CHAPTER 5

ON THE TRANSLATION OF CONCEITS AND PARADOXES: A MORPHOLOGICAL READING OF THE TURKISH TEXTS OF THE FLEA AND HOLY SONNET X BY JOHN DONNE

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INTRODUCTION

In seventeenth-century England, several poets such as John Donne, George Herbert, Andrew Marvell, Henry Vaughan, and Richard Crashaw started to write poems that were later called 'metaphysical poetry'. The earliest use of the term 'metaphysical' dates back to a letter by William Drummond of Hawthornden (1585-1649) in which he wrote about poets who use "metaphysical ideas and scholastical quiddities" (Greene, 2012). However, it was John Dryden (1631-1700) who first employed the term metaphysical for these poets in *A Discourse Concerning Satire* (1693). Later it was "Samuel Johnson, who made the first systematic study of Donne and some of his contemporaries in his *Life of Cowley* (and who) defined these poets' wit as 'Metaphysical'" (Singh, 1992). When the lexical meaning of this term is considered, it should be understood as a philosophy about explaining existence and cosmology. However, what Johnson meant was different from this general understanding of the word; he most probably must have referred to "a heterogeneous yoking together of ideas by violence" (Singh, 1992). Donne and his followers, pursuant to this idea, were writing

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in an unaccustomed fashion by presenting challenging ideas in unconventional ways. While in the beginning, the use of this title was restricted only to a number of poets such as Donne and Cowley, later it was used for all the followers of Donne including Marvell, Herbert, Vaughan or Crashaw.

What is meant by 'writing in an unaccustomed fashion'? Although the metaphysical poets wrote in an age that can be defined as Elizabethan, they were completely different from the conventional Elizabethan poets in several ways. First, while the Elizabethan poets gave importance to the pastoral tradition of their predecessors and the Greek mythology, the Metaphysical poets never preferred conventional usages in their poetry. As Peterson points out, "Donne's position in relation to the plain and courtly traditions is essentially one of opposition to the courtly" (1990). The metaphysical poets used unusual techniques and themes in their poems: Different from different from the conventional Elizabethan love theme in which the lover glorifies the beloved and love is platonic, the metaphysical poets had a completely different view of love in which the lover wants to attain the beloved physically, tries to convince her and she is not glorified as the beloved in the Elizabethan poetry. Other characteristics that define their poetry can be given as the use of colloquial language, new and original images, employment of conceits and paradoxes, and the use of intellectual knowledge about science and geography in their poems. All of these qualities attached to their poetry are emblematic of their originality in an age when the other poets of the period were still concerned about conventional usages and poetic tendencies. As in this study, particularly the use of 'conceits' and 'paradoxes' in two specific poems and their Turkish translations are focused on, in the following part these 'metaphysical' terms are studied extensively, and how these words are formed morphologically both in English and Turkish are examined. Before continuing with this section, as

two of John Donne's poems are analysed in the study, John Donne, his poetry, and his poetic poetic particularities are studied below.

A polyglot poet, preacher, and scholar, John Donne (1572-1631) upheld the position of a priest in the Church of England in 1615, and as Hunter states, although he was of Roman Catholic origin, he "formally rejected Catholicism sometime in early adulthood and became one of the greatest Protestant preachers in the history of the English church" (2010). In 1621, he became the Dean of St. Paul's Cathedral, a post he held until his death in 1631.

John Donne's life and writing career can be divided into two spheres. While, in the first period of his life, he dwelt upon a physical kind of love; in the later period of his life he turned towards a spiritual kind of love in his poems, where he addressed God as if he were a lover. As McCoy and Harlan express "the more libertine, sexually daring, and cynical poems are from his early youth and (...) the more sincere and serious poems, including the *Holy Sonnets,* probably were written after 1600" (1992). During his lifetime, Donne wrote poems, prose works, and religious sermons. However, they were mostly published posthumously: his works were collected in *Songs and Sonnets* (1633), *The Satires and Elegies* (1590), and *The Anniversaries* (1601). Unlike his predecessors and the Elizabethan poets, who favour platonic love and conventional poetic usages, Donne is highly critical of this kind of love and tries to attain physical love in his poems. Furthermore, different from the decorative Elizabethan poems which have traditional stanzaic patterns, Donne invents elaborate stanzas in his poems though he sometimes uses simple rhyming patterns.

As John Donne's poems are regarded to be 'metaphysical', the examination in this study is restricted to its two specific literary characteristics: Among the characteristics of metaphysical poetry, specifically 'conceit' and 'paradox' are chosen in this study as these two poetic elements are the ones that mainly incorporate

and address metaphysical poetry and can be taken as the most outstanding features of it. In a sense, metaphysical poetry can be identified with majorly these two poetic elements. When viewed from this aspect, as Donne is known to be the precursor in using conceits and paradoxes in his poems, and the most well-recognized of them are known to be *The Flea* and *Holy Sonnet X*; these two poems have been chosen for analysis in this study. The use of conceits and paradoxes in specifically Donne's poetry is examined in detail in the following part, and how they are going to be analysed in the Turkish translations of the two specific poems given above in a morphological sense is also studied in the next section.

METHODOLOGY AND USE OF CONCEITS AND PARADOXES IN POETRY

As this chapter seeks to examine the conceits and paradoxes in the Turkish translations of *The Flea* and *Holy Sonnet X* from a morphological point of view; first the metaphysical terms 'conceit' and 'paradox' are studied below, then the two poems and the use of these poetic elements in the original works are examined, and finally, morphological analysis in terms of poetry review is studied. After that, in the following section, under the heading of 'The Case Study', the morphological analysis of the use of paradoxes and conceits in the Turkish translations of these two poems is made. Finally, in the 'Conclusion' section, the related analyses are evaluated, and the contribution to the study field is given.

Conceits and paradoxes can be regarded as the most striking features of Metaphysical poems written by John Donne. A conceit can be defined as an extended metaphor or a far-fetched comparison in which different or nonidentical things seem to have a relationship. According to Helen Gardner "a comparison becomes a conceit when we are made to concede likeness while being strongly conscious of unlikeness" (1967).

James's explanation of the conceit is also very comprehensive:

It embodies and develops the thought rather than merely embellishes it. Designed to define or persuade, it represents an extreme proof by analogy and forces speculation: its dramatic, rigorous, complex and unlikely analogies express its rhetorical intention. The result is a style in which nothing can be taken for granted and where subject, tone, professed attitudes and sentiments are all equivocal. In fact, a distorted or unexpected perspective is almost the essence of the Metaphysical conceit (1988).

By using unlikely analogies and creating a kind of connection between two different things, the poet can create original conceits and attract the attention of the reader. John Donne and other metaphysical poets frequently use this literary element in their poems. Below, in the following part of the study, how John Donne makes use of conceits, even with a flea, is studied further.

Apart from conceits, John Donne and his followers employ paradoxes in their poetry, which is a new attitude in the environment of Elizabethan times, when poets usually refer to the sun as the golden eye of heaven or praise the beloved that they cannot reach or even think of being close to her. In such an atmosphere, metaphysical poets dare to attain the love of the beloved and even have a physical kind of affair with her, and while doing this they use colloquial language. Another device John Donne employs in his poetry to persuade the beloved one is the paradox. A paradox can be defined as "a statement that although seemingly contradictory or absurd may actually be well founded or true" (Harmon and Holman, 1996). As paradox is one of the most outstanding poetic elements of Donne's poetry, its use in both the original and target text is evaluated below. Before continuing with the next section where the target texts are examined, the two poems and the use of conceits and paradoxes in the original poems are studied below.

The Flea is an important poem of Donne that beautifully represents his typical use of conceit. In this poem, the speaker uses the image of a flea in order to convince his beloved to be with him, and one of Donne's most important conceits can be seen in this poem. Donne likens a small flea to the marriage bed and marriage temple of his beloved and himself:

Me it sucked first, and now sucks thee,

And in this flea our two bloods mingled be;

Thou know'st that this cannot be said

A sin, or shame, or loss of maidenhead

(lines 3-6)

This flea is you and I, and this

Our marriage bed and marriage temple is

(lines 12, 13)

Although the comparison of the flea to a marriage temple first seems to be absurd, one is able to concede likeness later when given the reason. As it first sucked his blood and then her blood, their blood is mingled inside the flea. Thus, this little creature stands for their coming together. For that reason, he proposes that their sexual mingling would not be a sin or shame as they are already together in the flea that is likened to the marriage bed and marriage temple of his beloved and himself. Although this idea seems to be irrational at first, the reader is able to concede likeness between the flea and the marriage bed after being given the reason. Therefore, the image of the flea is considered to be one of the most striking examples of conceit by many scholars. This comparison "is one of the most extreme examples of this type of comparison known as a metaphysical conceit" (Willmot, 2008). It is possible to think that his poem becomes "an individual poem an autonomous verbal artefact, driven and ultimately resolved by its own special logic" (Mousley, 1999). And this logic in a sense is called the use of conceit.

Among Donne's religious poems, *Holy Sonnet X*, which he wrote in the later period of his literary career, is perhaps the most renowned one. A typical example of paradox can be seen in Donne's *Holy Sonnet X.* At the end of the poem, Donne says:

And death shall be no more; Death, thou shalt die.

<div align="center">(line 14)</div>

In this line, the idea of the death of death seems to be explicitly a paradox. However, when the whole poem is examined, it is seen clearly that death is only a short sleep, everyone will wake up eternally in the end and death will no longer exist:

One short sleep past, we wake eternally

<div align="center">(line 13)</div>

Reading this line, it is seen that the seemingly contradictory state turns out to be well-founded and rational. In the poem, the speaker challenges death and accuses it of being proud of his destructive power. Death thinks that it kills people, but the speaker suggests that they do not die in reality, and it cannot kill him either. He further suggests that death is slave to fate, chance, kings, and desperate men and is forced to live with war, poison, and sickness; if they were not present, death would have no power. He later says that as poppy or charms can also make men sleep, death is not superior to them. In the last lines of the poem, one can see a typical example of paradox which suggests that death will die in the end. This idea also seems to be rational: after people die and live in the eternal world, death will no longer exist, and it will die.

As in the study, the words that constitute the conceits and paradoxes in the two poems are examined morphologically in the next section, morphology and morphological analysis is studied below before continuing with the analysis part.

Morphology, which emerged as a sub-discipline of linguistics in the nineteenth century (Katamba, 1993), can be defined as the

study of word formation and the internal structure of words. It is the study of morphemes[2] in a word, the way they are arranged, and what morphemes every word is made of. Rochelle Lieber defines morphology as "the study of word formation, including the ways new words are coined in the languages of the world, and the way forms of words are varied depending on how they are used in sentences" (2016). Studying morphology helps the reader and researcher define and understand how a language is organized in meaningful units. When considered in literary analysis, a morphological analysis of a literary piece of writing helps the reader and critic divide all the parts of the word, analyse them, and understand the context of the text in a more comprehensive way. Though morphological analysis can be used with varied functions, in this study it is used in analysing the words that constitute conceits and paradoxes in poetry, and how the Turkish structures of the same words can reflect a similar literary effect. To do this, first, phases and divisions of morphological analysis are given below, and next the Turkish target texts of the two poems are examined within this context in the following section.

As the morphological analysis in this study is limited to the examination of morphemes and analysis of each unit in a conceit or paradox translation, it is required to study morphemes and their characteristics in this section. Morphemes can be categorized as 'free' morphemes and 'bound' morphemes. Francis Katamba in his book *Morphology* expresses that "roots which are capable of standing independently are called free morphemes (…) such morphemes carry most of the semantic content of utterances" (1993). Free morphemes cannot be broken down into other units and can always stand alone as a word. However, not all words can be free morphemes. As some of them need another unit to form a word, they cannot stand alone as a word. Again, as Katamba states,

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2   "A morpheme is the smallest unit of language that has its own meaning." (Lieber, 2016).

bound morphemes "always occur with some other word-building element attached to them; (and) bound roots can recur in numerous other words as prefixes or suffixes" (1993). Consequently, while free morphemes can stand alone and cannot be broken into other units, bound morphemes cannot occur as independent words. In this sense, as can be seen in the following part, bound morphemes are seen in the form of prefixes and suffixes in this study. While analysing the morphemes of each conceit word or paradox word in the study, the morphological complexity tool[3] by Brezina and Pallotti is utilized.

THE CASE STUDY: A MORPHOLOGICAL ANALYSIS OF PARADOXES AND CONCEITS IN THE TURKISH TARGET TEXTS OF *THE FLEA* AND *HOLY SONNET X*

In this section, in light of what has been given in the previous part, the Turkish translations of the words that form the conceits and paradoxes in John Donne's *The Flea* and *Holy Sonnet X* are analysed from a morphological point of view. In this sense, the particular words that form these poetic effects are examined breaking each related word into units and morphemes in the two target poems.

In the poem *The Flea*, the given conceit in the previous part of this study is comprised of the word 'flea'. Below, the use of the word 'flea' is studied in both the source text and the target text.

When the source text is examined through the parts that contain this specific word, it is observed that this word can be found in six of the total twenty-seven lines:

Mark but this <u>flea,</u> and mark in this,

<div align="center">(line 1)</div>

And in this <u>flea</u> our two bloods mingled be;

<div align="center">(line 4)</div>

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3   http://corpora.lancs.ac.uk/vocab/analyse_morph.php

Oh stay, three lives in one <u>flea</u> spare,

<div align="center">(line 10)</div>

This <u>flea</u> is you and I, and this

<div align="center">(line 12)</div>

Wherein could this <u>flea</u> guilty be,

<div align="center">(line 21)</div>

Will waste, as this <u>flea's</u> death took life from thee.

<div align="center">(line 27)</div>

When the Turkish target text is examined through the parts that contain this specific word, it is observed that this word can be found in eight of the total twenty-seven lines:

Bak şimdi şu <u>pireye;</u> bak da gör işte[4],

<div align="center">(line 1)</div>

İki kan karışmış bile şu anda bu <u>pirede.</u>

<div align="center">(line 4)</div>

Oysa şu <u>pire</u>, kur falan yapmadan alıyor alacağını,

<div align="center">(line 7)</div>

Ah yapma, kıyma üç cana birden bir <u>pirede</u>;

Evlenme bir yana, daha da öte geçtik biz o <u>pirenin</u> bedeninde.

Bu gördüğün <u>pire</u> hem sensin şimdi, hem benim,

<div align="center">(lines 10,11,12)</div>

Suçu var mı şu <u>pirenin</u> şimdi, söyle?

<div align="center">(line 22)</div>

İşte, şu <u>pirenin</u> ölümü senin canından ne götürdüyse,

<div align="center">(line 26)</div>

When the word 'flea' is examined by being broken into its smallest units, the analysis given by the corpora tool[5] is:

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[4] The Turkish translation of the poem is B.Bozkurt's.

[5] http://corpora.lancs.ac.uk/vocab/process.php

Table 1. Morpheme analysis of the word 'flea'	
Word class	**Text total**
NOUNS	1
VERBS	0
MODALS	0
ADJECTIVES	0
ADVERBS	0
CONNECTORS (prepositions & conjunctions)	0
PRONOUNS	0
OTHER (gram, words)	0

The table clearly shows that the word 'flea' is a free morpheme, and it is a noun. It does not have any prefixes or suffixes throughout the poem pointing to the simple and colloquial language of the poet. However, the Turkish translation of the same words have some other bound morphemes in the conceit. When the Turkish word 'pire' and its variations given above are broken into their morphemes, it is observed:

pire -y -e[6]: 'pire' is the free morpheme, '-y' is the auxiliary sound, and '-e' is the dative suffix.

pire -de: 'pire' is the free morpheme, '-de' is the possessive suffix.

pire: 'pire' is the free morpheme.

pire -nin: 'pire' is the free morpheme, '-nin' is the genitive suffix.

The broken morphemes in this example show that though the word 'pire' is used several times in the target text, it has not been used only as a free morpheme. In accordance with the structure of the Turkish language, suffixes or bound morphemes have been added to the end of the free morpheme 'pire', and thus it is possible to argue that the simple and plain language usage in the original

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[6]   In this study, the Turkish words are broken into their morphemes by standing upon Muharrem Ergin's Türk Dil Bilgisi.

poem cannot be observed in the target text. As P.H. Matthews states "a word in Turkish is a sequence of distinct parts, each of which has a separate grammatical function. But in flectional languages they are not: in Ancient Greek the parts of words are less distinct" (1991). Hence, although this is due to the differences between English and Turkish, considering the examination above, it can be said that the target text does not embody the simplicity and plainness of the original text, and thus it does not reflect the plain language of the poet.

In *Holy Sonnet X,* the most explicit use of metaphysical poetry traits is the use of paradox. As studied in the previous section, the word that created the effect of paradox is 'death'. The death of death is not possible when considered in a logical sense; however, it is logical when one thinks that no one will ever die after they die once. The use of this word in both the source text and the target text is studied below.

When the source text is examined through the parts that contain this specific word, although all the fourteen lines of the sonnet are about the same word, it is observed that this word can be found in three of the total fourteen lines:

Death be not proud, though some have called thee

(line 1)

Die not, poore death, nor yet canst thou kill me.

(line 4)

And death shall be no more; death, thou shalt die.

(line 14)

When the Turkish target text is examined through the parts that contain this specific word, it is observed that this word can be found in two of the total fourteen lines as 'ölüm':

Gururlanma, ey Ölüm! Gerçekte yok bir keramet[7].

(line 2)

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[7] The Turkish translation of the poem is O.Eser's.

Zavallı <u>Ölüm</u>! Beni de beklemesen hani boşuna.

<div align="center">(line 4)</div>

When the word 'death' is examined by being broken into its smallest units, the analysis given by the corpora tool[8] is:

Table 2. Morpheme analysis of the word 'death'	
Word class	**Text total**
NOUNS	1
VERBS	0
MODALS	0
ADJECTIVES	0
ADVERBS	0
CONNECTORS (prepositions & conjunctions)	0
PRONOUNS	0
OTHER (gram, words)	0

The table clearly shows that the word 'death' is a free morpheme and does not have any suffixes or prefixes, and it is used in noun form. When the Turkish word 'ölüm' is broken into their morphemes, it is observed:

öl -üm: 'öl-' is the free morpheme, and '-üm' is the derivational affix.

In this example, while 'öl-' is the stem verb and a free morpheme, '-üm' is a derivational morpheme. Like the previous example of conceit use and its translation, in this example again while the original word is a free morpheme, the target word is comprised of a free morpheme and a bound one. This again suggests that while the original text reflects the simple style of the poet, in the target text the translated word is not a single and simple word. This is also due to the differences between the English language and the

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8   http://corpora.lancs.ac.uk/vocab/process.php

Turkish language. And while the paradox word in the original text is a noun, a verb (öl-) has become a noun in the target text with the use of a derivational affix.

The examples and analyses given above indicate that due to the different word formation characteristics of the two languages, the poetic style of the author cannot be reflected as the original in the target text. And this adds to the question of the hardship of poetry translation, the challenge in morphological and thus word formation problem in poetry translation.

CONCLUSION

The two poems studied in this chapter are the canonical ones by John Donne that give the reader the most outstanding examples of conceits and paradoxes in metaphysical poetry. Donne, who was both applauded and criticised by his contemporaries and later critics, was an original writer with his use of extraordinary poetic images, with his colloquial language, use of logical and persuasive arguments, and with his employment of conceits and paradoxes. As Winny suggests Donne was "the great literary innovator of his age" (1982) and it seems that he will continue to inspire other poets and the upcoming generations in the future. While his poems are still being read after centuries with their distinctive styles, they continue to be translated into other languages including Turkish.

It can be deduced at the end of the study that, although the Turkish target text can give the overall meaning and effect of the conceit and paradox words, the words chosen for the use of conceits and paradoxes cannot be used in the same way as the original ones. Though the original words that form the conceits and paradoxes are free morphemes and used in the form of nouns, the words used in the target text are not free morphemes and consist of several different parts of the language. And thus, this leads the reader to imply that the language of the target text is not as simple and plain

as one of the original text, which points to the fact that the style of the poet cannot be reflected in the specific translations of these poems.

It seems obvious that John Donne, his poems, and their translated versions will continue to contribute to man's intellectual development by making people reflect upon them with implicitly embedded meanings, and with their various styles.

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