

## **Semantic Adequacy in Translation: Strategies employed in the English renderings of Sa'di's wittical remarks of *The Rose Garden (Golistan)***

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### **Abstract**

Translating literary works is a difficult task, especially when it comes to cultural elements. It gets more difficult when words have ambiguities and multiple layers of meaning. The present study sought to examine the adequacy of witticism in the English renderings of Sa'di's clever remarks in *Golistan (The Rose Garden)*. To this purpose, the researchers selected three English translations of *Golistan* by different translators; namely, Rehatsek (1964), Gladwin (1806), and Ross (1890). A sample of 20 anecdotes containing wittical elements were randomly taken from *Golistan* and compared with their English translations. The collected data were then analyzed based on Delabastita's (1993) hierarchy of pun translation strategy model. The obtained results revealed that the three translations were at best similar in terms of the applied strategies, i.e. in all the translations, the most frequently used strategies were: Pun/Non-Pun translation strategy, Non-Pun/Pun strategy, and Pun/Related Rhetorical Translation strategy, respectively. Moreover, it was indicated that all the three translations used the strategies to the same extent, though slight differences were found among them in terms of the overall use of the strategies. Since adequacy in Delabastita's framework (1993) is hierarchically defined, it can be concluded that higher level strategies lead to more adequate translations. Generally, it was observed that the three translations were the same in terms of semantic and humorous adequacy; i.e. they transferred the source text effect in translating wittical elements of the *Golistan*. The findings of the study would have implications for translation students as well as translators of literary works.

**Keywords:** *Golistan*, wittical elements, semantic adequacy, humorous adequacy, literary translation

### **Introduction**

According to Norton (Norton 1984, p. 3), "Translation is a transfer process, which aims at the transformation of a written SL text into an optimally equivalent TL text, and which requires the syntactic, the semantic and the pragmatic understanding and analytical processing of the SL". Baker (1992, p. 21) believes that "the source language word may express a concept which is totally unknown in the target culture and language". These concepts may relate to a religious belief, a social and cultural custom, or grammatical features of every language. One of the problems a translator may encounter is that some words or phrases denoting objects, facts, and phenomena are so deeply rooted in their source culture that produced them and they have no equivalent in the target culture, be it because they are unknown, or because they are not yet codified in the target language (Fernández Guerra, 2012). For instance, in different cultures, there are many humorous concepts with specific meanings and upshots, while every single nation has its own semantic and entertaining patterns. A translator should thus be aware of all corners of

different cultures to be capable to recreate the same meaning and effect of the source text in the target language when facing such concepts.

The current study has tried to investigate Sa'di's *Golistan* and its English translations in connection with the semantic adequacy of wittical remarks used in anecdotes.

Wittical elements are among the peculiarities of literary texts, and thus literary translation is one of the most problematic forms of communication across cultures. The main concern in literary translation has traditionally been with words and phrases that are so heavily grounded in one culture and thus they are almost impossible to be translated into another. Actually, long debate has been there over when to paraphrase, when to use the nearest equivalent, when to coin a new word by translating literally, and when to transcribe (Hassan, 2014).

Humor is one of the most defining aspects of humanity. Dudden (1987) maintained that it is an integral part of everyday communication and an important component of so many literary works, films, art and mass entertainment. When trying to translate cultural humor, opaque elements and language-specific devices are expected to make the translator's work difficult, while some elements are ultimately not transferred at all. Hence, why does one translate a cultural humor? Usually, he does so in order to convey a message to someone whose culture and language differ from one's own and thus prevent direct communication.

Humor plays an important role in the context of intercultural communication. Partly universal, partly individual, and at the same time rooted in a specific cultural and linguistic context, humor poses a real challenge for translators. When translating humor, a number of factors need to be taken into consideration. Besides having to decide whether the target language reader understands the humor, translators also have to render the humor-inducing effect of the source text. They have to make source humor function as humor in the target culture. Translators' abilities to make creative decisions are often tested by culturally bound elements and language-specific devices. (Rosenthal, 1956)

Delabastita (1997, pp. 51-52) defines wordplay as a "textual phenomena" contrasting "linguistic structures with different meanings on the basis of their formal similarity". One aspect of wordplay and translation that many researchers have approached is whether wordplay is translatable at all, since it depends so strongly on the structure of the source language for meaning and effect.

Wordplay generally presents a greater challenge to the translator than does other types of humor. There are a number of distinct types of wordplay (e.g., paronymy, homonymy, spoonerisms and initialisms), and the translation of each of these types requires different strategies. According to Delabastita (1997, p. 11), adopting the commonly used translation strategies in the process of rendering wordplay poses challenges. Being so 'over-determined' as they are, puns (the major form of wit) hamper the easy compromise between source vs target, word-for-word vs free, form vs function, content vs expression, and so on, and often bring the customary and approved negotiation strategies to a grinding halt (cited in Verbruggen 2010, p.15).

### **Review of Literature**

Díaz-Pérez (1999) investigated the translation of pun in "*Through the Looking Glass*". He found that puns can be translated since many of the puns in the source text have their counterpart in the target texts. Ma`azallahi (2007) in "*An Investigation of Pun Translatability in the English translations of Hafiz Poetry*" examined the translatability of pun in poetry translation and the translation strategies employed by English translators to deal with different types of puns. To do so, she took the selected couplets of Hafiz containing puns compatible to Delabastita's (1996)

classification and the two English translations of Clark (1905) and McCarthy (2006). Ma`azallahi systematically showed that the feasibility of the theoretical framework proposed by Delabastita (2004) concerned with translating puns, seemed to be justified, and that his strategies would be applicable in the course of translating pun in poetry. Therefore, the notion of translatability of puns seems to be possible according to her research.

In a study conducted by Vahid Dastjerdi and Jamshidian (2011), attempts were made to examine a frequently-occurring element of the unique style of the Quran, i.e. puns. Adopting pun translation strategies outlined in Delabastita (2004) as a basis of measurement, the Quran and its two English renderings are hence analyzed to explore what strategies are applied by the translators on the one hand, and to discover the extent of (un)translatability of puns of the Qur'an, on the other hand. The results of the study revealed how feasible the strategies proposed by Delabastita (2004) in his theoretical framework are in terms of the (un)translatability of puns in the case of the Quran. The findings of the study will hopefully pave the way for further investigations on the translatability of different issues in Muslims' Holy Scripture. Also, the findings can be reconfirmed in future studies on other sacred books towards a possible generalization.

Low (2011) presented a brief survey of research on puns is given, followed by practical advice to increase the translator's responses to wordplay, and a systematic way to proceed instead of just waiting for inspiration. It focuses on two problem areas, language-specific jokes (in particular puns) and culture-specific jokes, distinguishing these from more manageable kinds of humor. He concluded that almost all verbally expressed humor is translatable, given appropriate strategies and reasonable criteria for success. Moreover, he claimed that if a joke is not translated as a joke, the translation is bad. In the paper, "The study of pun in English translations of Sa'di's the *Bustan*", Eslami Rasekh and Ordudary (in press) discuss about the procedures employed in rendering puns, and consistency of the translator in the choice of strategies viewed as the most effective. They studied Sa'di's *Bustan* and its English translation by Clarke (1976) based on Delabastita's model for puns translation. Their conclusion was that (un)translatability of any aesthetic element of a literary work in general and pun in particular majorly depended on the level of similarity between linguistic systems involved in the process of translation, namely SL and TL. They showed that zero translation/omission is the most frequently strategy employed by the translator.

Díaz-Pérez' (2014) study also aims to analyze the translation of puns from a relevance-theory perspective. The analysis carried out in this study is based on two tragedies by Shakespeare – namely, *Hamlet* and *Othello* – and on five Spanish and two Galician versions of those two plays. The results showed that in spite of the difficulty involved in the translation of puns and of all the voices defending their untranslatability, the position maintained here is that puns are not untranslatable. Furthermore, Mohammadsalari, Behtaj, and Moinzadeh (2014) made an attempt to apply Delabastita's strategies (1996) for translating puns in the translation of humorous puns from English into Persian in a literary text. In order to conduct the study, according to the categorization of puns by Delabastita, puns in *Alice Adventures in Wonderland* were extracted and analyzed with their three versions based on these strategies. The results of the research showed that six out eight strategies proposed by Delabastita were applied by Persian translators and it pun to non-pun was the most frequent strategy.

Apart from language knowledge, a translator of literary works needs to have general knowledge about the world as well as meaning and form that are inter-connected in literature. As for the present study, although lots of interpretations of Sa'di words exist, his poems and art prose statements are full of mystery. He uses lots of literary devices such as: simile, metaphor,

apostrophe and wit which make his words somehow untranslatable. Therefore, translators face problems when they encounter such devices. The first problem is how to understand and interpret his mystical poems with divine message and extra-linguistic elements; for example, whether the love motif he applies is of earthly love or divine love or both, which is a matter of interpretation. The second problem is how to translate wordplays, that is, to say words with multiple meanings. Actually, ambiguities and multiple layers of meaning make the understanding of wits difficult. Accordingly, translators should have a thorough mastery over these devices and be expert in the target and source languages to transfer them accurately.

The present study, therefore, aimed at investigating the existing wittical elements in *Golistan* which was composed by the great Iranian poet; Sa'di Shirazi; in 1258, and examining their English translations to see to what extent these devices have been adequately transferred to the target language in terms of their multiple meanings and the sense of humor they propose.

### **Research Questions**

To achieve the purposes of the present study, the following two research questions were addressed:

Q1. To what extent have the English translations of Sa'di's wittical remarks in *Golistan* adequately reflected the multiple meanings and the humorous sense of the source language?

Q2. Are varied English translations of *Golistan* significantly different in terms of adequate transference of Sa'di's wittical remarks?

### **Method**

#### **Design of the Study**

The study aimed to identify the humorous items used in the English translations of Sa'di's *Golistan*. One of the major concerns of the study was to examine the quality of *Golistan*'s translations, especially the humorous concepts. Thus, a descriptive-analytic method of research was utilized to achieve the purposes of the research when analyzing the corpus. Quantitative analysis was also done to find out to what extent wittical elements have been adequately and appropriately translated in English.

#### **The Corpus**

Transferring humor from one language into another is a difficult task, due to the fact that there are several obstacles during this process. To clarify this issue, some humorous anecdotes of *Golistan* were studied to show how the cultural context, social attitude and beliefs could impact the transference and manifestation of humor from one language into the other. Therefore, a Persian version of Sa'di's *Golistan* and its three English translations by Ross (1890), Gladwin (1979), and Rehatsk (1964), comprised the materials of this research. Actually, out of eight chapters of *Golistan*, twenty humorous anecdotes were randomly selected. The researchers took into account the length of the chapters and the number of the stories narrated therein to produce a sample as valid as possible. It means that the more the length of the chapter, the more anecdotes were to be selected for analysis. The whole corpus was investigated based on Delabastita's model (1996), concerning the translation of wittical elements.

#### **Model of the Study**

Delabastita (1996) asserts that puns (a major form of wit) can be thought as contrasting "linguistic structures with different meanings on the basis of their formal similarity" (P. 128). He defines pun as "a general name for the various textual phenomena in which structural features of

the language used are exploited in order to bring about a communicatively significant confrontation of two linguistic structures with more or less similar forms and with more or less different meanings" (P. 31). Delabastita has developed a model which deals specifically with the translation of wittical items. In this model, some different translation techniques that are possible to apply in the translation of puns are identified. He reckons the model is open to further refinement. Furthermore, it should be stated that in some cases it is possible to combine two or more techniques (Delabastita, 1993).

Delabastita's (1993) translation strategies for wittical elements are as follows:

- Pun=Pun: "the source-text pun is translated by a target-language pun".
- Pun = Non-Pun: "the pun is rendered by a non-punning phrase which may salvage both senses of the wordplay but in a non-punning conjunction, or select one of the senses at the cost of suppressing the other".
- Pun= Related Rhetorical Devices: "the pun is replaced by some other rhetorical devices.
- Pun =Zero: "the portion of text containing the pun is simply omitted".
- Pun ST = Pun TT: "the translator reproduces the source-text pun [. . .] in its original formulation, i.e. without actually 'translating' it".
- Non-Pun= Pun: "the translator introduces a pun [. . .] to make up for source-text puns lost elsewhere or for any other reason"
- Zero = Pun: "totally new material is added"
- Editorial Techniques: "explanatory footnotes or endnotes, comments" etc.

## Procedures

In order to achieve the purposes of the study, first, the corpus was precisely read word by word in order to identify and locate wittical elements. The English equivalents of the identified wits were also found in the three English translations of *Golistan*. Then, the wits which were translated inadequately in terms of humorous sense and multiple meanings were specified. Procedures and strategies employed in the translation of wits were carefully scrutinized according to Delabastita's strategies to identify which strategies were more frequently and more adequately applied in translating each original wittical item by the translators. Concerning the adequacy in translation of wits, the collected data was dissected twice by the researchers to maintain a strategic distance from any missteps in distinguishing wittical elements and their meanings in the entire corpus.

## Results

The first research question was set out to understand the adequacy of the three existing translations of *Golistan*. Since the adequacy in Delabastita (1993) is hierarchically defined, it can be claimed that the first research question is set out to investigate the order of frequency of each strategy among the existing strategies. Simply put, the more higher level strategies (in Delabastita's model) used, the more adequate the translations are. As with the second research question, the three existing translations of *Golistan* are compared in terms of the frequency of each strategy.

The first strategy in Delabastita's (1993) model is a translation in which the source-text pun is translated by a target-language pun. Throughout the corpus of the study, only two cases of the application of this strategy were observed. One of the cases was located in Rehatsk's (1964) translation and the other was observed in Gladwin's (1979) translation. These two instances are presented below in Example 1:

**Example 1: Pun/Pun Translation Strategy****ST:**

سبب پرسیدم کسی گفت پسرش خمر خورده است و عریده کرده است و خون کسی ریخته و خود از میان گریخته ، پدر را به علت او سلسله در نای است.

**TT:** Rehatsk (1964)

Asking for the cause, I was told that his son, having become drunk, quarreled and having **shed** the blood of a man, had **fled**; whereon his father was instead of him loaded with a chain on his neck and heavy fetters on his legs.

**ST:**

یکی از ملوک عرب رنجور بود در حالت پیری و امید زندگانی قطع کرده سواری از در درآمد و بشارت داد که فلان قلعه را به دولت خداوند گشادیم و دشمنان اسیر آمدند و سپاه و رعیت آن طرف به جملگی مطیع مطیع فرمان گشتند ملک نفسی سرد برآورد و گفت این مزده مرا نیست دشمنانم راست یعنی وارثان مملکت .

**TT:** Gladwin's (1979)

An Arab king was sick in his state of decrepitude so that all hopes of life were cut off. A trooper entered the gate with the good news that a certain fort had been conquered by the good luck of the king, that the enemies had been captured and that the whole population of the district had been reduced to obedience. The king heaved a deep sigh and replied: 'This message is not for **me but for my enemies**, namely the heirs of the kingdom.

Out of 27 cases of irony observed in Rehatsk's (1964) and Gladwin's (1979) translations, only one case (3.7 %) of using pun in the target language for the same pun in the source language was observed.

The second strategy based on Delabastita's (1993) model of translating pun is a target text in which the pun has been rendered by a non-punning phrase which may salvage both senses of the wordplay but in a non-punning conjunction, or select one of the senses at the cost of suppressing the other. This was the most prevalent strategy observed among the three translations under study. Actually, out of 27 cases of pun in Rehatsk's (1964) translation, 16 puns (59.2 %) in the source text were translated through pun/ non-pun strategy (second strategy in Delabastita's model). Out of 27 cases of pun in Gladwin (1979) translation, 19 puns (70.3 %) in the source text were translated using pun/non-pun strategy. Regarding Ross' (1890) translation, out of 28 cases of pun translation, in 17 cases the second strategy (pun/non pun) was applied. Three instances of

translating pun by the three translators, where the second strategy has been applied, are provided in Example 2 below:

**Example 2:** Pun/Non-Pun Translation Strategy

**ST:**

یاد دارم که در ایام جوانی گذر داشتیم به کوئی و نظر با ماهروئی در تموزی که حرورش دهان بخوشانییدی و سمومش مغز استخوان بجوشانییدی .

**TT1:** Rehatsk (1964)

I remember having in the days of my youth passed through a street, intending to see a moon-faced beauty. It was in Temuz, whose heat dried up the saliva in the mouth and whose simum boiled the marrow in my bones.

**TT2:** Gladwin's (1979)

I recollect that in my youth, as I was passing through a street, I cast my eyes on a beautiful girl. It was in the autumn, when the heat dried up all moisture from the mouth, and the sultry wind made the marrow boil in the bones.

**TT3:** Ross (1890)

In my youth I recollect I was passing through a street, and caught a glimpse of a moon-like charmer during the dog-days, when their heat was drying up the moisture of the mouth, and the samum, or desert hot-wind, melting the marrow of the bones.

The third strategy in Delabastita's (1993) model is replacing the pun in the source language by some other devices in the target language (Pun/Related Rhetorical Devices). This strategy was applied only five times throughout the corpus--there was no cases of the application of this strategy in Gladwin's (1979) translation, but Rehatsk (1964) and Ross (1890) have employed this strategy two times (7%) and three times (10.7 %), respectively. Two instances of the application of this strategy, taken from Rehatsk (1964) and Ross (1890) are presented in Example 3 below:

**Example 3: Pun/Related Rhetorical Devices****ST:**

همي ناگاه از ظلمت دهليز خانه اي روشني بتافت يعني جمالي كه زبان فصاحت از بيان صباحت از عاجز آيد چنانكه در شب تاري صبح برآيد يا آب حيات از ظلمات بدر آيد قدحي برفاب بر دست و شكر در آن ريخته و به عرق برآمخته ندانم به گلابش مطيب كرده بود يا قطره اي چند از گل رويش در آن چكیده.

**TT: (1964)**

Suddenly from the shade of the portico of a house I beheld a female form, whose beauty it is impossible for the tongue of eloquence to describe; insomuch that it seemed as if the dawn was rising in the obscurity of night, or as if the water of immortality was issuing from the land of darkness. She held in her hand a cup of snow-water, into which she sprinkled sugar, and mixed it with the juice of the grape. I know not whether what I perceived was the fragrance of rose-water, or that she had infused into it a few drops from the blossom of her cheek.

**TT: Ross (1890)**

I passed by the place where the Durwaish had dwelt, and asked how he went on. They told me he was in the town jail. I asked the reason. They replied, " Hisson got **drunk, had a quarrel, and killed** a man, and **fled** out of the city, on which account they had put a chain about the father's neck, and heavy fetters on his feet.

**ST:**

چنانكه عرب گوید التمریانع و الناطور غیر مانع. هیچ باشد كه به قوت پرهیزگاري ازو به سلامت بماند گفت اگر از مه رويان به سلامت بماند از بدگویان نماند .

**TT:**

As the Arab says, the date is ripe and its guardian not forbidding, whether he thought the power of abstinence would cause the man to remain in safety. He replied: 'If he remains in safety from the moon-faced one, he will not remain safe from evil speakers.'

As it can be observed in the extracted example, pun in the source language has been replaced by a related rhetorical device, i.e. alliteration. Alliterations of three sounds are highlighted in Example 3: /h/, /w/, /k/, and /n/. Throughout the corpus of the present study, the only related rhetorical device which has been used as the application of the third strategy was alliteration. Indeed, all of the five cases of the translation of pun in the source text into a related device in the target text have made use of alliteration. However, in other cases of the application of the third strategy, other sounds including /f/, /s/, and /θ/ have been alliterated.

The fourth strategy based on Delabastita's (1993) model of translating pun refers to a situation in which the portion of a text containing the pun is simply omitted. This strategy was not observed in any of the three translations under study. Indeed, none of the translators omitted any part of the source text, i.e. instead of omitting source text puns, the translators have preferred to apply the second strategy; namely, puns have been rendered by non-punning phrases which may salvage both senses of the wordplay but in a non-punning conjunction, or select one of the senses at the cost of suppressing the other).

As for the fifth strategy proposed by Delabastita's (1993), again none of the translators has applied it in their renderings. This strategy refers to a situation in which the translator reproduces the source-text pun in its original formulation, i.e. without actually 'translating' it.

The sixth strategy recommended in the model refers to cases where the translator introduces a new pun in the target text to make up for source-text puns lost elsewhere or for any other reason. This strategy was found to be the second most frequent strategy employed by the three translators. Actually, out of 27 cases of pun in Rehatsk's (1964) translation, 7 puns (25.9 %) have been translated through this strategy. This was exactly the case with Gladwin's (1979) translation (25.9 %). Regarding Ross' (1890) translation, out of 28 cases of pun translation, in 8 cases the sixth strategy has been made use of. In Example 4 below, three instances of the sixth strategy usage by the three translators are presented:

#### Example 4: Pun/make-up Pun Translation Strategy

**ST:**

'جانان پدر هنر آموزید که ملک و دولت دنیا اعتماد را نشاید و سیم و زر در سفر بر محل خطرست یا دزد به یکبار ببرد یا خواجه به تفاریق بخورد.'

**TT:** Rehatsk (1964)

'O darlings of your fathers, learn a trade because property and riches of the **world** are not to be relied upon; also silver and **gold** are an occasion of danger because either a thief may steal them at once or the owner spend them gradually'

**ST:**

چون به طعام بنشستند کمتر از آن خورد که ارادت او بود و چون به نماز برخاستند بیش از آن کرد که عادت او تا ظن صلاحیت در حق او زیادت کنند .

**TT:** Gladwin (1979)

When he **sat down at table he ate** more sparingly from that than his appetite inclined him, and when he stood up at prayers he continued longer at them than it was his custom.

**ST:**

یکی از جمله صالحان به خواب دید پادشاهی را در بهشت و پارسایی در دوزخ پرسید که موجب درجات این چیست و سبب درکات آن که مردم به خلاف این معتقد بودند.

**TT:** Rehatsk (1963)

A certain pious man saw in a dream a king in paradise, and a holy man in hell ; lie asked what could be the meaning of the exaltation of one, and the degradation of the other, as the contrary is generally considered to be the case ?

**Example 4:** Pun/make-up Pun Translation Strategy (continued)

As it can be seen in example 4, the translators have not been successful in translating the puns in the source language into puns in the target language. However, to compensate for the lost puns, they have produced other puns which did not exist in the source text. It needs to be added here that the pun in the target text is a paronymic pun, which exploits words that have slight differences in both spelling and pronunciation (Delabastita, 1993).

The seventh strategy referred to in the model concerns a target text in which the translator introduces a pun from scratch. However, there is a difference between this strategy and the sixth strategy; while in the sixth strategy the translator introduces a pun to compensate for a lost pun of the source text, in the seventh strategy the translator introduces a pun which is not the translation of anything in the source text, but the creation of meaning out of the source text. This strategy was very rarely used in the corpus of this study. Indeed, there was only one case (0.037 %) of this strategy usage found in Rehatsk's (1964) translation which is not needed to be explained here.

The last strategy which has been entitled "Editorial Techniques" in Delabastita's (1993) model of translating pun refers to using explanatory footnotes or endnotes, comments to explain and clarify. Similar to the fourth and fifth strategies, editorial techniques were not observed in any of the three translations in the present study.

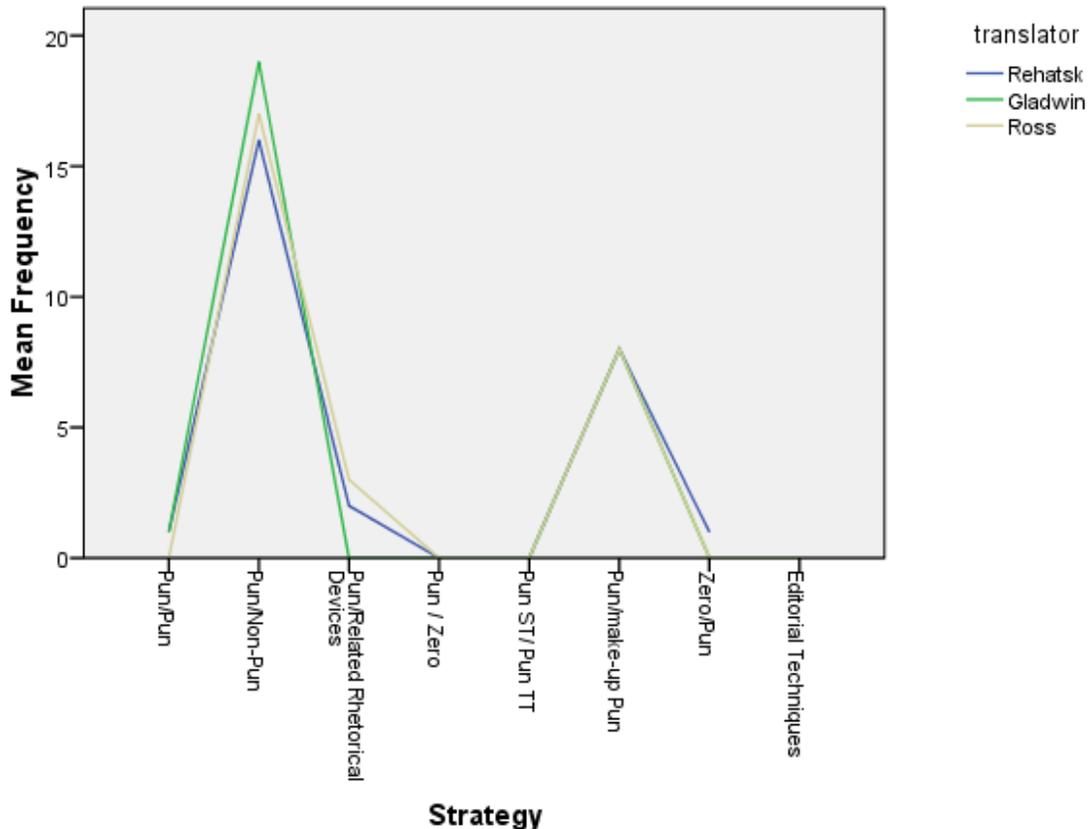
The analysis of the data regarding the comparison of the three translations in terms of the applied strategies revealed that all the translations were homogeneous in terms of the application of the strategies, that is, in the three translations the most frequently used strategies were: Pun/ Non-Pun, Non-Pun/ Pun, and Pun/ Related Rhetorical respectively. Moreover, the analysis of the data revealed that all the three translations used pun translation strategies to the same extent. However, there were some minor differences among the translations in terms of overall use of the strategies.

A comparative summary of the frequency of each of the translations based on Delabastita's (1993) model of translating pun is presented in the following table to better illustrate the analysis.

**Table.** *Frequency of application of Delabastita's strategies in rendering Sa'di's wittical remarks by three English translators*

ST	Rehatsk (1964)	Gladwin (1979)	Ross (1890)
	Frequency		
<b>Pun/Pun</b>	1 (0.03 %)	1 (0.03 %)	0
<b>Pun/Non-Pun</b>	16 (59.2 %)	19 (70.3 %)	17 (60.7 %)
<b>Pun/Related Rhetorical Devices</b>	2 (0.06 %)	0	3 (10.7 %)
<b>Pun / Zero</b>	0	0	0
<b>Pun ST/ Pun TT</b>	0	0	0
<b>Pun/make-up Pun</b>	7 (25.9 %)	7 (25.9 %)	8 (28.5 %)
<b>Zero/Pun</b>	1 (0.03 %)	0	0
<b>Editorial Techniques</b>	0	0	0
<b>Sum</b>	<b>27 (100 %)</b>	<b>27 (100 %)</b>	<b>28 (100 %)</b>

The following graph is more explicitly illustrative of the information in the above table in terms of strategy usage patterns in the three translations:



**Figure 1.** Frequency of strategy usage patterns in the three translations

As the above graph clearly indicates, the second and the sixth strategies are more frequently observed among the three existing translations. It also indicates the proximity of the translators' strategy preference. The obtained results stated here will be discussed in details in the next chapter.

### Discussion

The present study was set out to examine the adequacy of witticism in the English renderings of Sa'di's clever remarks in *Golistan*. To this end, three English translations of *Golistan* by different translators were examined and the selected parts with wittical elements were carefully scrutinized based on Delabastita's (1993) hierarchy of pun translation strategy. The results revealed that the second strategy, i.e. Pun/Non-Pun strategy was the most frequently-used strategy in the three analyzed translations. This can be explained by the fact that in the process of translation, focusing on the meaning of the source language without any attention to stylistic and figurative aspects of the source text is conducive to the second strategy of Delabastita's (1993) hierarchy. Indeed, this strategy is an easy way to help the translator who faces with the problem of translating puns including wittical elements.

Although the three translators could have applied the fourth strategy, i.e. pun/zero strategy, as an easier solution to the difficulty of translating wittical elements, there seems to be a reason for avoiding this strategy in anecdotes of *Golistan*: Anecdotes in *Golistan* are generally

short and not more than one paragraph or two in length. Thus, omitting a short clause or phrase in the process of translation may hamper the comprehension of the target text. For the same reason, the translators may have ignored the application of zero/pun strategy, in translating the anecdotes, since generating new content might cause great change in the meaning of the source text. Moreover, generating new content needs something more than translating skills from the translators' side; namely, the translator needs to be both an author and a translator at the same time, and few translators possess these two skills.

Two other strategies which were not applied in any of the three translations were the fifth and eighth strategies (Pun/Pun and editorial techniques, including foot notes). The absence of these two strategies seems to be reasonable considering the fact that when the translator uses the clever remarks of the source language without translating them (according to Delabastita: direct copy), he needs to elaborate on them somewhere in the endnotes or footnotes (editorial techniques strategy).

Some results of the present study are in line with and some others contradict those of previous studies. For example, Díaz-Pérez (1999) investigated the translation of pun in "*Through the Looking Glass*". His findings suggest that puns, in fact, are translatable, as the majority of source text puns from his corpus have their counterpart in the target texts. Parallel to this finding, the present study's results revealed that all wittical elements in the source text have their equivalents in the target text although the type of adopted strategies to render them based on Delabastita's model are different in terms of frequency. Similarly, Ma`azallahi (2007) indicated that Delabastita's (2004) framework and his proposed strategies would be applicable in the course of translating pun in poetry.

The results of the current study are also consistent with studies conducted by Vahid Dastjerdi and Jamshidian (2011) and Low (2011) who respectively claimed that the translatability of different issues in Muslims' Holy Scripture are conceivable and all verbally expressed humor is translatable, given appropriate strategies and reasonable criteria for success. Mohammadisalari et al. (2014) in the 'Persian translation of puns in *Alice adventures in wonderland*'. The findings of his research show that six out of eight strategies proposed by Delabastita (1996) have been applied by Persian translators, with the pun/non-pun strategy being the most frequent one, just as verified in the present study and they verified translatability of puns. Díaz Pérez (2014), in his analysis of two tragedies by Shakespeare – namely, *Hamlet* and *Othello* – and on five Spanish and two Galician versions of those two plays, demonstrated that although the translation of puns are difficult, the position maintained here is that puns are not untranslatable.

Finally, the findings of the present study are not consistent with those of Eslami-Rasekh and Ordudary (in press) who studied pun in the English translations of Sa'di's *Bustan*. Their findings suggest that zero translation/omission is the most frequently-employed strategy by the English translators of Sa'di's *Bustan*. They truly state, (un)translatability of any aesthetic element of a literary work in general and wit in particular majorly depends on the degree of similarity between the two linguistic systems involved in the process of translation. It is to be noted, however, that since some findings of Díaz-Pérez (1999) contradict the present study, the comparison needs to be proceeded with caution.

### Conclusion

The analysis of the data in the present study denoted that the three translations of Sa'di's *Golistan* are almost similar in terms of the total number of wittical elements translation in general and the frequency of each specific strategy applied, in particular. Regarding the application of the first and the sixth strategies, both Rehatsk's (1964) and Gladwin's (1979) translations were

similar in terms of frequency, while Ross' (1890) translation was only minimally different. Moreover, all the three translations were similar in terms of the frequency of use of the fourth, fifth, and the eighth strategies. In fact, none of the translators have used these strategies. The highest level of variation was related to the second strategy, Pun/Non-Pun, in which the difference of frequency came up to be just three.

As for the observed frequency for each of the strategies, one of the main findings of the study was the absence of Delabastita's (1993) strategies in translating wittical elements, because as it was observed, some strategies were not applied at all. What makes this finding more interesting is the fact that this absence was not limited to one translation, but all the three translations had ignored to use such strategies.

As a final word, it is to be added here that the present study revealed further findings related to relative translatability of wittical elements. The pre-eminent proponents of translatability of such elements, including Toury (1997) and Landheer (1989), maintain that languages are not as different from each other as some proponents of the untranslatability theory seem to think; all languages share some features with other languages and pun as well as other clever remarks, as a common and universal features of all languages, are translatable. Roughly speaking, with regard to the five applied strategies of translating such elements in the Golistan, that more or less have been organized to transfer the ST effect, it can be concluded that translatability is a relative, rather than an absolute concept.

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