Translating paratextual elements in religious texts
The case of Shariati's "Fatima is Fatima"

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Abstract

Paratextual elements are important components of a successful translation. While they were previously thought to be secondary to the main text, recent research has shown how important they are in translation tasks. The concept was introduced by Genette and divided into inner and outer paratexts. The translation of paratextual elements is different for religious texts, mainly due to the particular beliefs and religious and historical discourses behind them. The aim of this research is to understand the effectiveness of paratextual translation and the strategies used in translating paratextual elements in "Fatima is Fatima." This study used Genette's paratextual framework, Shangzhen's model and Baker's narrative theory. The results show the important role of translators in the successful mediation between the source text and the reader in religious texts through the efficient use of strategies in the translation of paratexts. An important intervention the translator of *Fatima is Fatima* could have made was the inclusion of explanatory footnotes. This would serve as a significant reflection of the translator's voice, which is a crucial element in receiving the translation of religious texts. To achieve better results, publishers need to play a dynamic role in highlighting the inclusion of paratexuality in translated religious works.

Keywords

Paratext, religious texts, specialized texts, translation, visibility.

INTRODUCTION

Recent scholarship in translation studies have expanded our understanding on the crucial role of paratextual elements such as preface and translator's notes in translators' visibility (Toledano-Buendía, 2013; Yari et al., 2020) These elements serve as a mediator between the target text and the readers (Hastürkoğlu, 2023). They can often be seen through the framing and reframing of content and as noted by Batchelor (2018) are gatekeepers for readers and has the capacity to alter the meaning of the text. Commonly thought of as the periphery to the text, paratext has recently been recognized as an active element impacting the way translated works are read and received in target cultures (Xu, 2023). For instance, paratextual notes explain intertextual references and contribute important knowledge about how translators deal with the challenges of cultural and linguistic untranslatability (Haroun, 2022; Mowafy & Mohamed, 2023). These elements may also reflect on the translational strategies employed by the translators as cultural mediators and the socio-political contexts in which the translators operate (Xu, 2023).

Gerard Genette's (1997) idea of paratexts as mediating, liminal devices — those that stand between text and reader— has enabled new frameworks for consideration of complex relations between translated texts and their readers. Grounded on this framework, recent studies have investigate paratextual features in translation in particular, highlighting the paratexts of translated works as a means to negotiate cultural differences and produce cultural understanding and the interpretative choices of translators (e.g., Sariaslan, 2024).

Recent research has increasingly examined paratextuality across multiple texts (e.g., Li & Tan, 2023; Mowafy & Mohamed, 2023). Because paratexual elements is significant in relation to sacred and religious texts, such elements should also be part of the investigation (Haroun, 2022). Religious texts abound with elevated and cultural specific items that need to be explained and annotated these items should be explained because they are so abundant (Roodashty et al., 2023). While there are some studies on translated paratexuality in religious texts, the lack of evidence about translated paratextuality in religious translation texts from Persian with less diffusion around the world shows that there is much room to focus on this research topic. This absence is especially striking, in light of the growing prominence of religious and cultural dialogue in our globalized society.

The current study aimed to fill this gap and investigates paratextual translation strategies with respect to Ali Shariati's Fatima is Fatima as a religious text. Further, drawing on a more recent body of scholarship on the translator's voice in shaping translated paratexts (e.g., Yalsharzeh et al., 2019; Toledano-Buendía, 2013), this study examined the findings under Baker's (2006) narrative theory. Through this lens, the translator's voice reflected in footnotes and other intervention apparatus becomes more visible to depict the source text meaning in a vivid picture for the readership. Guided by these objectives, this research explores the following questions:

> RQ1. What paratextual elements are present in the source text of Ali Shariati's "Fatima is Fatima," and how do they function within the context of the original Persian publication?
>
> RQ2. What are the most frequent strategies employed in translating the paratextual elements of "Fatima is Fatima" from Persian to English?
>
> RQ3. How does the representation of transparetexuality reflect the translator's voice?
>
> RQ3. How do translation students perceive the effectiveness and challenges of translating paratextual elements in religious texts, particularly in the case of "Fatima is Fatima"?

This research broadens our understanding of the role paratextual elements play in translating religious texts. By focusing on Fatima is Fatima, this study offers insights into challenges and translation processes associated with translating religious texts. The findings can enhance Translation theory and practice, especially when it comes to translating religious and cultural texts.

1. LITERATURE REVIEW

Gerard Genette's (1997) work is seminal in the case of paratextual studies in translated texts. Genette (1997) put forth the concept of paratext as a liminal device, mediating the text's entry into the readership's mind. This has inspired researchers to examine paratranslation as an important subfield of study in translation studies. In 2012, Jose Yuste Frias first used the term *paratranslation*, defining it as the translation of paratext from source language to target language. This conceptualization has created new research opportunities by inviting academics to think about the intricate process of translating the surrounding paratextual elements in addition to the translation of the main

text. Particularly, paratexts present a distinct challenge when it comes to religious texts. These problems are primarily caused by religious sensitivities and the importance of cultural and historical differences in subtitles between the target and source audiences. Religious paratexts often carry theological, ritual, and cultural meanings that resist straightforward transfer. The concept of paratexts is expanded to paratranslation (Tahir Gürçağlar, 2018) with a focus on describing the time and space required to translate any paratexts (Yuste Frías, 2012). Based on this extension, temporal and spatial dimensions of paratranslation are important when it comes to religious text translation.

1.1. Paratextual elements in religious text translation

Paratextual issues surrounding the translation of religious texts have their own unique challenges (Haroun, 2022). The studies of Kloppenburg (2013) and Pleijel (2022) are valuable in highlighting the role of paratexts while focusing on Bible or the New testament translations. The works demonstrate the complicated dimension of paratexts in altering meaning beyond doctrinal authority. As Pleijel (2022) notes, adding footnotes to the original translation can reframe the source text as well as the primary translation. The emerging scholarship on the authorial power of paretexts implies the importance of the translator's choice and their voice in reframing the original text based on the target audience Den Hollander et al. (2020) also published a book series covering broad investigations into paratranslation within Jewish and Christian traditions. Their book chapters underline the historical depth in which paratextual practices are rooted with regard to religious text translation, following the ways in which different traditions have developed various ways of framing and contextualizing sacred texts for new audiences. Such a historical perspective can offer useful contexts for grasping current practices regarding re ligious text translation.

While less extensively studied than Bible translation, the translation of Islamic texts presents its own set of challenges and considerations. In Islamic text translation, similar mechanisms exist. Saad (2020) analyzes paratexts in Edip Yuksel's English translation of the Quran, examining how paratexts render contextual clues with historical, cultural, and exegetical elements. What seems to be missing in most of these studies is the translator's voice that should be heard through translation of paratextual elements and adding new footnotes as a facilitating apparatus to understand the message of the original religious texts where the reader needs more contextual clues.

1.2. Paratranslation studies in Translation Studies

Most research has focused on literary fiction, in line with Genette's own interest, but investigations have also focused on domains such as audiovisual translation (Matamala, 2011) and news translation (Zhang, 2012). Many studies combine paratextual analysis with textual analysos of the translations themselves. As Tahir-Gürçağlar (2011) points out, examination of paratexts shows how translations can be bridged between the translated texts and their readership. While paratextual analysis cannot alone substitute for close reading of the translated texts, as Batchelor (2018) notes paratext has the potential to be examined beyond the authorship intention. Most researched paratextual features include translators' prefaces (Tahir-Gürçağlar, 2013), translators' notes (Lopes, 2012; Sardin, 2007), book covers (Harvey, 2003), forwords (Poldsaar, 2010) and paratext in world literature translation (Alvstad, 2012). Most of the above-mentioned studies used Genette's (1997) framework pragmatically, setting aside the stipulation to focus on authorial intention and the translator's voice. Within the Iranian context, paratextual translation studies, though relatively new, has garnered more interest. The research conducted by Hosseinzadeh and Shahparrad (2018) applied Gerard Genette's (1997) theories to French translations of Dolatabadi's fiction. Their findings showed that studying translated paratexts helps understand the role that target culture plays in shaping text reception. Their study aptly underlined the mediating function of paratexts within cultural differences that shape reception.

Mazhari and Farjah (2018) focus on book covers and other forms of visual paratexts while trying to set reader expectations. Their study underlines the necessity of maintaining a relationship between paratextual elements and the atmosphere of the book. One of the echoing words regarding the Iranian paratranslation studies is the necessity of the cultural adaptation. Mazhari and Farjah (2018) mention that "translating a book from a language to another language is transition of a book from a linguistic-spatial-cultural fact into another and while translating a book, paratextual elements will have changes" (p. 69). This observation rhymes with the broader trends in the translation studies, which put an emphasis on the cultural rather than merely linguistic nature of translation.

Recent scholarship has also underlined the educational function of paratextual elements across genres. Sariaslan (2024) notices that paratextual elements in poetry translation play an educational role that increases the awareness of the reader in terms of cultural and literary contexts. This

educational function is even more important in religious text translation, since in many cases, paratextual elements have to fill great cultural and theological gaps.

The role and persona of the translator in translating religious texts come to fore as a key factor. According to Buendía (2013), translator's notes are paratextual features by which the translator's voice may be rendered visible, contesting the conventional notions of translators' invisibility. The visibility acquires added dimension in religious texts, wherein the translator has to juxtapose faithfulness to religious information with the requirement of making the religious text accessible to the readers of the target language.

2. Methodology

2.1. Design of the study

The approach used in this study is a qualitative research design based on a descriptive case study. The research has also focused on the English translation of Ali Shariati's Persian Fatima is Fatima for studying the paratexts. This served to bring about an analysis more closely related to how paratextual elements were translated in order to affect the reception by their target audience.

2.2. Participants

In the current research, 10 students studying translation studies at Ershad Damavand University participated through convenience sampling. The participants were graduate students or had passed at least one semester of the Master's program and were familiar with paratextual elements in translation. The participants included 7 females and 3 males who were aged between 23 and 35 years old. All participants were native Persian speakers and had an acceptable proficiency level in English.

2.3. Corpus

The corpus of this research was Fatima is Fatima in its original Persian and in its English translation by Laleh Bakhtiar. The source text, published for the first time in 1971 by the Hoseiniye Ershad Publications, Tehran, is an extract from Shariati's lecture at Hoseiniye Ershad in 1971. It has to date been republished multiple times and is a leading work in modern Islamic thought, pertaining to women's roles and identities in Islamic society. The original text has been translated into English, Arabic, French, and Indonesian. The English translation, published by The Shariati Foundation in 1981, is 129 pages long and constitutes the first and most widespread English edition of the text. The analysis of the corpus included all paratextual elements present in each of the two versions.

2.4. Adopted analytical frameworks

The typology done by Genette (1997) of paratext lays the foundation of analysis in this study. Being a general classification of either peritexts or epitexts, this classification is useful to identify and further classify any form of paratextual elements in a given translation. Shangzhen (2021), inspired by Genette (1997), was used in the analysis as well. This framework considers both textual and sociocultural dimensions of paratranslation, offering a more comprehensive approach to understanding how paratexts function in translated texts. Baker's (2006) narrative theory provides another valuable lens through which to analyze paratextual elements in translation. Applying Baker's (2006) narrative theory helped analyze how the different paratextual elements contributed to the overall narrative framing of the translated text, as a way to highlight translator's visibility in the text.

2.5. Procedure

Initially, the corpus was analyzed by the researchers and all instances of paratextual elements and their translations were recorded. After identification and extraction of paratextual elements, the data were analyzed through the models adopted for this study. Finally, focus group discussions were carried out in order to provide insight into students' perceptions about the translation of paratextual elements in religious texts.

3. RESULTS

The analysis of paratextual elements in Ali Shariati's "Fatima is Fatima" and its English translation by Laleh Bakhtiar reveals significant insights into the strategies employed in translating these elements and their potential impact on the reception of the text in the target culture. This analysis is framed within Genette's (1997) conceptualization of paratexts and Shangzhen's (2021) paratextual translation strategies, while also considering Baker's (2006) narrative theory.

3.1. Inner paratextual elements completing directly

Inner paratextual elements, as defined by Genette (1997), are those found within the book itself. These can be further categorized into two groups: elements that complete the text and elements that exist in the book but do not directly complete the text.

3.1.1. Elements completing the text

Table 1 presents a comparison of the inner paratextual elements that complete the text in both the Persian original and English translation. A detailed analysis follows below.

Paratextual Element	Frequency P	Frequency E	Persian Sample	English Translation
Pseudonym	1	1	علی تخلص شاندل (Ali's pen name was Shandel)	Shundle
Preface	1	1	آنچه می خوانید سخنرانی من است در حسینیه ی ارشاد (صفحه ۱۵، چاپ شانزدهم) (Back translation: What you are reading is my speech at Hosseiniyeh Ershad (page 15, 16th edition).	The words you are about to read are from a lecture I gave at Hoseiniyyeh Ershad… (Page 1)
Intertitle	0	0	_	_

Note	43	1	ارشاد (صفحه حسینیه ۱۵، چاپ شانزدهم) (Back translation: Ershad (Hosseiniyeh, page 15, 16th edition))	A Hoseiniyyeh is a traditional religious center where the people gather to see passion plays, in particular, those related to the third Shi'ite Imam… (Page 4)
Epilogue	1	1	فاطمه این چنین زیست و این چنین مرد و پس از مرگش (صفحه۱۸۶) (Back translation: Fatima lived this way, died this way, and after her death… (Page 186)	Fatemeh lived like this and died like this. After her death… (Page 286)
Translator Notes	0	20	مجتهدان (Back translation: Mojtahedan)	Mujtahids (religious leaders whose directions for the practice of the faith are followed) (Page 46)
Postscripts	0	0	—	—
Characters	165	160	نام اشخاص به خصوص نام های مذهبی زیادی در این کتاب آورده شده است (فقط در چاپ شانزدهم انتشارات سپیده باوران، از صفحه ۳۰۴ تا ۳۰۸ لیستی برای نام ها تهیه شده است) (Back translation: The names of individuals,	All the names are translated the same without any explanation. Example: Zainab, Fatima

			especially many religious names, are included in this book). (Only in the 16th edition by Sepideh Bavaran Publications, a list of names has been provided from pages 304 to 308)	

Table 1. Inner paratextual elements glossing over the text

Pseudonym

The pseudonym "Shundle" is directly transliterated without explanation, potentially obscuring its significance for target readers. This approach aligns with Genette's (1997) concept of paratexts as thresholds of interpretation, but the lack of context may limit its effectiveness. From Baker's (2006) narrative perspective, this omission could impact the construction of the author's persona for the target audience.

Preface and Epilogue

The relatively successful translation of the preface and epilogue maintains their function as described by Genette (1997). Preservation of the author's framing contributes to narrative coherence: the framing allows the reader important context in which to place the text. This also agrees with Baker (2006).

Notes and translator's notes

The treatment of notes is also inconsistent, with some source text notes missing while others have been elaborated on. This extended note on "Hoseiniyyeh" itself indicates cultural adjustment (Shangzhen, 2021), but its arbitrary use may give target readers a different landscape. It will affect the understanding of cultural and religious concepts by the readers, which is significant in translating religious texts.

Character names

The lack of explanatory notes for character names, particularly religious figures, contrasts with Shangzhen's (2021) recommendation. This might be difficult for readers who are not familiar with Islamic religious figures which

could change how the story is framed and how readers understand the roles of the characters in the text. From a narrative perspective the degree to which readers interact with a text may be affected by the onomastic name approach put forth by Baker (2006). The loss of cultural weights and symbols from the original culture during translation may have a negative impact on how a text is framed and how readers perceive the significance and role of its characters.

3.1.2. Inner paratextual elements not directly completing the text

Table 2 presents the paratextual elements not directly completing the text.

Paratextual Element	Frequency P	Frequency E	Persian	English Translation
Title	1	1	فاطمه فاطمه است (Back translation: Fatmeh is Fatemeh)	Fatima is Fatima
Subtitle	0	0	_	_
Dedication	1	2	به روان مادرم، زهرا_آینه ی «افتادگی»،«عاطفه»و «پارسایی»_ام زندگی که همه برایش، «رنج»و وجودش برایم، همه «مهر» (Back translation: To the soul of my mother, Zahra - the mirror of 'humility,' 'compassion,' and 'piety' - my life, everything was 'sacrifice,' and very being was, for me, pure 'love'	To the spirit of my mother, Zahra, the mirror of humility, emotions, and chastity, for whom life was only sorrow, while her existence, for me, was all kindness (Page 1)
Foreword	0	1	_	When the earth is shaken with a

				mighty shaking, and earth brings forth her burdens, and man says, 'what ails her?' Upon that day she shall tell her Lord has inspired her… (Page 4)
Epigraph	0	0	_	_
Afterword	0	0	_	_

Table 2. Paratextual elements not directly completing the text

According to Table 2, these paratextual elements include Title (maintained in both versions), Dedication (expanded in the English version), and Foreword (added in the English translation).

These frequency differences displayed in Table 1 and Table 2 highlight significant shifts in paratextual strategies between the source and target texts, particularly in the treatment of dedication and foreword.

Title

The title "Fatima is Fatima" is a literal translation from the Persian one. The repetition inherent in the source text due to the literal translation was kept in the target text, which has valuable meaning in the source culture. However, this title will doubtless be less meaningful without further context to target readers who are unfamiliar with the cultural and religious significance of Fatima within Islamic tradition. This is a function of Baker's (2006) notion of narrative framing in which such paratextual elements contribute to the overall narrative presented to the reader.

Dedication

The dedication is translated relatively faithfully, preserving its emotional and personal nature. That the author retains this personal narrative is consistent with Baker (2006), who writes that personal stories form part of larger narratives. The dedication provides some background into the author's personal motivations and relationships, perhaps framing the way the reader perceives the author and the text.

Foreword

The foreword in the English translation is considerably different from the Persian original. While the Persian version refers to different forewords in various editions, the English version opens with a quote that appears to be from the Quran. This variation in the foreword constitutes a significant change in the paratextual framing of the text. According to Genette (1997), the foreword is an instrument of control which ensures that the text is read correctly. Here, the change in foreword may well have the effect of redefining the source text for this readership, now squarely indicating that it is a religious text, where the source text only gave that as an impression.

Absence of subtitle, epigraph, and afterword

It is also possible to observe the absence of the subtitle, epigraph, and afterword in both the source and target texts. This is important because these items give some context to the text in general. Their absence might have been intentional on the part of the author and preserved by the translator, possibly affecting the approach and interpretation that the readers of both cultures will give to the text.

3.1.3. Inner paratexts as publisher's duty

Table 3 shows the paratextual elements related to book presentation.

Paratextual Element	Persian	English Translation
Cover	The first edition of Fatima is Fatima book has a white cover with green writings (Name of the book) and at the bottom of the cover is the author's photo along with his name.	The first English edition of this book was published in 1982 by the Shariati Foundation. The cover's color is green, with Ali Shariati's name written at the top, the book's name in the middle, and the translator's name and publication at the bottom.
Back Cover	Not specified	Not specified
Inside Cover	Not specified	Not specified
Design	Soft paper cover	Soft paper cover
Price	The new price: 110,000 toman (2 dollars). The first price of this book was 75 rials.	The new price is 52.41$, but older prices are unavailable.

Table 3. Paratextual elements related to book presentation

Cover design and paratextual elements

A translated work's front and back covers are important paratextual components that act as the texts first point of contact with potential readers in the target culture. Shangzhen (2021) highlights how important these components are in forming readers' initial perceptions and affecting the target markets acceptance of the translated work. According to Gudinavičius and Šuminas (2018), cover designs are at least partially important in presenting the text to new readers. The cover design of the English translation of Fatima is Fatima which reflects the original Persian editions simplicity seems to have taken a minimalist approach.

Book design and selection of materials

The material used for the books cover and binding is an important paratextual choice that can affect how the book is presented physically as well as how readers view its worth and content. The original analysis highlights the differences between soft and hard covers in terms of production costs and durability. In addition to being driven by cost and production efficiency the

decision to continue using a soft cover for the English translation may also affect the books perception in the target literary audience.

Pricing strategies and market positioning

The significant price gap between the Persian original and the English translation gives cause for reflection on market position and accessibility. The highly increased price in the initial analysis may be interpreted in a perspective related to Sapiro's (2010) work on the economics of translation in the global book market. What this price disparity may account for is differences in production costs, market research, and value perceived in the target culture. However, such a steep price rise might render the text inaccessible to wider readerships in the target culture and thus affect its dissemination and reception.

Outer paratextual elements

The outer paratexts, according to Genette (1997), which Shangzhen (2021) further developed, are those that separate the main text yet relate to it. These elements are crucial in shaping reception and interpretation within the target culture. Outer paratexts are, therefore, important in influencing the readership and meaning-making from translated works. Shangzhen's (2021) definition of such elements, for example, follows what Genette (1997) originally termed as epitexts. Media comments, reader reviews, and interviews with an author or translator form crucial sites that not only preface but also position the status of the translated text within a target culture. Tahir-Gürçağlar (2002) adds weight to the role these elements may have in establishing "concepts such as authorship, originality and anonymity which are only covert in translations themselves" (p. 44).

Media reviews

Interestingly enough, a very limited number of international newspapers and programs reviewed "Fatima is Fatima" after its English translation. This compares with, for example, the number in Iranian media, like the Jam-e-Jam newspaper. It would, therefore, appear that minimal international media involvement occurred and may reflect the content presented in the book did not agree with international standards. This accordingly limits the proliferation and intended messages of the author and the translator.

The absence of media voices about the book in the target culture significantly hampers visibility and a feeling of relevance to prospective readers. This absence can limit the book's potential to either be reinforced or challenged by preheld narratives of the target text culture (Baker, 2006) on the

part of the media, particularly in regard to Islamic women's roles or Iranian thought. Reviews of the media and cultural reception. The difference in the reception of the way Fatima is Fatima in the source culture (as attested to by the original analysis) and in the target culture is an analysis of the type of reception the translation received in the way of media coverage. While the analysis of the original piece through the media mentions in source culture and target culture only goes to prove that cultural and ideological factors play a role in determining how a translation will be received, it was very limited to the attention received by the text in the target culture due to its lack of press coverage. The main argument of the text is culturally specific, not constituting a part of the dominating discourses of the target culture(s), so it is not surprising this argument did not draw attention in cultural products of whatever genre published in a language other than English.

Reader reviews and reception

The analysis of reader reviews on social platforms like Goodreads, for example, serves as a way to get some insight into what the reception was like among individual readers for the translation. The findings presented in the original text give evidence of a mostly positive reception among those engaging with the text. This number, however, is significantly low compared to more popular translations, which would suggest relative low readership. This can be understood within the perspective of Harding and Carbonell Cortés (2018) on cultural dynamics of translation reception. It could be due to a host of reasons, including marketing strategies, distribution channels, or the specialized nature of the content of the text.

3.1.4. Application of Baker's narrative theory to paratextual elements

The translator's inadequate use of explanatory notes was seen in the addition of one translator's note, which illustrates what Baker (2006) describes as "narrative positioning," implying inability to negotiate between cultural and religious ideas through appropriate use of the translator's voice.

The fact that the foreword is expanded in the English translation by the inclusion of Quranic verses is a good example of Baker's (2006) temporal and spatial framing. This paratextual decision situates the text squarely within Islamic tradition. The translator's decision to retain some Arabic terms in their original form in the translation constitutes what Baker calls "selective appropriation."

Most striking, however, is the way in which the paratextual structure engages in what Baker (2006) has described as narrative accrual. Translator's notes, explanatory footnotes, and cultural annotations all combine incrementally to provide a metanarrative that posits Fatima not solely as an historical religious figure but also as a model for contemporary Islamic feminist discourse. The design of the cover and presentation decisions in the English translation reveal Baker's (2006) idea of framing by labeling. Such a decision, if made with the purpose of active intervention can lead to new paratextual framing.

Character names and religious terminology in the paratextual elements show how Baker's (2006) "relationality in narrative construction" has been treated. Keeping the Arabic names allows the translator to establish the logical relation between the micronarrative and the whole narrative of the source text as a religious one. This way, therefore, the text is able to preserve its religious authenticity, yet be less accessible to the target readers who are unfamiliar with the Islamic history and traditions.

3.2. Focus group results

The focus group discussions with translation students from Ershad Damavand University yielded rich insights into their perceptions of translating paratextual elements.

Theme	Frequency
Cultural Adaptation Challenges	27
Preservation of Religious Integrity	25
Translator's Visibility	22
Target Audience Considerations	20
Paratextual Elements as Educational Tools	18
Balancing Fidelity and Readability	17
Cover Design and Marketing Implications	15

Table 4. The most frequent themes from the focus group discussions

Cultural Adaptation Challenges

This theme which showed how difficult it is to modify culturally specific paratextual elements for a target audience appeared most frequently. Participants frequently voiced worries about how hard it is to communicate cultural quirks without simplifying or distorting the original culture. For example:

> "The task at hand involves translating an entire worldview not just a few words. Without writing a lengthy essay in the footnotes how can you communicate the cultural significance of terms like Hoseiniyyeh?"(Participant 3)

Preservation of Religious Integrity

Participants often referred to a number of instances where it was felt that religious integrity was compromised in order for the source text to be better understood by the recipients. This theme was closely linked to the unique issues surrounding religious texts in translation.

> "When we translate religious texts, such as 'Fatima is Fatima,' we are obligated to preserve the spiritual significance. It's not just a translation; it's something so sacred." (Participant 1)

Translator's Visibility

The role and visibility of the translator in the paratextual elements were discussed. The participants debated ethical issues about translator interventions and to what extent translators should be visible in religious text translations.

> "The presence of the translator should in my opinion be more apparent in religious texts particularly in the paratexts. Our interpretations and decisions must be open and honest." (Participant 2)

Consideration to Target Audience

The participants very often mentioned considering the target audience as important when it came to the translation of paratexts, especially for religious texts where the cultural affinity between the source and target texts is substantially distant, thereby intensifying the translator's need to mediate meaning.

> "We need to know exactly who we are translating for: Are they familiar with Islam? Are they religious scholars or general readers? These are the things that should really guide our paratextual strategies." (Participant 4)

Paratextual Features as Teaching Devices

Several respondents felt that the paratext features may even become some kind of teaching tools-particularly in religious writings-which can present a reader with things that a receptor may be poorly aware of.

> "I see paratextual elements as a bridge between cultures. They are not just explanatory, but educational. We have a chance to broaden readers' horizons." (Participant 5)

> "In translating 'Fatima is Fatima,' the paratexts could be a powerful tool for introducing the non-Muslim reader to key Islamic concepts. It's an opportunity we shouldn't waste." (Participant 2)

4. DISCUSSION

The translation of religious texts must navigate source and target culturally specific elements in more complex manners. The way that the translator treated religious terms and character references in Fatima is Fatima is at times both an interesting departure from common practice. Such unevenness could reflect variations in the difficulties of translation based on various genres. In religious texts, based on the findings of this study, one can argue that "translator's notes as paratextual elements," as Buendía (2013, p. 149) observes, are an important tool that enables readers to better understand the translated text. Adding a single note in the English edition, as opposed to 20 in the Persian original acts as an evidence of passivity on the translator's side to afford her voice that bridges between cultures a proper reflection of her work.

The findings also raise interesting questions about the balance of translator visibility against textual authority, in religious contexts where a religious value is already assigned to the source text. By Baker's (2006) narrative theory, the translator failed to refract and place the text simultaneously as a religious text, a feminist discourse, and a work of cultural bridge-building. This somewhat explains the very little international media coverage of the English translation.

We found as an important insight from the focus groups —something that is hardly mentioned in the related literature— that working on religious texts puts an extra burden on translators. That means they felt not only a duty to accuracy of meaning conveyed, but also to religious integrity, in making the

text accessible to a new audience. It highlights the importance of specialized training and support for translators of religious texts. The minimalist choice of the cover in the English translation stirs some serious questions on marketing and presentation of religious texts in translation. While Mazhari and Farjah (2018) emphasize the significance of cover design in shaping what readers expect and anticipate, the present study argues that there should be a presentation style characterized by visual elements dedicated to various genres, including religious texts. What is challenging is how it should strike a balance between respectful presentation and attracting target readers.

The translator's subtle interplay of footnotes and explanations performs more than merely translation between the Islamic and Western intellectual systems of theology and philosophy. This extends earlier conceptual framing that addressed paratranslation by its cultural and linguistic attributes.

In this unexpected and crucial sense, a pattern of regularities was established regarding intertextual references. In terms of Tahir-Gürçağlar's (2002) assumptions paratexts have a significant role in production and reception of a text. According to our findings, these paratexts in religious texts need much more attention when being rendered to other languages. In the case of Shariati's book, the author has given space to his personal and theoretical reflections on women in Islam through his reference to Fatima. This important feature of the original text was not mentioned or reflected in the paratextual elements of the translated text. The failure to do so has a detrimental effect on the reception of the translated text.

CONCLUSIONS

The study has illustrated the intricate problems of translating paratextual elements in religious texts, focusing on Ali Shariati's "Fatima is Fatima" as the corpus. The results highlighted the influence paratextual devices on how translated religious works are both received and interpreted in target cultures. The analysis based on Baker's (2006) narrative theory revealed how the translator's underuse of explanatory notes and incoherent cultural mediation affected the level of accessibility of the text in the target culture and its reception with translator's voice barely heard through adding footnotes part of the paratranslational intervention apparatus.

Nevertheless, some limitations should be acknowledged in this study. The generalizability of the findings in this study is limited to one text and one translation pair. Meanwhile, due to limited access to the reception data and primarily a reliance upon the online platforms available, the scope of this study was limited to shed more light on how the target audiences engage with the paratextual features of the translated text. This study has significant implications in translation studies because religious texts have a unique translation dynamic, and spiritual and doctrinal considerations complicate translation. The study also suggests the pre-established paratextual translation approaches and models require revisions to fit religious texts.

The study highlights the need for more specific approaches to handling religious paratexts, such as a consistent explanation of religious concepts in translation, alongside an effective visual presentation of religious concepts in translation. Comparative studies of paratranslation practices could enrich future research in this area. Such studies could help address some of the current limitations of this research by examining a larger corpus containing retranslated texts. A study of digital paratexts of religious texts may also further elucidate some of the ways new technologies may foster religious and cultural differences in religious texts. Considering the growing awareness of religious and cultural diversities worldwide, research in translation of religious texts holds tremendous potential to raise the translators' awareness regarding the practical ways to render these texts more accessible, thereby furthering intercultural and interfaith dialogue and understanding.

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