

Chapter 5

Conclusion

5.1 Comparison of Problems in the Five Translations

The main task of this thesis has been to compare and evaluate five Persian Bible translations. This chapter summarizes the findings of this thesis and presents suggestions for further studies.

5.2 Presentation of Collective Results

Based on the detailed analysis of Colossians 1:13-23 in Chapter 4, the translation issues found are listed in a table in this chapter. This table reveals the number of occurrences of each translational issue. There are some limitations though in regard to these tables and figures. For example, the severity of the problem is not shown here and it is not possible to exhaustively label the issues in the table.

5.3 The Overall Number of Translation Issues in each Translation

The number of occurrences of translation issues according to the labeled translation issues are in Table 12:

Translation Issues-verse 23	OTV	SHT	FCT	PST	NMV
Unclear:					
Logical relation skewed	1	0	0	1	1
Ambiguity	8	5	1	7	7
Sense too general	1	0	0	0	0
Changed meaning	3	1	1	3	2
Inaccurate:					
Changed meaning	12	9	14	13	8
Key term (changed meaning)	0	0	1	0	0
Omitted meaning	1	0	1	0	0
Omission	0	1	1	0	0

Translation Issues-verse 23	OTV	SHT	FCT	PST	NMV
Sense too narrow	1	1	1	1	1
Addition	0	0	3	1	1
Punctuation	1	0	0	1	0
Emphasis missing	1	1	1	0	1
Unnatural:					
Tense	1	1	1	0	0
punctuation	1	0	0	0	0
Collocational clash	5	2	1	3	2
Ambiguity	0	0	1	0	0
Logical relation skewed	1	0	0	0	0
Outdated word	1	0	0	0	0
Redundancy	0	0	2	0	0
Total problems	38	21	29	30	23

Table 12: Number of Occurrences of each Translation Issue Occurring in each Version

5.4 Presentation of Results by Error Type

This thesis has analyzed and compared five Farsi translation of Colossians 1:13-23. The findings are summarized and presented below. Figures 1-4 which show the number of incorrect renderings based on each category of translation issues.

Unclear

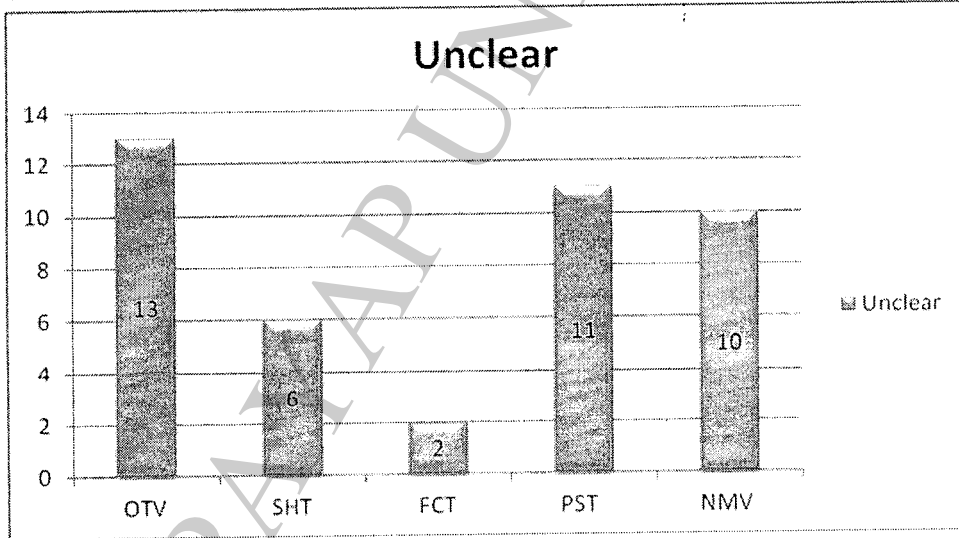


Figure 1 Problems with Clarity

It is evident from Figure 1 above that FCT had the fewest problems with clarity which is commendable. The reason is that FCT has tried to fully exegete the

meaning and express it freely in Farsi. However, at times the renderings have become redundant. Nevertheless, the renderings were clear and understandable. On the other hand, OTV, PST and NMV had a significant number of problems by being unclear in too many places. This probably reflects an attempt to follow a more literal approach to translation, that inevitably and eventually leads to a text that is difficult to read and understand. For example, ἐν ᾧ 'in whom' has been translated as در وی 'in whom (Colossians 1:14) while it is instrumental and should have been translated as 'through Him'. Another example is نخست زاده از مردگان 'first-born from the dead' which would have been more clearly translated as 'He is the first person who came back to life after death' (Colossians 1:18).

Inaccurate

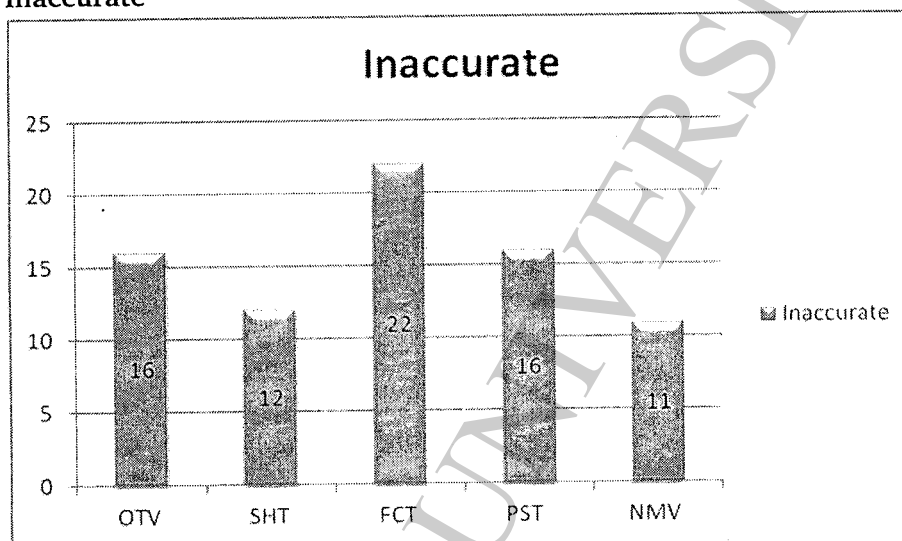


Figure 2 Problems with Accuracy

Figure 2 above shows that FCT had significant problems with accuracy. Some examples of the problems are: εἰκὼν 'image, likeness, representation' has been translated as صورت 'face, image, form' (Colossians 1:15). Another example is καὶ αὐτὸς ἔστιν πρὸ πάντων 'and He is before all things' was translated as او قبل از همه 'and He is before all' which should have been translated as 'he is above all' (Colossians 1:17). Similarly, پسر محبت خود 'Son of His love' (Colossians 1:13), نخست زاده از مردگان 'first-born from the dead' (Colossians 1:18), and تمامی پری 'all the fullness' (Colossians 1:19) are inaccurate translations. The other translations did much better in this area. The NMV, in particular, with eleven mistakes did the best.

Unnatural

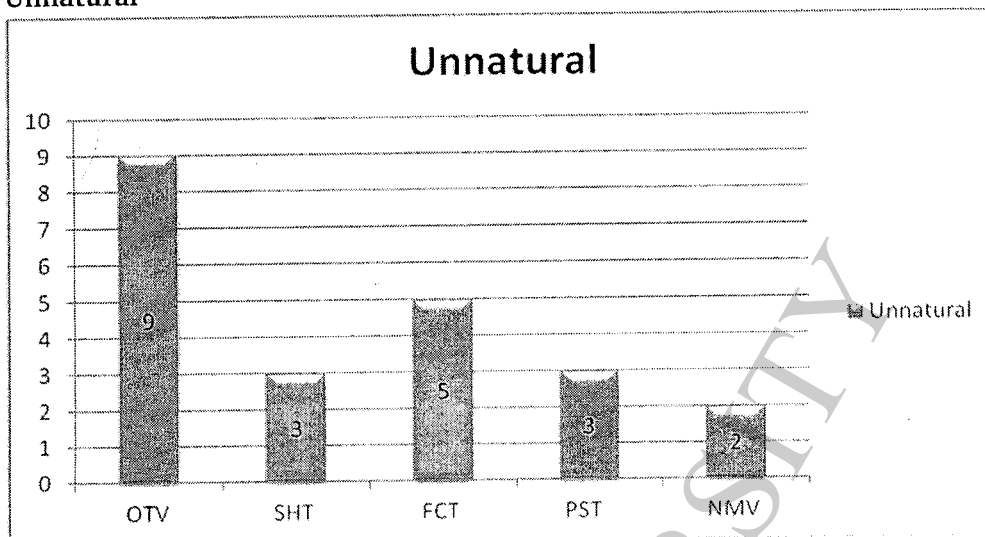


Figure 3 Problems with Naturalness

As shown in the Figure 3 above, the OTV had the most difficulties with naturalness. These many problems with naturalness are undoubtedly due to the fact that it was translated and revised in 1895. It is a fact that languages change over time, and Farsi is not exempted from this fact. Some examples of the problems of naturalness are: 'ransom' (Colossians 1:14); 'stands' (Colossians 1:17); 'alien' (Colossians 1:21) and 'remain firm' (Colossians 1:23) which either are not found in modern Farsi Dictionaries or are not commonly used anymore. This shows that revisions of even the best quality translations are required periodically. The NMV, SHT and PST deserve commendation for being so natural with only two problems in NMV and three problems in both SHT and PST.

Overall Errors

From comparing the Figures 1, 2 and 3 it is evident that the most problems of the five translations were in the area of accuracy.

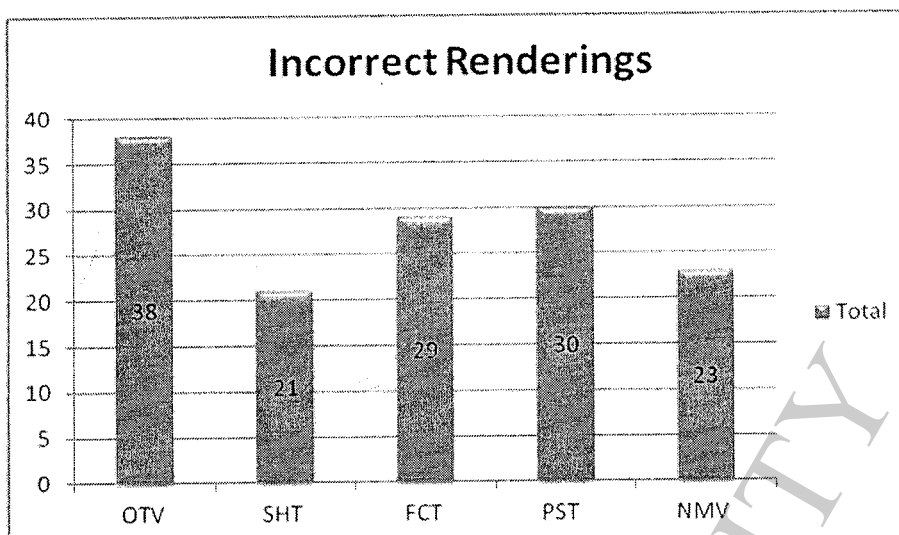


Figure 4 Total Incorrect Renderings of Each Translation

Based on the information presented in Table 1, the strengths and weaknesses of each translation are as follows:

NMV, SHT and PST have the least number of unnatural renderings which means these three translations are the most natural. SHT also has the second least number of unclear and inaccurate renderings. SHT in total has the least number of incorrect renderings. Therefore, I conclude that it is the best and the most reliable translation among the five Farsi translations.

NMV is in a close completion with SHT. NMV has the least number of unnatural and inaccurate renderings which means it is the most natural as well as accurate translation. However, its large number of unclear renderings places it in the second position.

FCT and PST with a bigger gap of the number of incorrect renderings stand in the third and fourth positions.

OTV stands in the last position with the most number of unclear and unnatural renderings. OTV also has the most number of total incorrect renderings which makes it the least reliable translation.

5.4.1 Summary of Conclusions

The hypotheses to start the study were as below:

1. Any translation which is closer to the original Greek structure has more translational issues and as a result is more difficult to understand.

2. All five translations have failed to fully grasp some aspects of the meaning of the original text.

3. Farsi Contemporary Translation (FCT), which claims to use meaning-based translation theory, is closest to meeting the standard of meaning-based translation. Based on the analysis the following hypotheses are proved or disproved:

Hypothesis one was confirmed because OTV was closest to the original Greek structure and had the most number of unnatural rendering. The nine unnatural renderings are almost 50% more in comparison to the five unnatural renderings in the next closest version (FCT). To give some perspective on the total scope of the problem throughout the Bible, if there is one unnatural rendering in each verse and this is extended to the whole Bible, there would be more than 30000 unnatural renderings throughout the whole Bible.

Based on Figure 2 all translations have failed to fully grasp some aspects of the meaning of the original text. This problem is clearly evident from passages such as θρόνοι, κυριότητες, ἄρχαι, ἐξουσίαι 'spiritual powers, lords, rulers, and authorities' (Colossians 1:16) and αὐτός ἐστιν ἡ κεφαλὴ τοῦ σώματος τῆς τῆς ἐκκλησίας 'He is the head of His body, the Church' (Colossians 1:18) in which all the translations have either failed to grasp the meaning or to convey it correctly, thus the second hypothesis is proved correct.

Based on the data in Figure 4, FCT was not the closest to meeting the standards of meaning-based translation; therefore, hypothesis 3 was incorrect.

The FCT translation is not the closest to meeting the standards of meaning-based translation because it has a high number of inaccurate renderings, in fact the highest among the five. Also at times the renderings in FCT are redundant or so overly free that they go beyond the scope of translation, to the point that it could be considered more as a commentary on the text rather than translation. This, in turn, reduces the reliability of the translation.

Also from the similarity of incorrect renderings plus the similarity of the language (which has not been discussed in this thesis) it is evident that OTV has been used as a base for some of the other translations. This idea is supported by Thomas and Vahman, (Thomas and Vahman 1985). Even though other translations may have used OTV as a base for their work, they have improved the number of incorrect renderings, and have reduced the number of archaic words or foreign expressions. The language has also been modernized.

5.5 Limits of the Research

One of the limitations of this study is that only one translation theory, namely meaning-based approach has been used as the standard for comparing, analyzing and evaluating the five Farsi versions of the chosen passage of the Scripture. There are other translation theories that could be used for this purpose.

Another limitation is that only one passage of Scripture has been chosen for evaluation as a representative of the whole Bible. It is obvious that one passage cannot be a good representative for the whole Scripture. Therefore, choosing a few different passages, with different levels of difficulties, different genres and different styles of writings would be much better.

The third limitation of this study is the difficulty of precisely categorizing the translational issues. There are no clear cut criteria that could be used exactly in the same way for every issue.

The limited Greek knowledge of the author of this thesis is the next limitation of this study, which in turn, makes the exegesis of the original Scripture heavily dependent on the work of other scholars.

Finally, it is of vital importance to test the suggested translations with other native speakers of Farsi. Unfortunately due to geographical and political circumstances, comprehension checking with other native speakers of Farsi could not be carried out.

5.6 Suggestions for Further Studies

Since this thesis has compared the translations only based on meaning-based translation theory, it is suggested other translation theories such as Relevance theory to be used to compare the translations. And since, only one passage of Scripture has been compared and analyzed in this thesis, it is needful to compare and analyze different passages with different levels of difficulties and different genres to achieve a more accurate result. Finally it is suggested that translations be checked by additional native Farsi speakers to find out to what degree they are able to convey the true meaning.

This study provides some objective criteria to define what a good translation should be but defining a good translation is also helped by finding out about the perception of acceptability of the translation to the whole of the native speaker population which is one of the most important criteria in Bible translation.