Variability of Cohesive Devices in Literary Genre: Persian Text and Its Three English Translations in Contrast

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Cohesive devices contribute to the texture and distinguish a text from a non-text. A text is not just a string of sentences; in other words, it is not simply a large grammatical unit. The unity of a text is a unity of a different kind. It means that the expression of the semantic unity of the text lies in the cohesion among the sentences of which the text is composed. The present study aimed at investigating three subheadings of cohesive devices in literary texts. In doing so, the third chapter, (On the preciousness Of Contentment), was culled from the Gulistan of Sadi. It was compared with its three English translation versions done by Edwin Arnold (1899), Edward Rehatsek (1964), and Backhouse Eastwick (1952).

This study has adopted the taxonomy of cohesive devices put forward by Halliday and Hasan (1976) to set up relationships within a text. The headings were reference, conjunction, and lexical cohesion, which were investigated to determine whether there are any relationships between cohesive devices of the original text and its translation versions. To do so, the devices were first identified in the original text and then compared with each other in terms of occurrences in the translation versions.

The results revealed that there are differences in number of cohesive devices in the Persian (original) text and that of English translation versions. Each of these texts utilized one of the devices more frequently which was indicative of the different nature of the two languages under investigation. These results can be used in translation teaching, translation criticism, and evaluation.