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Exploring the Translator's Solutions to the Translation of Conversational Implicatures from English into Persian: the Case of Tolkien's *the Lord of the Rings*

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Abstract

The present study aimed to examine the translator's solutions to the translation of conversational implicatures from English into Persian. To do so, 120 conversational implicatures were extracted from the novel *the Lord of the Rings* (Tolkien, 1954) and classified based on Grice's (1975) categorization of Maxims, including quality, quantity, relevance, and manner. Mur Duenas's (2003) taxonomy of translation strategies was used as a valid framework to find out the translation strategies the translator employed to transfer the 120 conversational implicatures. Furthermore, the most /least frequent translation strategies applied by the translator were investigated. At the end, the effectiveness of the source text (ST)-and target text (TT)-oriented strategies in transferring the same meaning of implicatures to the target text was determined. As the results indicate, the translator employed five out of six of Mur Duenas's translation strategies, namely TL cultural cognate, SL cultural and linguistic borrowing, replacement of the SL cultural reference by explanation, TL cultural reference suppression, and TL cultural reference literal translation, of which SL cultural and linguistic borrowing and replacement of the SL cultural reference by explanation were the most/least frequently-used strategies. Moreover, the translator preferred to employ the ST-oriented strategies rather than the TT-oriented ones that referred to the employment of the ST-oriented strategy for the whole text. Based on Grice's theory, the researcher concluded that the ST-oriented strategies were more effective than the TT-oriented ones and helped the translator to produce comprehensible translations and convey the meaning of implicatures to the target readers.

Keywords: Pragmatics; conversational implicature; Grice's maxims

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1. Introduction

1.1. Background

Meanings are the most important characteristics of languages that should be carefully discovered because languages are used by people to communicate and express their intentions accurately and impressively (Al-Shawi & Mahadi, 2017). More often than not, it is difficult to understand a meaning of a word due to that it might imply more than one meaning. The exact meaning of a word or phrase is understood when it is used in the context. That is to say, communication is not established only through words or expressions that express "beliefs, feelings, identities, events," but through "a way of pointing to or presupposing or bringing into the present context beliefs, feelings, identities" (Guessabi, 2013, p. 225).

When transferring the meaning of the word, it may be affected by many factors, such as the situation or the context in which the word is used. Thus, the speaker may convey additional information that contains some pragmatic meanings, which are not exactly expressed by a specific word or expression in the utterance. This alludes to the implicit meaning of the word which is known as *implicature*, a subcategory of pragmatics. Gazdar (1979) implies that implicature refers to "what is suggested in an utterance, even though neither are expressed or implied by that utterance" (p. 49).

The role of the translator becomes increasingly important when he has to cope with implicatures. In other words, the translator faces a complex task because of the mediating role he plays between two cultures. The

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translator, as Cenac (2009) states, should discover and reduce cultural differences, because differences in cultures create serious problems than differences in linguistic structures. An expert translator, as Chifane (2009) argues, needs to have "a wide perspective upon the organization of the language as a system and be constantly aware of all the levels" when transferring implicatures (p.19). It is rather to say, transferring implicatures are more challenging than translating forms or semantics for the translator.

During the process of translating from one language into another, the translator, as Faghih and Abbasi (2016, p. 2026) discuss, encounters some problems one of which is how to translate "the implied meanings of the utterances between two speakers" adequately because it is not enough to know the meaning of the word expressed and the combination of them (Abdellah, 2004) to understand the utterance. The main intention should be to communicate with the recipient.

The context in which the utterance appears is a matter of importance that should be taken into account by the translator. Unfortunately, most translators are unable to diagnose the context of the utterance due to lack of pragmatic competence that is defined as "the ability to use language effectively in order to achieve a specific purpose and to understand language in context" (Thomas, 1983, p 92). This deficiency of the translator might be due to his limited knowledge of the target culture and language. In this context, Machali (2012) implies that "on working at the pragmatic level a

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translator often has to refer to the (immediate) context in order that his/her translation can be understood by the target language (TL) readers" (p. 77).

The other problem arises when the translator is incapable of choosing an adequate translation strategy for the utterance. It is directly related to strategic competence that, according to PACTE Group (2000), refers to "all the individual procedures, conscious and unconscious, verbal and non-verbal, used to solve the problems found during the translation process" (p.102). This shortage might be due to the limited knowledge of translators about how to employ translation strategies.

In recent years, implicatures have been paid attention by some scholars. For example, for Baker (1992), the emergence of implicature in text studies points to the important notion that should be taken into consideration. According to Baker, implicature is "what the speaker means or implies rather than what s/he literally says" (p. 223) that refers to *a cooperative principle*. According to Grice (1975), the cooperative principle follows four *rules* or *maxims* that are known as *conversational maxims,* including quantity, quality, relevance, and manner. The cooperative principle provides the opportunity for interlocutors to derive implicatures (Janssens & Schaeken, 2016).

1.2. Concept of pragmatics

An inquiry into pragmatics has brought it up as an area of study in which such an important issue has been paid attention and the reason for using

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sentences has been studied (Stalnaker, 1972). He defines pragmatics as "the study of language in relation to the users of language" (p. 380). According to Hatim (1998), there are three types of pragmatics, including speech act, implied meaning, politeness and implicature. As the focus of the present study is on the last type, it is discussed in the next section in brief.

1.2.1. Implicature

Grice (1975) was the first to use the term *implicature*. Brown and Yule (1983) imply that implicature refers to "what a speaker can imply, suggest, or mean, as distinct from what the speaker literally says" (p. 31). They provide a full definition of implicature as follows:

> Implicatures are pragmatic aspects of meaning and have certain identifiable characteristics. They are partially derived from the conventional or literal meaning of an utterance, produced in a specific context which is shared by the speaker and the hearer, and depend on a recognition by the speaker and the hearer of the Cooperative Principle and its maxims. (p. 33)

According to Grice, there are two types of implicature: *conventional* and *conversational* implicatures. As conventional implicature is not the subject of our discussion, this is enough to just rely on a definition of it. Conventional implicature is determined by "the conventional meaning of the words used" (p.44).

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The type that is of great importance in discourse analysis is the concept of conversational implicature that is resulted from "a general principle of conversation plus a number of maxims which speakers will normally obey" (Brown & Yule, 1983, p. 31). In this context, Baker (1992, p. 227) implies that regardless of observing the maxims, "a language user can deliberately flout a maxim and in doing so produce" what is called by Grice a conversational implicature and by Levinson *a standard implicature*. The general principle of conversation points to *the cooperative principle* which Grice (1975) defines it as "make your conversational contribution such as is required, at the stage at which it occurs, by the accepted purpose or direction of the talk exchange in which you are engaged" (p. 45).

According to Blum-Kulka (1981), within the cross-cultural area of pragmatics, an assumption that has drawn attention is that there might be a possibility of making predictions about the plausibility or of recreating the same degree of indirectness in another language by establishing a series of rules that influence textual competence in the use of any language.

1.3. Grice's rules or maxims

Janssens and Schaeken (2016) discuss that a cooperative principle "allows interlocutors to derive implicatures" (p. 1). Corporative principles, as Baker (1992) mentions, produce implied meaning in association with a number of maxims. According to Grice (1975, p. 45), these maxims are as follows:

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1. The maxim of quantity: Make your contribution as informative as is required (for the current purposes of the exchange). Do not make your contribution more informative than is required.
2. The maxim of quality: Do not say what you believe to be false. Do not say that for which you lack adequate evidence.
3. The maxim of relevance: be relevant.
4. The maxim of manner: be perspicuous and avoid obscurity of expression and of ambiguity. Be brief (avoid unnecessary prolixity) and be orderly.

Hatim (1998) implies that "the Maxims may be obeyed or disturbed" (p. 207). He further states that disturbance can appear in "the form of blatant *breaking* of a Maxim, *violation* or *flouting*. Jia (2008) argues that flouting occurs "when one or several maxims are absent during communication processes" (p. 89). That is to say, if the speaker follows the rules, the maxims will be observed; otherwise the maxims will be flouted.

The maxim of quantity is flouted when the speaker gives too much or too less information that makes his/her contribution more or less informative than is required.

"How bright your garden looks!" said Gandalf.

"Yes," said Bilbo. (p. 25)

The maxim of quality is flouted when the speaker is not able to represent literally what he/she means. It is rather to say, the speaker says something that seems to be blatantly untrue.

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"Did you hear that, Merry? That was an insult, if you like," said Frodo as he shut the door on her.

"It was a compliment," said Merry Brandybuck (p. 39)

Flouting the maxim of relation occurs when the listener responses irrelevantly to the topic. In other words, the listener proves the speaker with unrelated information.

"What do you really know about – about my business; and how do you know it?"

"The lesson in caution has been well learned," said Strider with a grim smile. (p. 166)

Flouting the maxim of manner occurs when the speaker's expression is obscure due to its lack of clarity.

"And what will that be, pray?" said Frodo.

"No more than you can afford," answered Strider with a slow smile. (p. 163)

1.4. Mur Duenas' taxonomy of translation strategies

The term *strategy* refers to "a kind of tactic or a planned way used by an individual, organization, or country to achieve a particular purpose" (Abdi, 2019, p. 8). According to Krings (1986), translation strategies are "translator's potentially conscious plans for solving concrete translation problems in the framework of a concrete translation task" (p. 18). Translation strategies, as Molina and Hurtado Albir (2002) imply, provide

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the opportunity for the translator to choose an appropriate solution for a translation unit. In this context Newmark (1988) argues that "translation procedures are used for sentences and the smaller units of language" (p. 81).

From taxonomies of translation strategies (see for example, Vázquez Ayora, 1977; Baker, 1992; and Hurtado Albir, 1999), Mur Duenas (2003, pp. 74-79) proposed a brief but an effective taxonomy that was used as a valid criterion to determine translation strategies employed by the translator to transfer implicatures. Her taxonomy includes six translation strategies as follows:

1. TL cultural cognate: is the use of a cognate lexical item, linguistic expression, or concept in the TL to produce an equivalent effect on the target readers.

Example:

"How long have you been eavesdropping?"

"There ain't no eaves at Bag End." (p. 69)

"از کی فال گوش ایستاده ای؟"

"ما توی بک اند فال گیر نداریم." (ص. 89)

2. SL cultural and linguistic borrowing: transferring the SL word directly to the TL.

Example:

"Have you often been to Rivendell?" said Frodo.

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"I have. I dwelt there once, and still I return when I may. There my heart is; but it is not my fate to sit in peace, even in the fair house of Elrond," said Strider. (p. 202)

فرودو پرسيد:" تو خيلي زياد در ريوندل بود ه اي؟"

استرايدر گفت: "بله خيلي زياد، يك زماني آنجا ساكن بودم و هنوز هم اگر بتوانم برمي گردم آنجا . دل من آنجا مانده؛ ولي تقدير

اين نيست كه روي آرامش ببينم، حتي در خانة زيباي الروند." (ص. 271)

3. SL cultural borrowing plus explanation: the use of the SL word in the TL and provide it with some explanation. No example of using this strategy by the translator was found.

4. Replacement of the SL cultural reference by explanation: the translator decides to omit the SL word and use some explanation instead.

Example:

"Who invented the stories anyway? Take dragons now, said Sam"

"No thank 'ee," said Ted" (p. 44)

سم گفت: "فكر ميكنى چه كسى اين همه داستان را از خودش دراورده؟ مثل همين اژدها."

تد گفت: " نه تورو خدا دست بردار." (ص. 61)

5. TL cultural reference suppression: the translator prefers to omit the cultural reference because it may mislead the reader.

Example:

"I know these fields and this gate!' he said. This is Bamfurlong, old Farmer Maggot's land.

"One trouble after another!" said Frodo. (p. 91)

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"من این مزرعه ها و این دروازه را می شناسم !ما توی زمین بابا دهقان ماگوت هستیم ."
فرودو گفت:"دردسر پشت دردسر." (ص. 146)

6. TL cultural reference literal translation: this strategy is divided into two groups: the first group includes those cultural references that "are literally translated and whose illocutionary and perlocutionary acts are transferred" to make the text coherent for the readers. The next group encompasses those references that are transferred but the text may not cohere for the readers.

Example:

"I thought they were all destroyed in the flood," said Merry.

"You cannot destroy Ringwraiths like that. The power of their master is in them, and they stand or fall by him," said Gandalf (p. 273)

مری گفت: "من فکر کردم همشان توی سیل نابود شده اند."
گندالف گفت:" نمی توان اشباح حلقه را بدین ترتیب نابود کرد قدرت اربابشان در آنهاست وبرخواستن و سقوطشان بسته به اوست." (ص. 336)

1.5. The present study

Gricean (1975) conversational principles provide translators with a useful framework within which they are able to analyze implicatures and produce translations that are oriented towards the structure of the source text (ST) by maintaining the cultural reference of the ST in the target text (TT). Under this framework, the present study aimed to investigate the translation strategies employed by the translator in the translation of implicatures. It

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also attempted to probe which translation strategies were more helpful for better understanding of implicature. The findings of the present study provide helpful recommendations for translation students, trainee translators, and translation teachers.

In order to achieve the objectives of the present study, the following questions were answered:

1. Which translation strategies proposed by Mur Duenas (2003) did the translator employ to transfer implicatures?

2. Which strategies were more successful, the source-oriented or the target-oriented ones?

2. Method

2.1. Corpus

The corpus of the present study included the English version of the first and second books of *The Fellowship of the Ring* one of Tolkien's (1954) *The Lord of the Rings* book series that encompassed 22 chapters and published by Houghton Mifflin Company. This book was translated by Reza Alizadeh (2002) and published by Rozaneh Publishing Company. *The Lord of the Rings* was a high fantasy novel that was written by one of the leading British writers. Since this novel included conversations between different characters and covered different types of Gricean Maxims, including

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quality, quantity, relevance, and manner; the researcher found it as a valuable source of the data that could fulfill the needs of the present study. Alizadeh is not only the first to translate the book *The Lord of the Rings* but also one of the famous translators in Iran. It should be noted that the translation that was made by Alizadeh was the only Persian version of the novel *The Lord of the Rings* and no other Persian translation of the book was found at the present time.

2.2. Data collection and analysis

To conduct the study and to gather data, the following procedures were established: first of all, the original book was read line by line to extract maxims that have been flouted and caused different kinds of implicature; that is, the data encompassing the features of implicature. All implicatures (N = 120) were classified on the basis of four types of Gricean maxims, including quality, quantity, relevance, and manner. Then, the Persian translations of these implicatures were found and a comparison was made between each implicature and its Persian translation to examine the strategies the translator employed for transferring the 120 implicatures according to Mur Duenas' (2003) taxonomy of translation strategies. This led to determine the overall strategy of the translator for the whole text and which strategies were more successful, the source-oriented or the target-oriented ones for transferring the 120 implicatures based on Grice's (1975) model. Moreover, the frequencies and percentages of translation strategies

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applied by the translator were illustrated in tabulation forms, and the relation between the types of strategies and the number of them was evaluated by using Chi-Square test (*X2*).

3. Results

Table 1 shows the number of implicatures (*N* = 120) extracted from the first and second books of *The Fellowship of the Ring* one of Tolkien's (1954) *The Lord of the Rings* book series which were flouted entirely based on Grice's (1975) theory.

Table 1
Frequencies and percentages of flouted maxims

Types of Maxims	Frequency	Percentage
Quantity	58	48.0
Quality	16	13.0
Relevance	39	33.0
Manner	7	6.0
Total	120	100.0

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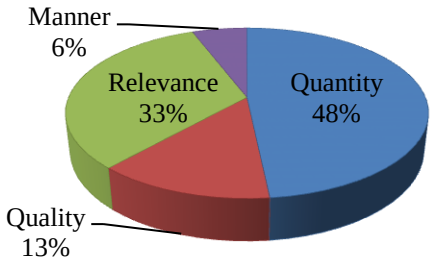


Figure 1

The type and percentages of flouted maxims

Table 2 indicates that the translator employed five out of six of Mur Duenas's (2003) translation strategies to transfer implicatures of which SL cultural and linguistic borrowing (n = 42) and replacement of the SL cultural reference by explanation (n = 7) were the most/least used strategies respectively.

Table 2

Frequencies and percentages of the type of translation strategies used by the translator for translating

Flouted Maxims

Microstrategies	Frequency	Percentage
SL cultural and linguistic borrowing	42	35.0
TL cultural reference literal translation	33	28.0
TL cultural cognate	24	20.0
TL cultural reference suppression	14	12.0
Replacement of the SL cultural reference by explanation	7	6.0
Total	120	100.0

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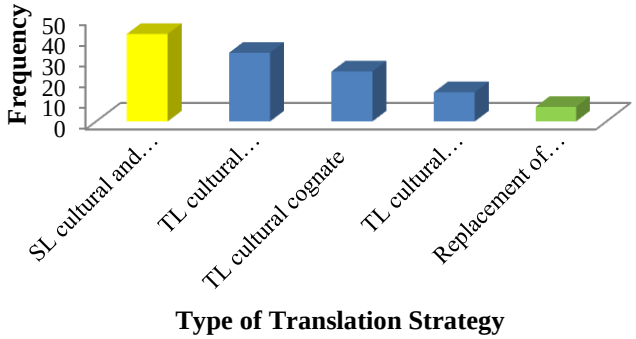


Figure 2
Translation strategies used by the translator for translating flouted maxims

Table 3 indicates the ST- and TT-oriented strategies included in the Mur Duenas's (2003) taxonomy of translation strategies.

Table 3
Frequencies and percentages of the ST- and TT- oriented strategies used by the translator for translating flouted maxims

ST-Oriented Strategies	*f*	%	TT-Oriented Strategies	*f*	%
SL cultural and linguistic borrowing	42	56.0	TL cultural cognate	24	53.0
TL cultural reference literal translation	33	44.0	TL cultural reference suppression	14	31.0
SL cultural borrowing plus explanation	0	00.0	Replacement of the SL cultural reference by explanation	7	16.0
Total	75	100.0	Total	45	100.0

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According to Table 3, the total number of ST-oriented strategies (*N* = 75) was higher than the total number of TT-oriented ones (*N* = 45).

3.1. Reliability test

The reliability of all scores given by the three raters, who were asked to assess the reliability of findings, was checked. To do so, the Interrater reliability test was calculated. Table 4 indicates correlation coefficient among the three raters.

Table 4

Summary of correlations between the three raters

Raters		*1*	*2*	*3*
1. Rater 1	*r*	1	.827	.793
2. Rater 2	*r*	.827	1	.679
3. Rater 3	*r*	.793	.679	1

Note. *r* = estimate of the Pearson product—moment correlation coefficient. Correlation is significant at **p* < .05, two-tailed.

As Table 4 illustrates, there is an acceptable correlation and a strong relation among the three raters. That is to say, the agreement among all raters is perfectly accurate. Moreover, the highest amount of correlation is

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between first and second raters (r = .827), and the lowest is between second and third raters (r = .679).

3.2. Chi-square test

The chi-square test (*X2*) is used "to analyze data that are reported in categories (Fraenkel et al., 2012, p. 238). In this regard, Lodico et al. (2006) imply that the *X2* provides the opportunity for the researcher to test observed and expected frequencies to see whether there is a true difference between them. Best and Kahn (2006) argue that the *X2* "is not a measure of the degree of relationship"; it is only applied to measure the probability that "some factor other than chance accounts for the apparent relationship" (p. 434). That is to say, the *X2* can be applied to evaluate the probability that the observed relationship resulted from the chance. Thus, the researcher ran the *X2* to see whether the relation between translation strategies and the number of them is significant.

Table 5

Summary of the chi-square test results for the type of translation strategies and the total number used by the translator

Types of Translation Strategies	*N*	*X2*	*df*	*p*
n				
5	120	1.14846	4	0.113491

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Note. *n*= the number of translation strategies; *N*= the total number of strategies used by the translator; X^2= Chi- square test; *df*= degrees of freedom; The sig value of *X2* is significant at $p < .05$.

As Table 5 shows, there is not a significant relationship between the type of translation strategies and the total number of them at the 0.05 level of significance ($p = .113$, $p > .05$). Hence, the null hypothesis is not rejected and it is accepted at the .05 level of significance.

4. Discussion

Grice (1975) argues that a conversation is made on the basis of the cooperative principle with the aim of understanding the difference between the semantic meaning and the speaker's meaning as well as finding which plays the main role in establishing communication. He further states that Maxims are rules that explain the meaning of implicature. In a sense, implicature is produced when the cooperative principle is flouted. Thus, the strategies the translator employs alongside the decisions he makes to transfer implicatures should be considered as a matter of great importance.

According to the results of the study, the translator employed five out of six strategies proposed by Mur Duenas (2003), including TL cultural cognate, SL cultural and linguistic borrowing, replacement of the SL cultural reference by explanation, TL cultural reference suppression, and TL cultural reference literal translation. The translator also employed the ST-oriented strategies in preference to the TT-oriented ones. This refers to the

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employment of the ST-oriented strategy for the whole text. Through the ST-oriented strategies, the translator showed his faithfulness to the ST. The same results derived from Faghih and Abbasi's (2016) study on the translation of implicatures. That is, the ST-oriented strategies, such as literal translation, were employed more than the TT-oriented ones by both translators in the translation of implicatures. In another study conducted by Al-Shawi and Mahadi (2017), the ST-oriented strategies were the translator's decisions to transfer implicatures. They explain that if the translator, as a communicator, intends to communicate with the target readers about what exactly happens between and among the characters in the novel, he needs to pay special attention to the ST (semantic meaning), and make an overt translation that causes him to choose the ST-oriented strategy for the whole text.

In general, to transfer implicatures, the translator should first decode the implied meaning of the utterance and then encode it for the TT receivers. In other words, the implied meaning of the utterance should first be understood by the translator and then transferred by him to the TT. In the present study, the only way to achieve this was to use Mur Duenas's (2003) ST- oriented strategies, including SL cultural and linguistic borrowing, TL cultural reference literal translation, and SL cultural borrowing plus explanation, which was done correctly by the translator. In a wider sense, such strategies enable the translator to retain the intended meanings of the utterance. By contrast, the TT-oriented strategies, such as TL cultural

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cognate, TL cultural reference suppression, and replacement of the SL cultural reference by explanation, give no choice to the translator but to omit implicature, add a short explanation to it, or use a TL cultural word instead. Thus, the translator makes the implied meaning more explicit that is highly recommended to avoid using the TT-oriented strategies in the translation of implicatures.

5. Conclusion

Translating implicatures is a challenging task for translators because discovering the implied meaning of implicatures is a challenge. The reason of such a challenge, as Baker (1992) implies, is that implicatures may either open to several interpretations or explain not clearly in such a way that their meanings remain vague. She believes that to interpret implicatures, the ability to use the linguistic system is required, not "the successful interpretation of a certain speaker's inclined or implied meaning in a given context" (p. 228). Thus, the aim of the present study was to investigate the translation strategies the translator employed to transfer implicatures. It also attempted to probe which translation strategies helped the readers to have better understanding of implicatures.

As the results indicate, the translator employed the ST-oriented strategies to transfer implicatures. Such strategies are the best to enhance the readers' understanding of implicatures. Hence, based on Grice's (1975) theory, the researcher concludes that not only did the ST-oriented strategies

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enable the translator to make comprehensible translations of implicatures but also these strategies provided the translator with much success in transferring the meaning of implicatures to the TT and in communicating with the target readers. The findings of the study offer some pedagogical implicatures that can be helpful for translation students, trainee translators, and translation teachers.

It is recommended that translation students and trainee translators broaden their knowledge of translation strategies employment and have mastery over them because of that they are in need of a variety of strategies to transfer implicatures and communicate with the target readers. Furthermore, they need to devote their attention not only to denotative meanings but also connotative meanings of implicatures to understand the implied meaning of the intended implicature.

Translation teachers who are responsible for teaching students give them translation assignments that cover different types of implicatures and teach them how to have an appropriate use of translation strategies. Moreover, translation teachers need to acquire new education methods and use them in their classes. This causes translation teachers to update not only themselves on new materials but also help students to become familiar with the modern methods and improve their translation skills.

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