety of language or recreating linguistic varieties at both levels of language user and language use, the author suggests that a thorough examination of Ghaderi’s translations may always be inspiring for students and scholars because it shows his focus on the representation of essential elements of drama on a stage, that is, the final arena for dramaturgy.

Keywords: Behzad Ghaderi, Dramaturgy, Ibsen, Research, Translation

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