



A Study of Translation of Fillers and Catch Phrases in Two Persian Translations of *The Catcher in the Rye*

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Abstract

Considering the formality of language, colloquial language is one of the language levels that might be used by the author for an effective characterization and making the atmosphere of the story. This language has different features such as the use of short, ungrammatical sentences, repetition, hesitation, catch phrases, and fillers. These features should be reflected in translation thoroughly. In this study, we focused on the fillers and catch phrases as a subpart of colloquial expressions in particular. Fillers are the sounds, words, and phrases used to fill pauses in speaking. Catch phrases, on the other hand, are the expressions used repeatedly to represent a person's ideas or points of view. These two subparts of colloquial language have the feature of "repetition" in common and this feature should be maintained in the process of translation. In this study, the frequency of the strategies used in the translation of the fillers and catch phrases, applied by the Persian translators of *the Catcher in the Rye*, (i.e., Karimi, 2002, and Najafi, 1998) were computed to see how the translators dealt with repeated expressions and how the style and content of TT were affected. The analysis of the data indicated that repetition, as one of colloquial stylistic aspects of the text, is lost when the translator uses the strategies of "repetition" "cancelling" and "omission."

Keywords: Translation, Colloquial Language, the Catcher in the Rye, Catch Phrases, Fillers, Repeated Expressions

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1. Introduction

In a novel, language plays a very important role. It introduces the character, his or her social class, and the culture of the speaker. It also reflects the atmosphere of the novel. Language is one of the most important devices applied by the author in presenting the characters. In fact, authors communicate to their readers through the tongue of their characters, and they state their ideas, thoughts, and intentions through these characters. Furthermore, the language of characters leads the readers to their identity, social class, their level of literacy, and so on. In this regard, Landers (2001), states, “in any language, every utterance and even a word in isolation convey a set of associations that go beyond the literal denotation of words” (p. 59). In fact, Landers believes that human beings, consciously or unconsciously, equate words, expressions, grammatical construction, and even intonation patterns with nonlinguistic characteristic such as class, status, and educational level, which are defined socially.

Thus, translating with the same level of formality is of great importance in translation, especially when the author uses the languages as his or her stylistic tool. As a result, the first and the most crucial responsibility of the translator is the recognition of the language and the style that has been used in a novel and render them with the same level in order to produce the same feeling on the target reader. According to Reidel (1980), “ideally translation presupposes a faithful rendition of all features of the original text on the same stylistic level while observing aspects of overall unity” (p. 204).

Considering the formality of language, colloquial language is one of the language levels that might be used by the author for an effective characterization and making the atmosphere of the story. This language has different features such as the use of short, ungrammatical sentences, catch phrases, and fillers. These features should be reflected in translation thoroughly. According to Nopper (2010), a proper assessment of the nonstandard language like colloquial language, youth language, and so forth of the source text is necessary in order to create the same effect of the nonstandard language in the target text. A translator should keep in mind that such an effect is not an incidental consequence, but an intentional one. Therefore, the proper translation of this language and finding correct equivalences by the translator in order to achieve the author’s intended goals and to provoke the same impact from the target readers and to preserve cultural and local coloring of the original text are of great importance. In this study, we focused on the fillers and catch phrases as a subpart of colloquial expressions in particular. To achieve this goal, the novel of *the Catcher in the Ryewas* chosen.

1.1. Fillers and Catch Phrases in the *Catcher in the Rye*

In the case of *the Catcher in the Rye*, the author J. D. Salinger (1951) uses the specific kind of language to show the protagonist's personality. In fact, all of the language of the novel enhances its thematic concerns as well as characterization and formulates the character, his social class, and at the same time, the atmosphere of the story. Reidel (1980) asserts that:

Salinger's *the Catcher in the Rye* is a stylistic masterpiece with regard to contextual details as well as to coherence of the whole. Central to the book is a strongly delineated protagonist who is characterized mainly through his use of language and through episodic detail. (p. 198)

Most critics such as Reidel (1980) and Emami (2006) who looked at *the Catcher in the Rye* believe that its language is a true rendering of a teenager's colloquial speech. The choice of words, ungrammatical sentences, and fillers are all samples of this type of language in this book. Therefore, it is very important for the translator to pay attention to the little things Salinger does in his use of language and honor his style.

Fillers are the sounds, words, and phrases used to fill pauses in speaking. Catch phrases, on the other hand, are the expressions used repeatedly to represent a person's ideas or points of view. According to Kruihof (2010), the frequent use of fillers and catch phrases reflects the different aspects of the main character and can be regarded as a part of the author's style. The main protagonist of this novel frequently uses fillers and catch phrases in his speech. Because fillers and catch phrases are often part of the way of speaking applied by a certain group of people, they tell you something about the people who use them. Because there seems to be such an abundance of fillers in this novel, the translator needs to determine how to cope with them. In other words, the emphasis placed by the writer on certain words or syllables adds to the novel's aspects of spoken language. It allows the protagonist's to maintain the personality and frustrations that the writer provided him. All of these fillers have been used by the author to keep the main protagonist in his role of struggling, rebellious teenager that hates the phony adult world. Thus, if the translator chooses to eliminate them, this character changes to a flat character. By maintaining these curse terms, fillers, and catch phrase, the translation becomes a little harsher and it matches the source text. In other words, because the fillers in the novel are vital to the writer's style, their omission may mean compromising on the novel's style.

In other words, the main character's mental state, a state of rebellion against the society's established values and the phoniness he detects in these values is shown in the way he uses his language to emphasize how he feels about the fake adult world he sees around him: The more he seems to despise something, the more his tone becomes harsher. He uses swear words to emphasize things he dislikes. Because these elements make up a big part of the writer's style and

the main character's personality, the translator needs to maintain all these factors by trying to find equivalences for the novel's colloquial language.

1.2. Translation of Fillers and Catch Phrases

Nopper (2010) has introduced two translation strategies that can be applied for the translation of colloquial expressions in general and fillers in particular. The first strategy is "repetition cancelling," that is, the repetitive words in the source text are translated with a diversity of words, with the same denotation in the target text. This makes the lexicon of the target text more diverse than the lexicon of the source text. This strategy neutralizes the use of nonstandard language, which is characterized by the repetition of certain words that are considered popular.

Lingen (2007, cited in Nopper, 2012) states that the large amount of repetition in the speech is a characteristic of young adult's speech and colloquial language that signifies both the otherness in comparison to the standard language and the popularity of certain words. Thus, repetition cancelling in young adult literature levels out the difference between a standard language and a nonstandard variety. The other strategy that Nopper suggests in translation of these repeated expressions is "omission," which is frequently applied and is used in all genres of texts.

2. Methodology

2.1 Materials

As the main character of the novel of *the Catcher in the Rye* (Salinger, 1951), Holden Caulfield speaks an informal language and he uses fillers and catch phrases to a great extent. Therefore, the corpus of this research was *the Catcher in the Rye* by Salinger (1951) and its two Persian translations by Karimi (2002) and Najafi (1998). The scope of this study was confined to the dialogs of the main characters and his peer which contain a great deal of colloquial expressions such as fillers or catch phrases. Therefore, chapters 3, 4, 6, 9, 15, 17, and 19 were included in this research.

2.2 Procedure

An attempt was made to find out what strategies were used by the translators in dealing with the repeated words and the fillers.

As the first step in this phase of research, the data that were repeated several times were tabulated and the different translations of these words in the two translations were found. As the next step, these data were examined through the following scale (strategies introduced by Nopper, 2010):

1. Repetition cancelling
2. Omission

Finally, the data were compared with their equivalents in both translations regarding the above strategies, and the frequency of each strategy was calculated in each translation to see what strategies were used more by these two Persian translators in translation of therepeated phrases and fillers.

3. Results and Discussion

The words *hell* and *goddam* were the most frequent catch phrases found in the protagonist’s speeches in these dialogues. *Lousy*, *bastard*, and *morons* were the other catch phrases in the protagonist’s speech. *And all* and *and stuff* were of the fillers frequent in the protagonist’s speech. Table 1 shows the frequency of these expressions in the protagonist’s speech:

Table 1. The Frequency of Catch Phrases and Fillers

Expression	Frequency	Percentage
Goddam	33	18.43%
Hell	14	7.8%
Bastard	6	3.35%
Moron	8	3.91%
Lousy	7	3.35%
and all	23	13.14%
and stuff	7	3.91%
Total	98	54.74%

In fact, the total number of the protagonist’s sentences that contained colloquial expressions and stated in the dialogues with his peers was 179. Almost more than half of these 179 sentences (i.e., about 98 sentences) contained catch phrases or fillers. The fact that these catch phrases and fillers have occurred so often in these small number of passages of the text may suggest that they are equally frequent in the rest of the novel.

As fillers and catch phrases are of the characteristics of the novel’s style, their proper rendering is of great importance. Karimi (2002) has omitted 67.34% of the expressions and has used the strategy of “repetition cancelling” for about 20.40% of the expressions. Najafi (1998), on the other hand, has omitted 56.12% of the fillers and catch phrases and has translated 22.44% of these expressions through “repetition cancelling.”

The rest of the data—12.24% in Karimi’s (2002) translation and 21.42% in Najafi’s (1998) translation—have been rendered following Salinger’s style. That is, these expressions have been repeated the same as the original text as

the character’s catch phrase. Tables 2-5 as well as Figures 1 and 2 give a better view of the data and the translation strategies:

Table 2. The Frequency of Karimi’s Strategies in Translating Catch Phrases

Catch Phrase	Omission (O)	Repetition Cancelling (RC)
Goddam	30	3
Hell	11	3
Bastard	1	2
Moron	2	0
Lousy	0	7

Table 3. The Frequency of Karimi’s Strategies in Translating Fillers

Fillers	Omission (O)	Repetition Cancelling (RC)
and all	19	1
and stuff	3	4

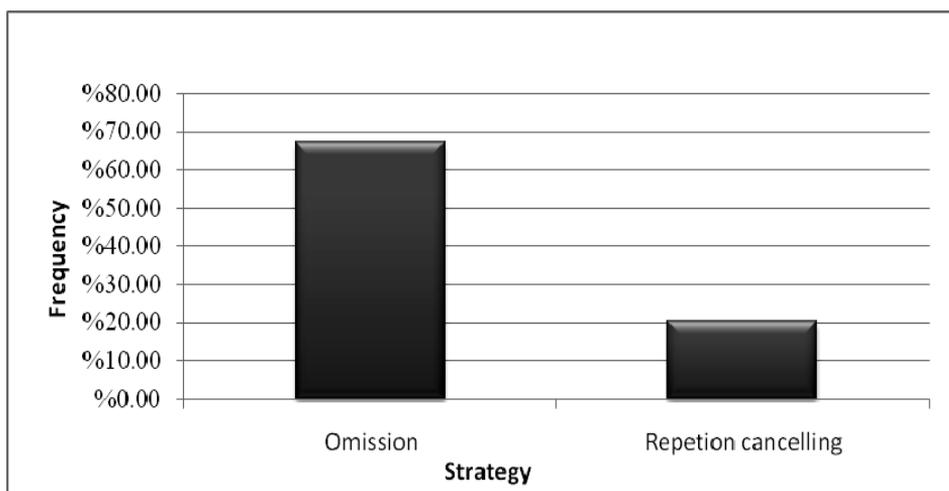


Figure1. The Frequency of Karimi’s Strategies in Translation of Catch Phrases and Fillers

Table 4. The Frequency of Najafi’s Strategies in Translating Catch Phrases

Catch phrases	Omission	Repetition Cancelling (RC)
Goddam	24	3
Hell	9	5
Bastard	0	2
Moron	0	2
Lousy	0	5

Table 5. The Frequency of Najafi's Strategies in Translation of Fillers

Filler	Omission	Repetition Cancelling (RC)
and all	18	2
and stuff	4	3

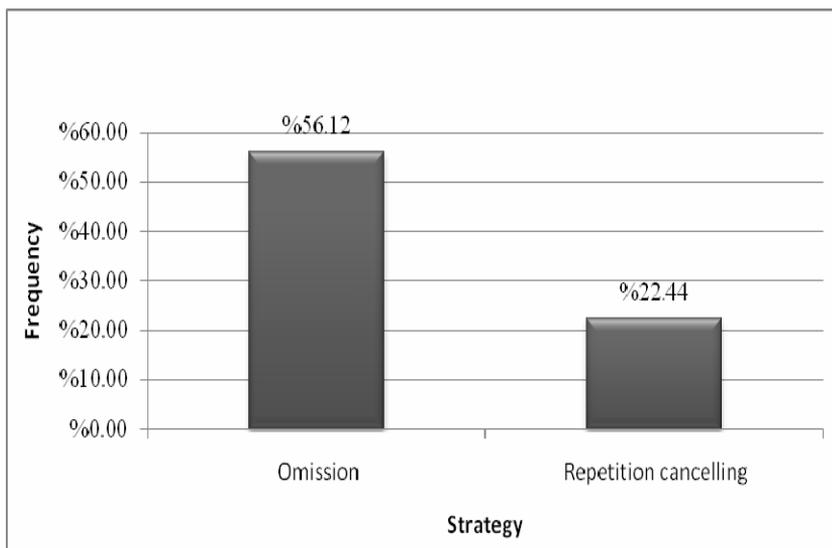


Figure 2. The Frequency of Najafi's Strategies in Translation of Catch Phrases and Fillers

3.1. Samples

The followings are some samples of the application of the two strategies of “repetition cancelling” and “omission” by the two translators. The catch phrases and fillers are omitted in the following examples:

- **Example # 1:** In the woods or some *goddam* place. (p. 170)
 - ترجمه‌ی ۱: یه جای دور، توی یه جنگل یا یه جای دیگه. (کریمی، ص ۲۰۱)
 - ترجمه‌ی ۲: تو جنگل یا یه همچین جایی. (نجفی، ص ۱۳۰)
- **Example # 2:** What the *hellya* doing, anyway? (p. 60)
 - ترجمه‌ی ۱: خوب، داری چکار می‌کنی؟ (کریمی، ص ۷۳)
 - ترجمه‌ی ۲: چیکار می‌کنی؟ (نجفی، ص ۵۰)
- **Example # 3:** No kidding, they're better for sex *and all*. (p. 189)
 - ترجمه‌ی ۱: بی شوخی می‌گم، اونا بهترن؟ (کریمی، ص ۲۲۳)
 - ترجمه‌ی ۲: جدی؟ بهترن؟ (نجفی، ص ۱۴۳)

- **Example # 4:** We'll stay in these cabin cams *and stuff* like that till the dough runs out. (p. 171)
 - ترجمه‌ی ۱: ما توی مهمونخونه‌های ییلاقی اون قدر می‌مونیم تا پول هامون ته بکشه. (کریمی، ص ۲۰۳)
 - ترجمه‌ی ۲: می‌ریم یه کاروان می‌گیریم تا پولاً تموم شه کیف می‌کنیم. (نجفی، ص ۱۳۱)
- **Example # 5:** You're a real friendly *bastard*. (p. 192)
 - ترجمه‌ی ۱: تو یه دوست واقعی هستی. (کریمی، ص ۲۲۶)
- **Example # 6:** That's the way you can always tell a *moron*. (p. 70)
 - ترجمه‌ی ۱: با شماها باید از این راه وارد شد. (کریمی، ص ۷۰)

The strategy of “repetition cancelling” can be seen in the following examples in which the translators have used different equivalents, rendering a single word and have disregarded the Salinger’s style in using catch phrases and fillers.

Translating *goddam* to لعنتی and کوفتی in about six sentences may present the “repetition” that is of the characteristics of Salinger’s style, but translating it as عوضی, بدبخت, or other words are the instances of “repetition cancelling.”

- **Example #7:** You don't even know if her first name is Jane or Jean, ya *goddam moron!* (p. 57)
 - ترجمه‌ی ۱: تو بی شعور بدبخت حتی اسم دختره رو درست و حسابی نمی‌دونی. (کریمی، ص ۶۹)
 - ترجمه‌ی ۲: توحته نمی‌دونی اسمش جینه یا جون، کودن عوضی! (نجفی، ص ۴۸)
- **Example # 8:** *Goddam it!* (p. 33)
 - ترجمه‌ی ۲: کثافت! (نجفی، ص ۲۹)
- **Example # 9:** I'd rather have a *goddam* horse. (p. 170)
 - ترجمه‌ی ۱: ترجیح می‌دم یه اسب مردنی داشته باشم تا یه ماشین قدیمی. (کریمی، ص ۲۰۱)

Translating *and all* as واین حرفا can be regarded as the “repetition” of the expression. Other translations can be regarded as a “repetition cancelling.”

- **Example # 10:** I said I'd pay you for coming *and all*. (p. 127)
 - ترجمه‌ی ۲: گفتم که پولشو می‌دم همه شو. (نجفی، ص ۹۸)

The translation of *moron* as کودن in six sentences in Najafi's (1998) translation and بی شعور in six sentences of Karimi's (2002) translation is an

example of “repetition,” but translating *moron* as مشنگ is an example of “repetition cancelling.”

• **Example # 11:** You’re a dirty *moron*! (p. 135)

- ترجمه‌ی ۲: تویه مشنگ کثافتی! (نجفی، ص ۱۰۴)

Translating *lousy* to different expressions گند, کثافت, and قناس may mean losing this catch phrase in the translation.

• **Example # 12:** She was worried that it might make her legs *lousy*, all thick and all. (p. 41)

- ترجمه‌ی ۱: غصه‌ی پاهاشو می‌خورد که هوا باعث بشه از ریخت بیفته چاق و کلفت بشند. (کریمی، ص ۵۰)

- ترجمه‌ی ۲: نگران بود پاهاشو خراب کنه می‌ترسید پاهاش کت و کلفت بشه. (نجفی، ص ۳۴)

• **Example # 13:** She had a *lousy* childhood. (p. 42)

- ترجمه‌ی ۱: جین بچگی‌هاش خیلی سختی کشیده. (کریمی، ص ۵۱)

- ترجمه‌ی ۲: بچگی گندی داشته. (نجفی، ص ۳۶)

Rendering *bastard* as حرومزاده in almost half of the sentences may convey the “repetition” of this catch phrase in the original text. Therefore, the other equivalents are the examples of “repetition cancelling.”

• **Example # 14:** He’s drunk as *bastard*. (p. 38)

- ترجمه‌ی ۱: مست و خرابه. (کریمی، ص ۴۷)

- ترجمه‌ی ۲: حسابی سگ مسته. (نجفی، ص ۳۳)

• **Example # 15:** She’s probably just didn’t know what a handsome charming *bastard* you are. (p. 44)

- ترجمه‌ی ۱: شاید نمی‌دونسته تو چه پسر خوشگلی هستی. (کریمی، ص ۵۳)

Translating *stuff* as وسایل, برنامه, or کار all are examples of “repetition cancelling” in translation of this filler.

• **Example # 16:** I left the goddam foils *and stuff* on the subway (p. 27)

- ترجمه‌ی ۱: من شمشیر و سایر چیزها را توی مترو جا گذاشتم. (کریمی، ص ۴۳)

- ترجمه‌ی ۲: وسایل و شمشیرای کوفتی رو تو تراموا جا گذاشتم. (نجفی، ص ۳۳)

Finally, translation of *hell* as سخت, بدجوری, and خیلی can be instances of “repetition cancelling” relating to this case.

• **Example # 17:** I’m lonesome as *hell* (p. 193)

- ترجمه‌ی ۱: من سخت تنها هستم. (کریمی، ص ۲۲۷)

- ترجمه‌ی ۲: من بدجوری تنها هستم. (نجفی، ص ۴۱۵)

Regarding the translation of fillers and catch phrases, there are only little differences between the charts of Karimi's (2002) translation and Najafi's (1998) translation that is worth mentioning. Karimi has made use of the translation strategy of "omission" more than Najafidid (67.34% to 56.12%). Both Karimi and Najafi have repeatedly applied the translation strategy of "repetition cancelling." Karimi has used this strategy for about 20.04%, and Najafi, on the other hand, applied this strategy in 22.44% of the expressions.

4. Conclusion

Both "repetition cancelling" and "omission" cause the target text to seem to be more neutral in comparison to the source text. In other words, whenever certain repeated terms that are part of the stylistic feature of the text's language are replaced with different expressions and, in fact, "repetition cancelling" happens, "repetition" as one of colloquial stylistic aspects of the text is lost and the amount of colloquial language is reduced. In other words, "repetition cancelling" of catch phrases and fillers is part of the "neutralizing" strategy and if the translator uses it repeatedly, he or she reduces the amount of nonstandard and colloquial language.

Whenever the omission of colloquial expressions are inevitable because of the different structure of two languages, the translators should compensate the loss of informality in their translation because maintaining the style of the text is one of the most important issues in translating the literary text and loss of style in some cases like *the Catcher in the Rye* leads to loss of meaning. Unfortunately, this important aspect of the novel's style was ignored to a great extent in the translation of the two translators via "omission" and "repetition cancelling" without any compensation and, therefore, led to the fading of some aspects of the main character's personality in these two translations.

Of the Holden's favorite catch phrases are *goddam* and *hell*. Nowadays, *goddamn* is simply an utterance mostly devoid of meaning. However, it is still a favorite among young people if only because of meaninglessness. The previous generations used this word to help them get rid of the religion that has been laid on them. Although it may have lost some of its meaning, it has become simply an everyday uttering of annoyance or anger and is used by the main character of this novel to convey the extent of his true dislike. The other expression that Holden Caulfield, the main character of this novel, uses frequently to express his annoyance is *hell*. These two expressions and the other similar catch phrases and fillers are placed there for a reason. By using these words and this style in such a manner, certain persona has been created in Holden, the protagonist. In other words, all of these qualities make a rebellious character that express his annoyance through his language and whenever possible should be mentioned in a translation. Therefore, by omission of these expressions or by ignoring the repetition of these expressions, this character

would lose his boyish and spoken style. This loss would make him a less rebellious and struggling teenager and finally leads to losing the novel's style.

The results can be compared to similar studies such as Rua (1997) in "The Translation of Idiolects in the *Catcher in the Rye*: An Approach Through Lexicalized Structure" that discusses loss of meaning in translation. Rua states that:

Most of the inadequacies detected in Spanish and Galican versions are related to the translations by paraphrase and by omission. In my view, they are due to the fact that the translators have failed to recognize the defining features of the characters' idiolect (e.g., the systematic use of some lexicalized structures). Apparently, they are not aware of the fact that the writer is deliberately resorting to trite and monotonous vocabulary in order to define the characters and their speech habits. Both translations (but particularly the Spanish one) seem utterly unable to render the characters' idiolects accurately. Instead of trying to convey those idiolects whenever possible (of course, adapting them to the peculiarities of the TL), in most cases the translators resort to the systematic omission of recurrent structures, and some other times they translate those recurrent structures in many different ways without taking into account the context, the style, and the character who uses them. As a result, the translation becomes expressionless.

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