

Challenges Posed by Religious-bound Terms while Rendering Classical Persian Literature: English Translations of Sa‘di’s *Gulistan* in Focus

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Abstract

The present study concentrates on Sa‘di’s Gulistan and its two English translations by Burton (1888) and Eastwick (1880) to explore the way they coped with challenging religious-bound terms. The Gulistan, abounding with RBTs, is a world-renown literary-religious masterpiece. Ivir’s (2003) taxonomy was employed as the model of the study. Findings revealed that the categories of ‘concrete religious concepts’, ‘proper names’, ‘religious verdicts’ and ‘abstract religious concepts’ posed great challenges to translators. It was also found that while most of the RBTs were rendered via the use of ‘substitution’ and ‘definition’ (84%), ‘lexical creation’ was never used by any translator.

Keywords: *religious-bound terms, literary-religious texts, Sa‘di’s Gulistan, substitution, Ivir’s (2003) taxonomy*

1. Introduction

One of the formidable barriers in translating literary texts is to cope with culture-bound items (CBIs) or the terms embedded in the source text conveying concepts entirely unfamiliar for the target-language readership. They may cover lexical items related to a social custom, a sort of drink, food, a religious belief, etc.

As far as rendering different text-types is concerned, religious texts are undoubtedly among the most difficult ones since they are considered as ‘sacred’ texts. Religion is part of a culture, and, consequently, religious-bound terms are included in CBIs. The SL cultural concepts or culture-bound references pose great challenges to literary-religious (and even non-literary) translators. The SL cultural concepts or culture-bound references pose great challenges to literary-religious (and even non-literary) translators (Cómitre Narváez & Valverde Zambrana 2014; Nazari Robati 2015; Arnita, Made Puspani, and Nyoman Seri Malini 2016; Pérez 2017; Afrouz 2017, 2019, 2020, 2021; Thawabteh 2017; Putrawan 2018; Setyawan 2019; Bywood 2019).

The fact that most of the works in classical Persian literature is replete with references to religious concepts has made rendering such texts to be considered as a real challenge. Translators need to be both linguistically and culturally competent to appropriately cope with the difficulties posed by religious-bound terms. Resorting to specific procedures can help translators deal properly with CBIs in general, and RBTs, in particular. Such procedures are usually proposed by translation studies scholars in the form of a model. Ivir’s (2003) model is used in the current study to analyze the data.

The Gulistan or *Rose-Garden* is Sa‘di’s most well-known masterpiece composed in rhythmic and rhymed prose or *mosajj‘a* mixed with verse. It has been rendered into many languages. In the present paper, two English translations by Edward Eastwick (1880), Richard Francis Burton (1888) are investigated. The researcher conducted the study to find answers to these questions:

- 1) What are the procedures used by the two translators? How is the distribution of procedures?

- 2) To what extent translators were consistent in applying procedures? Were all Persian RBTs translated into English via the use of a certain procedure?
- 3) How consistent were translators in selecting equivalents for the same RBTs occurred in similar contexts (but various chapters) of *the Gulistan*?
- 4) What are the RBT categories in *the Gulistan*?
- 5) How is the distribution of procedures used in rendering RBTs classified under each category?
- 6) Does the type of RBT influence the type of procedure used by translators?
- 7) How is the distribution of untranslated RBTs in various categories? Which translator left more RBTs untranslated than the other?
- 8) Which category of RBTs were probably more challenging for translators?
- 9) How is the relationship between the frequency of a procedure and its efficacy interpretable?

2. Literature Review

2.1. Literary-religious texts

Literary-religious texts pose great difficulties to translators due to the fact that they are steeply rooted in the source-text culture. That is why Weissbort and Eysteinnsson (2006) attach paramount importance to the idea that translators of sacred texts should inevitably possess profound cultural knowledge.

Another challenge faced by translators of religious texts is that lexical items embedded in such texts usually have “multiple meanings” (Afridi 2009: 21). Under such circumstances, referring to comprehensive dictionaries and exegetic texts can be thought of as a feasible solution. RBTs in general, and Qur’anic terms, in particular, as is confirmed by Abdelwali (2007: 7), can be effectively rendered into English if there could be found “bilingual dictionaries” precisely documenting different meanings of Arabic lexical items and explain “the range of contexts” wherein such terms occur.

2.2. Previous studies

The *Holy Qur’an* is considered by Muslims to be the greatest religious-literary book of all time. In Persian language, classic literary works by Sa’di, Molavi, and Hafiz are ranked among the top-ten greatest literary-religious texts. As the order of the lexical items ‘literary’ and ‘religious’ show, the *Holy Qur’an* is primarily a religious book which is considered to be a great literary work, as well, while the mentioned Persian literary works are first and foremost literary works deeply rooted in the *Holy Qur’an*. Due to the limitation of space, only a limited number of studies were selected to be reviewed—those dealing with *the Gulistan* and/or *the Qur’an* which focused on the frequency and/or efficacy of procedures.

Akbar Khorrami (2004), in his thesis, focused on the second chapter of *the Gulistan* and identified that there were no consistency in resorting to specific procedures of rendering CSIs. Ordudari (2006), concentrating on the proper name allusions, mentions that the most frequently employed strategy of rendering the PNs (preserving the exact graphological and phonological form of the name) could not be considered as an effective one.

Focusing on CSIs in the series *Friends*, Zhao (2009) reached the same conclusion as Orudari and pointed out that ‘frequency’ and ‘efficacy’ of a procedure do not correlate—in his study, the relation was found to be that of opposite.

Pahlevannezhad and Shirinzade (2010) concentrated on three translations of ten stories randomly selected from *the Gulistan* (i.e., “Rehatsek (2004), Eastwick (1979) and Ross (1890)”). The researchers’ findings revealed that the most frequently used procedure was “obligatory explicitation” (p. 129).

Similarly, Babapoore (2014) worked on *the Gulistan* and its three translations by Gladwin (1808), Eastwick (1852) and Arnold (1899) through applying Klaudy's (2004) model “to investigate aspects of the explicitation hypothesis”. He finally realized that “obligatory explicitation is the most common strategy used by the three translators” (p. ii). The results are absolutely in line with that of Pahlevannezhad and Shirinzade (2010).

Moradi and Mohammadsadeghi (2014) explored the procedures used in rendering merely 52 CSIs in English translations of *the Qur'an* (Shakir 1985, Yusuf Ali 1996, & Pickthall 1996). The most regularly employed strategy was (i.e., literal translation), was realized by them to be the best procedure. They provided no justification for their claim.

Nazari Robati (2015) worked on one single RBT “Jilbab”. The word is mentioned in *the Holy Qur'an*. She totally investigated sixty four English and Persian translations of the RBT (12 in English and 54 in Persian). She employed Davies’ (2003) taxonomy for analyzing the data. The model included seven procedures ‘addition, preservation, creation, omission, globalization, transformation, and localization’. In general, the researcher realized that male translators showed great tendencies to employ “localization”, while female translators were more inclined to the two procedures of “addition” and “globalization” (p. 64). Nazari Robati (2015) did not focus on the issue of efficacy of translation procedures.

Exploring the way Muslims rendered *the Holy Qur'an* into English, Afrouz (2019: 1) found that “translator’s religious background” did not have a key role in adopting particular translation procedures of translating RBTs. The researcher found that none of the translators consistently resorted to one single procedure in rendering all items.

As far as the researcher knows, no study was yet conducted to be sharply dedicated to the study of RBTs in the classical Persian literature. Due to the significance of the issue, the present study was carried out to fill the research gap.

3. Method

3.1. Material

The current study is a corpus-based descriptive research focusing on Sa‘di’s *the Gulistan* and its two English translations by Eastwick (1880) and Burton (1888). *The Gulistan* was selected as the material since it is considered as a great literary-religious masterpiece in Persian and possesses a fairly high position in the world’s literature. The main reason, however, was that *the Gulistan* replete with RBTs due to the fact that Iran had been gradually Islamized from Sassanid era on (Zandjani 2019).

3.2. Models

Newmark's (1988: 81-93) model, considered as one of the earliest frameworks for dealing with cultural concepts, included: transference, functional equivalent, naturalization, cultural equivalent, recognized translation, componential analysis, synonym, paraphrase, through translation, modulation, compensation, descriptive equivalent, couplets and notes. Another related taxonomy was presented by Hervey and Heggins (1992: 28) which included five procedures: cultural transplantation, exoticism, calque, communicative translation, and cultural borrowing. The last model in the twentieth century, presented for coping with the issue of cultural terms, was probably that of Mailhac (1996: 140-141) whose classification covered nine procedures: literal translation, cultural borrowing, lexical creation, combination of procedures, definition, deliberate omission, compensation, footnote, and cultural substitution.

In the early twenty first century, other theoreticians presented their own framework. Ivir (2003: 117) proposed the following seven procedures to fill in the cultural gaps between the two languages involved in translation: "substitution" (i.e., replacing a culture-bound SL term with its culture-specific correspondent in the TL), "borrowing" (i.e., directly transferring the SL term), "definition and paraphrase" (i.e., providing either intra- or extra-textual notes for the SL term), "lexical creation" (i.e., coining a new term in the TL as an equivalent for the SL lexical item), "literal translation" (i.e., providing each SL term of a phrase with one single TL term), "omission" (i.e., leaving the SL term untranslated) and "addition" (i.e., providing equivalents for underlying sense-components of a SL term through componential analysis).

Ivir's taxonomy is a model recently employed frequently by researchers working on literary/religious texts (e.g., Alizadeh 2010, Hajiannejad and Salman 2017, Nazari and Jalali Habibabadi 2018). Therefore, his model is selected to be used in the current paper for meticulous analysis of the data.

3.3. Procedure

The following steps were taken to carry out the study:

1. Persian RBTs in Sa'di's *the Gulistan* and their English equivalents were identified;
2. RBTs were classified into nine categories;
3. Procedures employed in rendering each RBT was identified;
4. It was explored whether each translator was consistent in applying a certain procedure or he changed it in different occasions;
5. The distribution of untranslated RBTs in various categories was specified;
6. It was attempted to answer the research questions based on the findings presented via tables and figures.

4. Results and Discussion

4.1. RBTs, their equivalents and procedures

The present study aimed at exploring the challenge imposed by RBTs in translating Sa'di's *Gulistan* into English. This end in view, first, Persian RBTs and their equivalents were extracted from the corpus understudy and procedures employed in their rendition were

identified. Due to the space limitation, just a number of selected RBTs were presented in Table 1.

Note that in the column of ‘RBTs’, the first and the second number within parentheses respectively signify the number of the chapter and the story wherefrom the RBT were extracted. Moreover, procedures are abbreviated in the following way: substitution (Sub), borrowing (Bor), definition and paraphrase (Def), lexical creation (LC), literal translation (LT), omission (Omi) and addition (Adi). The Persian words are transliterated based on the UN System (1972) Retrieved from <http://ee.www.ee/transliteration>.

Table 1 A selection of RBTs, their equivalents and procedures

Translator RBTs	Burton	Eastwick
(15-7) ائمه /ae‘meh/	illustrious man Sub	great man Sub
(17-1) قبله /qebleh/	Qiblah Bor	place Sub
(29-3) مصلا /moṣallā/	Masalla Def	Musalla Bor
(12-5) سماع /samā‘/		‘mid dance and song Sub
(16-3) موسي /mūsā/	Moses Sub	the prophet Musa Def
(20-7) تسبيح /tasbīḥ/	rosary Sub	rosaries Sub
(7-1) حوران /ḥūrān/	huris Sub	Houris Sub
(4-4) ملاحده /molāḥedeh/	unbeliever Sub	heretic Sub
(23-1) صدقه /ṣadaqeh/	oblation Sub	Omi

The term ‘سماع’ /samā‘/ signifies “hearing” (During and Sellheim 2021), and “[t]he practice of *samā‘* is clearly an extension of the more basic practice of *dhikr* (‘remembrance [of God]’ or ritual chant and praise)” (Avery 2004: 4). *The Holy Qur’an* “prescribes the constant remembrance and praise of God, and all these ritual activities have as their source the recitation of *the Qur’an*” (ibid.). As Anvari (2000) points out, the word ‘سماع’ /samā‘/ is a special kind of “singing” that influences the hearer greatly, but it can also refer to the party wherein such a singing occurs (p. 214). It should be noticed, however, that this kind of singing is exclusive to the Sufi. While the RBT is entirely omitted by Burton, Eastwick referred to two sense components “dance” and “song”.

The lexical item ‘ملاحده’ /molāḥedeh/ refers to “the followers of Hassan Sabbah and that of the so-called religion Ismailia” (Anvari 2000:189). None of the equivalents chosen by the translators (i.e., ‘heretic’ and ‘unbeliever’) could convey the senses underlying the term.

The term ‘حوران’ /ḥūrān/ is the plural form of ‘حور’ /ḥūr/ which refers to the “white skinned” beautiful damsels or “virgins of paradise” whose large beautiful eyes have “deep black” pupils (McAuliffe 2001: 456). Burton and Eastwick transliterated the RBT and treated

it as an English term and made it plural just by adding a plural ‘s’—thus employing ‘naturalization’. The big question is ‘how are the TT readership supposed to recognize such a process?’

The RBT ‘قبله’ /qebleh/ refers to the direction towards which Muslims perform their prayers—it is towards Ka’ba in Mecca. Burton and Ross preferred to transliterate the RBT and leave their readers in the dark. Employing informative notes of any kind could be a possible way out of this predicament. Eastwick’s equivalent (i.e., place) is too general to be considered as an adequate one.

The word ‘موسى’ /mūsā/ refers to Prophet Moses—the equivalent opted for by Burton. In such cases where there is a naturalized equivalent for the original PN, it is unjustifiable to use merely provide the TT readership with a transliterated version. Eastwick accompanied his transliteration with the word ‘prophet’. Eastwick was consistent in dealing with names. In other instances, ‘فرعون’ /fero’n/, ‘مصطفى’ /moṣṭafā/, and ‘هامان’ /hāmān/, he had first used the transliterated version (i.e., Fira’n, Mustafa, and Haman) in the main text and then provided a footnote. His footnotes were quite informative. As in the case of ‘هامان’ /hāmān/, Eastwick (1852) pointed out in the related footnote: “the only Haman we know being the favorite of Ahasuerus. However . . . Haman appears to be the vazir of Pharaoh, and therefore only of the same name as our Haman, not the same person” (p. 118).

The RBT ‘صدقه’ /ṣadaqeh/ is an offering in the way of Allah. Burton used the equivalent ‘oblation’ which denotes “something that is offered as a religious sacrifice” (extracted from the online Cambridge Dictionary: <https://dictionary.cambridge.org>). The English term is actually a ‘cultural equivalent’ substituted by the original term.

The term ‘مصلا’ /moṣallā/ refers to a great mosque in which Muslims gather to perform congregational prayer on Fridays and some special Islamic festivals. As this lexical item is an RBT rooted in Islamic culture, most of the English TT readers would be normally unfamiliar with its underlying meaning; therefore, the mere use of the procedure ‘transference’ (employed by Eastwick) undoubtedly does not suffice. Burton was the only translator who employed footnote.

4.2. Answering the research questions

The percentage of procedures is illustrated in Figure 1.

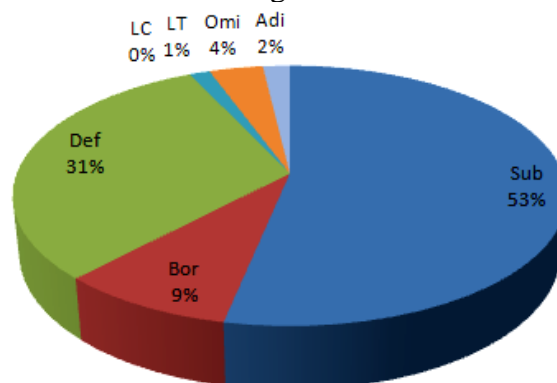


Figure 1 General distribution of procedures

The frequency of procedures employed by each translator is illustrated in Figure 2.

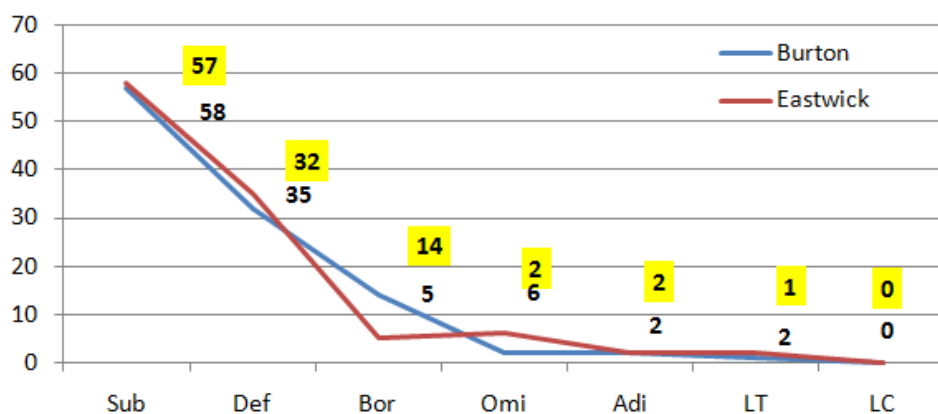


Figure 2 Frequency of procedures

Table 2 presents the percentage of the seven procedures employed by each translator.

Table 2 Percentage of procedures

Procedures Translators	Sub	Def	Bor	Omi	Adi	LT	LC
Burton	53%	29%	13%	2%	2%	1%	0%
Eastwick	55%	31%	5%	5%	2%	2%	0%

As an answer to the first research question (i.e., *What are the procedures used by the two translators? How is the distribution of procedures?*), Figure 1 reveals that ‘substitution’ (by 53%) and ‘definition’ (by 31%) are the most frequently used procedures by the two translators, while ‘lexical creation’ was the least employed one.

Figure 2 and Table 2 confirmed that there was a sort of similarity in the tendencies of the two translators in employing the seven procedures.

As an answer to the second RQ (i.e., consistency in employing procedures), it was found that translators, depending on the situation, altered their procedures and did not prefer the consistent usage of one single procedure for rendering all RBTs embedded in the work.

Concerning the third RQ (i.e., the issue of consistency in equivalent choice), only one case of such inconsistency was detected. While the RBT ‘حلال’ /ḥalāl/ (i.e., lawful / based on Islamic law or *Shari‘a*), firstly occurred in Story 36-Chapter 2 of *the Gulistan*, was translated by Eastwick as ‘lawful’, the same translator rendered it as ‘takeable’ in the second appearance of the word in Story 27-Chapter 3.

As an answer to the fourth research question, it was found that RBTs appeared in the corpus understudy could be classified under the following categories: Concrete Religious Concepts (CRC), Abstract Religious Concepts (ARC), Location (L), Religious Labels and Attributions (RLA), Religious Activities (RA), Religious Times (RT), Religious Verdicts (RV), Supernatural Religious Concepts (SRC), Proper Names (PNs). However, due to the space limitation, just a number of selected RBTs were presented in Table 3. Transliterations and equivalents are respectively presented within slashes // and brackets [].

Table 3 Classification of RBTs

CRC	(23-1) /ṣadaqeh/ صدقه؛ [rosary] (12-2) /moṣṣhā/ مسحی؛ [rosary] (20-7) /tasbiḥ/ تسبیح [offering]
ARC	(20-7) /nazr/ نذر؛ [reliance on God] (47-2) /tavakkol/ توکل؛ [piety] (16-1) /taqvā/ تقوی [alms] (20-7) /zakāt/ زکات؛ [vows]
L	(29-3) /moṣallā/ مصلّا؛ [Ka'ba] (17-1) /kabeh/ کعبه؛ [great mosque] (10-1) /jām'e/ جامع [mosque]
RLA	[a descendant of Imam Ali] (33-1) /alavī/ علوی؛ [devotee] (12-1) /parsā/ پارسا؛ [muezzin] (13-4) /moa'zzen/ مؤذن؛ [a learned man] (2-3) /faqīh/ گیسو بافتن؛ [ablutions] (5-2) /ṭahārat/ طهارت؛ [twist one's ringlets] (32-1) /gisūbāftan/ سماع؛ [a special singing party] (12-5) /samā'/
RA	[Ramadan] (40-1) /ramazān/ رمضان؛ [Festival of sacrifice] (32-1) /eideāzā/ عید اضحی [the night of Qadr](43-8) /shabeqadr/ شب قدر
PNs	(2-3) /fero'n/ فرعون؛ [Prophet Jonas] (4-1) /jūnes/ یونس؛ [Qarun] (18-1) /qarūn/ قارون؛ [Pharaoh] (20-7) /ṣāleḥ/ صالح؛ [Prophet Salih]
SRC	(9-2) /kerāmāt/ کرامات؛ [the beautiful women of paradise] (7-1) /ḥūrān/ حوران [miracles]
RV	(17-5) /harām/ حرام؛ [Halal] (36-2) /ḥalāl/ حلال؛ [disgusting] (20-2) /makrūh/ مکروه [forbidden by Islam]

Table 4 demonstrates the frequencies (F) and percentages (P) of procedures opted for rendering RBTs in each category:

Table 4 Distribution of procedures in each category

Procedures Categories		Sub	Bor	Def	LC	LT	Omi	Adi
CRC	F	16	2	2			2	
	P	73%	9%	9%			9%	
ARC	F	11	1	4			2	
	P	61%	6%	22%			11%	
L	F	10	2	6				2
	P	50%	10%	30%				10%
RLA	F	35	5	12		2		
	P	63%	9%	24%		4%		
RA	F	12		8		1	1	
	P	55%		36%		4%	5%	
RT	F	1	1	4				
	P	16.5%	16.5%	67%				
RV	F	10		2			2	
	P	72%		14%			14%	
PNs	F	16	7	29			2	2
	P	29%	12%	52%			3.5%	3.5%
SRC	F	4						
	P	100%						

As for the fifth RQ, (i.e., distribution of procedures in each category), Table 4 revealed that, except for the categories of RT and PNs, ‘substitution’ is the most recurred procedure used in rendering RBTs. ‘Definition’ is by far the most repeatedly used procedure in translating items classified under the two categories of RT and PNs.

‘Lexical creation’ was never used by translators in rendering any RBT in any category. ‘Literal translation’ was only used for categories of ‘Religious Labels and Attributions’ and ‘Religious Activities’. Interestingly, while ‘substitution’ and ‘definition’ were used in translating almost all nine categories of RBTs, ‘addition’, ‘literal translation’, and ‘lexical creation’ together were used for translating items of only four categories.

As an answer to the sixth RQ (i.e., ‘Does the type of RBT influence the type of procedure used by translators?’), Table 4 demonstrated that not all RBTs classified under a certain category are rendered via resorting to the same procedures. Therefore, the type of RBT cannot be considered as a key factor influencing the type of procedure selected by translators.

The distribution of untranslated RBTs in each category is presented in table 5.

Table 5 Frequency and Percentage of untranslated RBTs

Translators Categories		Burton	Eastwick	Total
CRC	F		2	2
	P		33%	22%
ARC	F	1	1	2
	P	33.3%	17%	22%
RA	F	1		1
	P	33.3%		12%
RV	F		2	2
	P		33%	22%
PNs	F	1	1	2
	P	33.3%	17%	22%
Total	F	3	6	
	P	33%	67%	9

As an answer to the seventh RQ, Table 5 illustrates that Eastwick left twice as many RBTs untranslated as Burton did. As far as the distribution of untranslated items in each category is concerned, it is revealed that no RBT belonging to the following categories is left untranslated by the translators: L, RLA, RT, and SRC. The highest amount of untranslated RBTs occurred in the categories CRC (22%), RV (22%) and ARC (22%). Therefore, concerning the eighth RQ, Table 5 implies that translators experienced more challenges in rendering RBTs related to ‘Concrete Religious Concepts’, ‘Religious Verdicts’ and ‘Abstract Religious Concepts’.

Table 6 demonstrates the frequency and percentage of the ‘footnotes’ being used for rendering RBTs in each category.

Table 6 Distribution of 'footnotes' in each category

Categories		CRC	ARC	L	RLA	RA	RT	RV	SRC	PNs	Total
Translators											
Burton	Frequency		2	2	2		3	1		12	22
	Percentage		9%	9%	9%		14%	4%		55%	49%
Eastwick	Frequency			4			1	1		17	23
	Percentage			18%			4%	4%		74%	51%

The use of footnotes can indicate that translators most probably deemed it an urgent necessity to considerably provide the TT readership with clarifying information concerning the RBT. In other words, when translators face such challenging items requiring explanatory information, they show tendencies to resort to 'footnotes' which have probably the capacity to convey detailed informative notes to the readers. Most of the footnotes were provided for the PNs (i.e., 55% and 74% for the case of Burton and Eastwick, respectively). The reason translators deemed such a category a potential challenge for their TT readers underlines the fact that religious proper-names have allusive references which can be conveyed to the readers and via explanatory footnotes. It should, however, be noted that it does not mean that when translators did not provide footnotes for RBTs classified under a specific category, s/he found them absolutely easy-to-understand items. In fact, failing to provide informative notes for challenging ST items, in general, and RBTs in particular, can, in some cases, indicate translators' lack of religious-cultural knowledge. It is, actually, difficult to exactly pin point the cases where either providing or not providing items with notes denote their challenging or unproblematic nature of these categories. Therefore, we just limited our interpretation to the category of PNs for which we could find a probably justifiable reason for our claim.

As for the last question, when we consider the total number of procedures employed by the two translators in general, no absolute correlation was found between the frequency of a procedure and its efficacy. The most frequently used procedure (i.e., substitution) could not prove to be the most efficient one. However, when it comes to less efficient procedure of 'omission', its low occurrence in the two translations partially confirms a sort of correlation between the frequency of a procedure and its efficacy. To phrase it differently, while we do not assertively put forward that the most frequently employed procedure is the most efficient one, we found that one of the least frequently used procedures could also be classified among the least efficient ones. Therefore, no strong or deterministic claim could be made in this regard.

5. Conclusion

The present study focused on Sa'di's *Gulistan* and its English translations by Edward Eastwick (1880), Richard Francis Burton (1888) to investigate the procedure used by them in rendering religious-bound terms classified into nine categories.

As far as consistency in resorting to specific procedures was concerned, the results of the present study confirmed that of Khorrami (2004) and Afrouz (2019) indicating that none of the two translators showed consistency in resorting to one particular procedure.

Composing the original literary-religious text, the ST writer had undoubtedly counted on the shared cultural knowledge with the ST readers. But the TT was naturally prepared for a

different readership who did not share the same cultural-religious background. Therefore, providing footnotes containing detailed explanations for the TT readers seemed unavoidable. Interestingly, both translators of *the Gulistan* resorted to footnotes in translating about 22 RBTs.

Furthermore, concerning the relationship between the frequency of a procedure and its efficacy, the findings of the study could neither entirely refute nor totally confirm the results achieved by Ordudari (2006), Zhao (2009), and Moradi and Mohammadsadeghi (2014).

Finally, it was found that translators of *the Gulistan* experienced more challenges in rendering RBTs related to ‘concrete religious concepts’, ‘proper names’, ‘religious verdicts’ and ‘abstract religious concepts’. As an implication, therefore, potentially prospective translators of *the Gulistan* would be highly recommended to boost their knowledge in the aforementioned categories before trying their hands at rendering this world-famous classical Persian masterpiece.

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In SKASE Journal of Translation and Interpretation [online]. 2022, vol. 15, no. 1 [cit. 2022-07-01]. Available online at http://www.skase.sk/Volumes/JTI22/pdf_doc/01.pdf. ISSN 1336-7811.