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## **Exploring Translation Strategies of Middle Persian Texts: The Case of the 19<sup>th</sup> Chapter of Vandidad**

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### **Abstract**

The main objective of the present study was to semantically and syntactically explore translation strategies applied by translators in the translation of chapter nineteen of *Vandidad* from Avestan to Middle Persian for ritual purposes. To this end, the Middle Persian translation of *Vandidad* was studied, and the meaning of the words accompanying their syntactic roles in the *Avestan* language were compared to their Middle Persian equivalents. Then, the strategies applied by the translators were divided into two categories: semantic and syntactic ones. The findings of the study can shed some light on the translation strategies applied in the translation of ancient texts which can be used for deeper and broader scientific inquiry into Iranian ancient languages.

*Keywords: Avesta, Translation, Zand, Middle Persian, Strategy, Vandidad*

## 1. Introduction

Iranian or Indic languages are a branch of the Indo-Iranian languages in the Indo-European language family which have been spoken natively by inhabitants of Iranian Plateau. This linguistic term has been adopted from the name of Iran which is a very wide area without any kind of cultural borders, namely the region where Iranian languages were spoken since ancient times (Schmitt, 2011, p. 23). Ancient Iranian languages were spoken in a wide area from the northern borders of China in the east to the northern coasts of the Black Sea and Sea of Azov<sup>i</sup> to the west and from the north western parts of the Iranian Plateau to the coasts of Persian Gulf since the Iranian groups were separated from their Aryan siblings at the end of the second century BC until the collapse of the Achaemenid Empire in 330 BC (Jackson, 2014, p. 9). From a historical perspective, Iranian languages are divided into three categories: Old Iranian, Middle Iranian, and New Iranian. The two directly attested Old Iranian languages are Old Persian and Old *Avestan*. Old Persian as the ancestor of New Persian, is a language belonging to Achaemenid period (559 to 330 BC) in Pars and the only reliable evidences remained are the cuneiform inscriptions of Achaemenid kings. The language and the scripts, however, disappeared after the fall of Achaemenid Empire (Tafazoli, 1999, p. 23). *Avestan* is the language of Zoroastrian scripture, and there is a long time interval between collection and compilation of the oldest part, namely *Gathas*. The Middle Iranian languages are linguistically classified into two main groups: Western and Eastern Middle languages. The Western family includes Parthian (Arsacid Pahlavi or Pahlawānīg) and Middle Persian. The Parthian language was common in Parthian Period, and the Iranians have written works in this language to the late Sassanid period. Middle Persian language or Pahlavi was the language of the south and south western parts of Iran as well as the official language of the Sassanid dynasty (Tafazoli, 1999, p. 12).

Middle Persian known as Pārsīg which is a Western Middle Iranian language rooted in Old Persian continued to function as an official language even after the collapse of Sasanian Empire. The Middle Persian appeared after the demise of Achaemenid Empire, and continued up to the present time. Accordingly, from the third century BC until the late eighth and ninth centuries, Middle Persian was a living language; however, it was used as a dead ritual language up to the ninth and tenth centuries by the Iranian Zoroastrians (Schmitt, 2011, p. 223). The modern period includes Persian language and a wide variety of Iranian dialects and languages which were common within or beyond the borders of Iran or the languages which have been died or are still spoken. *Vandidad* is an ancient collection of Zoroastrian myths, prayers, and religious observances intended to defend against sources of infection and evil. The term *Vandidad* (which was previously *Vidodad* [Vi.daēva.dāta]) means someone whose rule is to evade and get away from *Div* (demons). The term *Div* originally meant god, i.e. a set of Indo-Iranian gods rejected by *Zoroaster*<sup>ii</sup>. Later on, the

meaning of *Div* changed from god and then rejected god to its modern meaning which is demon or devil. When writing and dividing *Avesta* into various sections, this part of the book was called *Vandidad* since it discusses the purity, cleanliness and avoidance of demons (Tafazoli, 1999, pp. 60-61). *Vandidad* is the nineteenth *Nask* or section of *Avesta* in the Sassanid period. It includes 22 *fargard* or chapters. In order to document the concepts which did not originally constitute the *Zoroaster's* doctrine, the questions are presented by him and *Ahura Mazda*<sup>iii</sup> answers these questions. Unlike other parts of Sassanid *Avesta*, *Vandidad* is largely intact. It seems that due to the religious functionality of the book in nightly rituals which were held on midnights (*Ushahin Gah*), it had to be protected against demonic threats (Kreyenbroek, 2005, p. 237). Moreover, it was used for issues regarding cleanliness and impurities. As a literary and religious book, the content of *Vandidad* has often been misunderstood by many scholars to the extent that it sometimes is not in consonance with modern perceptions and visions. However, the book narrates and clarifies various dimensions of everyday life in ancient Zoroastrian society. The nineteenth chapter, which was selected for the present study, includes 47 paragraphs<sup>iv</sup> on issues such as the efforts of *Ahriman*<sup>iv</sup> to deceive and kill *Zoroaster*, the commands of *Ahura Mazda* to *Zoroaster* to appeal gods for elimination of deceptions and distortions from the society, the function of *Barsom* to praise the creation of plants, the cleanliness of *Asho* (clean) man which is infected by touching *Naso*, preparing and passing across *Chinvat Bridge* where they meet the *Din* god, praising the gods of *Bahram* and *Tishtar*, five *Gahani* songs, seven territories, *Hirmand River*, and the power of *Zoroaster* against demons and retreat of demons into darkness after the birth of *Zoroaster*.

During the Parthian and Sassanid Empire, *Avestan* was considered a dead language, which was learned and practiced only by Zoroastrian clergies and was not understandable by general public. Therefore, it was translated into Middle Persian, the language spoken by the public during Sassanid era, to be well protected and preserved. The translated text was also accompanied by a number of interpretations. The translation and interpretations of the *Avesta* into Middle Persian, which is also known as *Zand*, were prepared based on the *Avesta* recorded during the Sassanid era. The translation of *Avesta* to Middle Persian along with the supplementary interpretations constitute the *Zand* texts, which originally means explanation. The collection of *Zand* available today includes *Zand Yasna*, *Vispard*, *Vandidad*, a part of the smaller *Avesta* such as five prayers, *Panj Gah*, small and large *Sirozeh*, *Bahram Yasht*, small and large *Soroush Yasht*, *Neirangestan* and *Hirbodestan*. Although the precise date of compiling *Zand* texts is not known, it is believed that Middle Persian Translation of *Zand Vandidad* was prepared in two stages: (1) literal translation from the original text which accounts for *Zand*, and (2) addition of extra explanations and interpretations. However, deeper investigation suggests that these two stages are intermingled and are not completely distinct since translation depend upon the addition of commentaries and the *Zand* texts are consequently influenced by the

original text. Amouzegar has defined three stages for translation of *Zand* texts: (1) literal translation of the *Avestan* text in which a Middle Persian equivalent which shares analogous roots and morphological features with *Avestan* word is selected (2) explanations on the reasons for acceptance or rejection of *Avestan* sentence; some of these explanations includes only one word which is often a simpler Middle Persian word for technical terms, and (3) shorter or longer interpretations as footnotes or appendices added to explain the concepts in each one of the chapters. These interpretations are extensive in scope when it comes to various aspects of everyday life. These interpretations are more prominent in *Zand Vandidad*, *Neirangestan*, and *Hirbodestan* (Amouzegar, 2007, p. 40). Regarding the linguistic value of *Zand* texts, Tafazoli believes that there was a literal translation from *Avesta* into Middle Persian. The *Avestan* language is an inflected and Middle Persian is a non-inflected language. Therefore, literal translation based on the syntactical features of *Avestan* language would in some cases leads to abnormal structures in Middle Persian (Tafazoli, 1999, p. 126). Whether all these interpretations had been prepared by one individual, as in *Medu Mah's Vandidad*, or they are a set of notes collected through several generations, is not clear yet; however, the high level of observed dissimilarities and differences will prove the second theory (Encyclopedia Iranica, 2006). It is also probable that the scripting and translation of *Avesta* has been done simultaneously in the Sassanid period (Josephson, 1997, p. 10).

While investigation of the *Zand* texts is generally profitable for better perception of the original text, the majority of scholars believe, due to the inherent syntactic and semantic deficiencies in Middle Persian equivalents, they will not be much helpful in understanding the *Avestan* texts. The majority of translations have been done on a literal base resulted in creation of texts incongruent with the standard structure of Middle Persian language which are often difficult to understand. There are also multiple examples of awkward repetition of original *Avestan* sentences in the Middle Persian text. Furthermore, the translators have sometimes added their understanding of the *Avestan* text to the Middle Persian equivalents and have written commentaries on it. The present study aims to investigate, both linguistically and contextually, the nineteenth chapter of *Vandidad* and compare it with recommended translation in order to discover the strategies applied or followed by the translators.

## 2. Literature Review

The studies on *Avestan* translations into Middle Persian has been progressing slowly because the scholars of ancient languages believe that *Zand* texts are not much efficient in understanding *Avestan* texts due to their special semantic and syntactic structure. The first Middle Persian translation of the *Avesta* was published by the German orientalist, Friedrich Spiegel<sup>v</sup>, (1858). Then, the German linguist Hübschmann<sup>vi</sup> (1872) presented his first critique of the features

of *Zand* texts. [Jamasp Asana<sup>vii</sup>](#) (1907) has also studied the *Avestan* and Middle Persian texts of *Vandidad*. Few studies have been done on the strategies applied in translation of *Avestan* texts into Middle Persian. The very few studies which have been specifically conducted in this area generally consider translation from Middle Persian into Sanskrit. [Degener<sup>viii</sup>](#) (1991) wrote an article on the analysis of translation of *Šak-ud-gumānīgīh-vizār* from Middle Persian to Sanskrit by Naryosang. He has studied semantic and syntactic translation methods too. [Gropp<sup>ix</sup>](#), the German archaeologist (1991), has investigated the interpretation of *Ahuna Vairya* by *Zadasperm*, the most sacred and revered text of the *Gathic* hymns of the *Avesta*. Several bilingual works have also been published recently. Some of these works cover translations of Middle Persian to English among which we can point out the book by [Ankelsaria<sup>x</sup>](#) (1949) including the translation of *Vandidad* into Middle Persian along with English version and the related dictionary. In addition, [Josephson<sup>xi</sup>](#) (1997) has studied the principles of translation into Middle Persian based on the text of *Hom Yasht*. [Oktor Skjærvø<sup>xii</sup>](#) (2006) has also provided an English translation of several chapters of *Vandidad* at Harvard University.

### 3. Methodology

#### 3.1. The Corpus

The data for the present study comes primarily from the text of the *Vandidad* in both *Avestan* and Middle Persian languages respectively based on the manuscripts by Karl F. Geldner and Tehmuras Ankelsaria. The *Avestan* corpus consists of the *Avesta* grammar by Williams Jackson, dictionary of ancient Iranian languages by Bartholomae, dictionary of *Avestan* roots by Jean Kellens, translation of *Avestan* texts in English by [James Darmesteter](#) (2005), and New Persian translation of *Avestan* texts by Jalil Doostkhah. The secondary set of the data concentrating on semantic and syntactic studies of Middle Persian text consists of the Middle Persian dictionary by David Neil Mackenzie, Middle Persian grammar by Rastorgueva, Pahlavi language by Jaleh Amouzegar and Ahmad Tafzali, Pahlavi dictionary by Henrik Samuel Nyberg, roots of Iranian verbs by Johnny Cheung, Middle Persian grammar by Prods Oktor Skjærvø as well as the translation and interpretation of Middle Persian *Vandidad* texts into New Persian by [Hashem Razi](#) (2006). The article corpus also consists of a set of sources mostly rich in commentaries on ritual and mythological terminologies including the critical and bibliographic guide of Zoroastrianism by Antonio Panaino, review of devine and demonic words in *Avesta* and *Saošyant* in *Avesta* by Rezaei Baghbidi, rituals in *Neirangestan* by Philip G. Kreyenbroek, persistence of ancient customs in contemporary Zoroastrian traditions by Katayoun Mazdapour, rituals of purity in Zoroastrianism by Mohammad Mashhadi et. Al and length measurement units by Farzane Goshtasb.

### 3.2. Procedure

To identify the strategies applied by translators, the *Avestan* as well the Middle Persian texts were precisely analyzed in terms of semantic and syntactic characteristics. The contrastive review of both texts was coincidentally performed to examine the occurrence and frequencies of transference of the morphological and syntactic features of lexicon from *Avestan* to Middle Persian language. The strategies extracted from the texts were subsequently categorized into semantic and syntactic groups. Each group includes several sub categories for further explanation of the translation strategies.

## 4. Data Analysis

### 4.1. Syntactic Strategies

#### 4.1.1. Etymological Subscription

The clergies who decided to translate the *Avestan* texts in to Middle Persian language for ritual purposes, usually prefer to select equivalents which have a similar root to the original word. This is probably because the equivalent word is in fact the most common one used by Middle Persian speakers at the time; however, it is almost impossible to prove or disapprove this assumption since the Middle Persian language is a dead language at present time. The second reason may include the extreme loyalty of the translators to the original concepts to maintain the sanctity of the text. For instance, in 19:26, *haxšāne* (I guide) is a verb from *hak* (accompanying, directing) (Bartholomae, 1904, p. 1739). In the Middle Persian text the equivalent of *hâchêni* (I invite) from *hâčitan* (inviting, preaching) is used. The translators try to choose the Middle Persian equivalent with a root similar to that of the *Avestan* word, and this is evident throughout the text.

#### 4.1.2. Transference of the Original Word

The other common strategy followed by the translators is use of the original proper nouns and ritual words in the Middle Persian text. This type of translation involves words whose translation may reduce the value and significance of the text and the best way is to keep the original words to maintain the sanctity and accuracy of the text. For instance, in 19:13, *vātō* (wind) from *vātay* from the root *vā* (to blow) (Bartholomae, 1904, p. 1409) is the god of wind, this is considered as a proper noun in the Middle Persian and is translated as “*vat*”. In 19:40, *vāzištəm* (*Vazshiste*) is a noun from *vāzišta* which is the name of one of the five sacred fires which moves among the clouds and eliminates the darkness of the air. In the Middle Persian translation, it is written as *Vazist* (*Vazshit*).

#### 4.1.3. Incomplete Transference of the Word Meaning

Sometimes the translators select a word which includes only the semantic portion of the original word. This is probably due to the limitations of the lexicon of the Middle Persian language or due to the fact that studying a word through comparison of various languages as well as other linguistic and scientific considerations, which are common practices in modern translation, was not available to the translators at that time. For instance in 19:17, *yasna* (praise, prayer) from the root *yaz* (praising) (Bartholomae, 1904, p. 1274) is translated in Middle Persian language as *gûbîsn* (speech) from the root *gaob* (saying). The term *gûbîsn* doesn't transfer the meaning of the *Avestan* word correctly because the translators could have used a better word such as *yasn* which invokes the connotation of praying in Middle Persian language (Mackenzie, 2011, p. 167).

#### 4.1.4. Transference of the Implicit Meaning of Word

Sometimes the translators select an equivalent which communicates only the implied meaning of the word in *Avestan*. For instance in 19:3, the word *kamərəðəm* (head, demonic head) is a noun from *kamərəða* and it is a demonic term. In order to communicate the secondary meaning and the correct usage of the word in Middle Persian, the translators used *kamār* (head) which is also a demonic term in Middle Persian. In 19: 46, the term *aduarənta* (they ran away) is originated from the root *dvar* (demonic escape) which is translated as *dôbâriṭ* (they escaped) from *dobaridan* (demonic escape).

*[Hast ke aētûn gûyēt, aē: Ôi dâst pa in zami chand pahanâ garṭ, dûrviṭara; vas ân jâk dâst, pa-Drejiya zbar, ander mân I Pôrûs-asp]*

[There is someone who says that he hold in his hand on this earth the size of the horizon, far horizons; there he had *darja* (*darjia*) horizon in *Pourwoshashb* house].

#### 4.1.5. Explanation and Interpretation of Word

In some cases, the translators add a word or group of words to the Middle Persian text to further explain the subject. For instance in 19:14, *mazištəm* (the greatest) is a superlative adjective from *mazišta* (Bartholomae, 1904, p. 1158) and is translated in Middle Persian by *mahest* (the biggest) (Mackenzie, 2011, p. 103). The translators add the explanatory term, *patan*, (in size and body) to emphasize that the size of the body is meant here. In 19:24, the translators add the explanatory term *vastra* (dress, clothes) which is not present in the *Avestan* text. Moreover, in 19:14, *sraēštəm* (the most beautiful) is the superlative adjective of *sraēšta* from *sri* (being beautiful) (Bartholomae, 1904, p. 1632), which is corporal beauty. The translators select *nêvak – tom* (the best) for this term (Mackenzie, 2011, p. 111) and adds the explanatory term *pa ditan* (for looking at) to show that

the visual beauty is to be induced here. In 19:34, *narō* (man) is a noun from *nar* which is translated as *mart* in Middle Persian. The translators explain that this term refers to “*Ushidar, Ushidarmah, and Saoshyant*”.

[*Hast ke Aûsêtar, Aûsêtarmâh û Sôslyasns gûyêt*]:

[Which is *Ushidar, Ushidarmah, and Saoshyant*.]

#### 4.1.6. Literal Translation

Another characteristic of the text, which usually reduces the linguistic validity of the translation, is the literal translation of the *Avestan* text into Middle Persian. The translators neglect the syntactic structure of Middle Persian language and puts words together based on the sentence structure of *Avestan* language. For instance, in 19:46, the term *ân dêvân snah* ([for] him, there [are] weapons [against] demons) which is a translation of the *Avestan* *hâu.daēuuanqm.snaθō* doesn't display a correct sentence structure. Moreover, the expression *ân dêvân pêtiyâra* (He [has] enmity [towards] demons) which is a translation of *Avestan* *hâu.daēuuanqm.paitiiārō* cannot correctly communicate the meaning of the *Avestan* sentence and is only a literal translation of the original text. However, sometimes the translators repeat the *Avestan* expression in order to maintain the sanctity of the text and the Middle Persian translation is followed by *Avestan* statement. For example, the expression *nəmō.uruuaire.vājuhi.mazda dāte.aṣaone* (praised be [you], the good plant created by holy *Mazda*) which is a praise in Zoroastrianism is repeated; however, its Middle Persian translation follows the text as well:

(Praised be you, oh the holy noble plant created by *Ahura Mazda*)

Later on, the *Ashem Vohu* prayer, which is one of the three important Zoroastrian prayers, is repeated as the original *Avestan* text.

*Avestan: aṣəm.vohū.vahištəm.astī.uštā.astī.uštā.ahmāi.hiiṭ.aṣāi.vahištāi.aṣəm*

Middle Persian: *ashem vohû vahistem asti; ustâ asti: ustâ ahmâi hyaṭ ashâi vahistâi ashem*

In fact, the loyalty of the translators to quote sacred statements which have significant ritualistic meaning is one of the characteristics of the translation of *Vandidad*, which is seen throughout the text.



## 4.2. Syntactic Strategies

### 4.2.1. Selection of Different Syntactic Groups in Avestan and Middle Persian Languages

In the first and most common type of changes, the translators have to select a word which belongs to two different *syntactic* groups in the two languages in order to provide the closest equivalent which communicates the original concept. In other words, the original word in *Avestan* may be a noun while the closest equivalent in Middle Persian may be a verb, and adjective etc. For instance, in 19: 3, the term *paiti* (verb prefix) + *dauuata* (answered) is a verb from root *dav* (demonic speaking) (Bartholomae, 1904, p. 688). This verb prefix which reverses the meaning of the verb (Jackson, 2014, p. 2010) is translated into Middle Persian as *pasukh* (answer), which is a singular noun. In other words, in *Avestan*, the word is a preposition and its equivalent in Middle Persian is a noun. Moreover, in 19: 21, *yaoždāta* (someone who is purified) is a participle from *yaoždā* (purifying and cleaning) (Bartholomae, 1904, p. 1235) which is an adjective for someone who is purified; in the Middle Persian translation, the used term is *yōsdāsrīh* (purification and cleanliness), which is an abstract noun. In 19: 22, *frasrāuuaiiōiš* (composing a poem) is a verb from root *sraV* (to sing) (Bartholomae, 1904, p. 145) which is the second person singular transient of present tense (Jackson, 2014, p. 145); in Middle Persian it is translated as *frāz-srāysin* (composing a poem), which is a gerund. In 23: 19, the term *uzgəuruuuiāt* (rising) is a verb from *grab* (grabbing) + prefix *uz* (up) (Bartholomae, 1904, p. 526) in third person singular of present transient tense (Jackson, 2014, p. 163). In the Middle Persian translation, the selected equivalent was *aūlā-girīsn* (rising upward), which is a gerund.

### 4.2.2. Non-Transference of Morphological Features of Original Word to Its Middle Persian Equivalent

In this type of changes, the translators substitutes a word from a syntactic group with a certain attribute by the same syntactic group with different attribute. For example, the three cases of masculine, feminine, and neutral and three counts of singular, dual, and plural in ancient Iranian languages including *Avestan*, do not exist in Middle period languages. For instance, in 19: 2, the term *āpō* (waters) is a feminine noun from *āp* (water) (Bartholomae, 1904, p. 1394) and *Vaṅhuiš* (good) is a feminine adjective from *vahehi* (better) (Bartholomae, 1904, p. 1394). These two words are translated in Middle Persian as *āw.vēh* (good waters). While in *Avestan* language, the case and inflection of these words indicate that they are dual in count, this characteristic cannot be seen in Middle Persian since Middle Persian lacks any genders for words. In 19:22, the term *gaēḍanəm* (the world) is a feminine noun from *gaēḍā* and the term *astuuainti aṅhuuō* (Astomand World, material world) is created from two words, namely *aṅhuuō* (world, being) a feminine noun from *aṅhuuō* and *astuuainti* (material), a feminine adjective from

*astuant*, which are the names of two worlds in Zoroastrianism. In the Middle Persian translation, the translators do not translate *gaēθanqm*. The term *aṅhuuō* which is dual, is translated as *ahvân* (worlds), which is a plural noun (noun + the plural preposition of *ân*) since the Middle Persian language lacks the dual characteristic, the translators use plural number to show the meaning.

#### 4.2.3. Non-Transference of Syntactic Structure of Avestan Language to Middle Persian Language

In this case, the translators change the syntactic functionality of a linguistic structure. For instance, in 19: 4, *frašusat* (started going) is a verb from *frašusa* originated from the root *šū* (going, becoming) + the prefix *fra* (Bartholomae, 1904, p. 1707). The case of this verb is an inchoative case which means the start or beginning of an action that is not acted upon before until the verb (past, present, imperative) is accompanied by the present preposition of (*a*) and the inchoative prefix of (*s*), and then the action starts. In Ancient Iranian languages, the inchoative case is created by adding *s* to the root and then inflexing the thematic *a* after that *s* (Jackson, 2014, § 697, p. 192). This verb is translated into Middle Persian using prefix *fra* (starting to go) with the term *frāz-rapt*. While the translators accurately communicate the prefix and the inflection of the verb, there is no inchoative case in Middle Persian since this language doesn't consider such an attribute for verbs. In 19: 12, the term *yaoždaθāni* (I will purify) from the root *yaož* (purifying) (Bartholomae, 1904, p. 1231) is the first person singular transient subjunctive present verb (Jackson, 2014, p. 145). In Middle Persian translation, the equivalent *yōsdāsrīnēm* (I purify) is a verb from the same root which is the first person singular declarative present tense (Guyova, 2000, p. 140) and the subjunctive property of this verb is neglected in the translation. While subjunctive present tense is used for verbs showing doubt, desire, and wish, the declarative present is used for verbs which are occurring in the present or continuously in the present. In 19:2, the term *frāiīazaēta* (high praising) is a verb in third person singular of declarative non-transient (middle) present tense (Jackson, 2014, p. 144). While there is no consensus regarding the usage of non-transient verbs in *Avestan* language, Moghadam believes that these verbs carry non-transient inflection suffix that are used when the action of the verb is not related to a person or something else and the receiver of the action is the same as the subject of the verb. In other words, these verbs do not have an opposite texture. Ritualistic verbs are one of the eight sets of verbs in *Avesta* which are conjugated as non-transient. The root *yaz* (praising) is an example of such verbs (Moghadam, Nematollahi, 2012, p. 103). In the Middle Persian translation, *frāz-yazit* is used which is the third person singular of transient past tense (Guyova, 2000, p. 146); however, it cannot be conjugated as non-transient since the Middle Persian language does not have a transient or non-transient attribute for verbs.

#### 4.2.4. Selection of Different Syntactic Groups in Avestan and Middle Persian Languages

In this type of changes, the translators select an equivalent for the word which is different regarding syntactic hierarchy in *Avesta* and Middle Persian. To be specific, a single word in *Avestan* language, is turned into a prepositional phrase or a noun phrase. For instance, in 19:3, *pouru.xv ārənaŋhō* (full of glory) consists of two words, namely *pouru* (full) plus *xvārənaŋhō* (glory) originated from *xvārənah* (Bartholomae, 1904, p. 903) which is an adjective from *Zaraθuštrō* (highly-glorious *Zoroaster*). In the Middle Persian translation, it is translated as *ez pōr-khārēhīh* (due to having a lot of glory), which is a prepositional phrase. In 19: 18, the term *uruθmīianaqm* (booming, growing) is an adjective from *uruθmīia* originated from the root, *raoδ* (growing) (Bartholomae, 1904, p. 1492). In the Middle Persian translation, it is a prepositional phrase of *â-rōyisn-aūmand* (having the capability of growing).

#### 4.2.5. Conversion of Syntactic Features in Avestan Language to Morphological Features in Middle Persian

In this type of changes, the relation between the words, which is shown in *Avestan* language through syntax, is shown in Middle Persian using semantic relations. For instance, in 19:9, the term *zrūne* (time) is a noun from *zaurvan* (Bartholomae, 1904, p. 1684) which is a locative object. The term *akarane* (limitless, infinite) is an adjective from *karana* (limit, border) plus the negative prefix of *a* (without). To establish the relation between the adjective and the described noun, the translators use the preposition *pad* and adds *ī: pa zamān i akanāra* (in an infinite time). In 19:23, *bāzuuō* (arm) originated from *bāzav* has an ablative case (Jackson, 2014, p. 77). The terms *hāuuōīia* (left) and *dašina* (right) are adjectives for *bāzuuō* and follow their noun. Because the Middle Persian is not an inflected language, the translators have used the preposition *pad: pa-havē-bāzā* (with the left arm) and *pa (ān) das* (with the right one (arm)). In 19: 33, the term *yaoždāθriiō* (purity, cleanliness) is a noun from *yaoždāθra* and is an ablative object. In the Middle Persian translation, *ez-yōsdāsrih* (from purity and pureness) is selected. The translators have used the preposition *ez* to show the conjugative case of the term in the *Avestan* language.

### 5. Discussion and Conclusion

A review of the nineteenth chapter of *Vandidad* leads us to the conclusion that the translators have been compelled to make inevitable changes in order to provide the closest equivalent in the Middle Persian. The changes could be divided into two groups, namely semantic and syntactic strategies. It is probable, however, to discover other categories through further investigations. The syntactic evaluation of the text proves that the preference of the translators, due

to their radical allegiance to the *Avestan* text and their effort to adhere to the sanctity of content, is usually to select an equivalent which is closer to the syntax of the Middle Persian language. In other words, the translators have no choice but to change the structure of the Middle Persian statements. Sometimes the characteristics of the Middle Persian language make the translators obliged to communicate certain aspect of word's meaning since Middle Persian has lost several attributes of ancient languages such as gender, number and dual characteristic of lexicon. However, in many cases, the translators select a word which belongs to two different semantic groups in *Avestan* and Middle Persian which are inconsistent in syntactic terms. Sometimes, the translators have no choice but to make some changes in the syntactic structure of Middle Persian language to communicate the meaning of the word more efficiently. In other cases, the translators select an equivalent belonging to two different syntactic hierarchies in *Avestan* and Middle Persian languages, which sometimes obstacles the transference of the word meaning. In many cases, the words association which is presented through syntactic relations in *Avestan* language is achieved through semantic relations in Middle Persian. Middle Persian is a non-inflective language, therefore the translators are often obliged to add several words to the text to communicate the original *Avestan* concept more efficiently. In semantics terms, the translators select equivalents which have the highest subscriptions with the roots and morphological features of the *Avestan* word. Sometimes, the translators would select an equivalent which contains only partial meaning of the original word and results in failure to accurate conveyance of the message. This may be originated to the limited number of the lexicon in Middle Persian or translators' insufficient knowledge about the semantic and syntactic features of words which are now perceived through scientific linguistic investigations and comparative studies of languages. Inadequate acquaintance of translators as well as their excessive adherence to the ritual terms and geographical or religious proper nouns justifies the awkward repetition of words in their original form, even when an appropriate known equivalent is available in Middle Persian. Another characteristic of the Middle Persian text which damages the validity of the translated volume is the literal translation which could be seen throughout the book. The translators neglect the syntactical structure of the Middle Persian language and puts words together based on the syntactical structure of the *Avestan* language. Sometimes, the translators repeat the *Avestan* expression to adhere to the religious sanctity of the text and then supplement the text with explanatory notes. In some cases, the translators add a word or a group of words to the Middle Persian text to achieve more precise explanation of concept. In fact, the translators' commitment to quote sacred statements, which bear specific ritual significance, is one of the characteristics of the translation of *Vandidad* which is observed throughout the text.

While the studies carried out in this area often leads us to the conclusion that translations are mainly of literal nature which do not present the structure of

Middle Persian and are not beneficial to the perception of the *Avestan* text, the current study tries to outline specific translation strategies and mention the obstacles faced by translators.

We hope the studies conducted in this area pave the way for further researches on this valuable book. To carry out deeper studies, it is essential to refer to other grammatical sources of Middle Persian language to closely investigate the structure of this language. Moreover, dictionaries on related ancient languages can provide us with comprehensive information regarding the roots, meanings, usage and historical meanings of the words which helps us achieve deeper, more precise comprehension. Investigation of other chapters of *Vandidad* and precise comparison with the nineteenth chapter, which was studied here, could also be very effective.

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<sup>i</sup> The northern part of the Black Sea and it is linked by the narrow (about 4 km or 2.5 mi) Strait of Kerch to the Black Sea. The sea is bounded in the north by mainland Ukraine, in the east by Russia, and in the west by the Crimean Peninsula.

<sup>ii</sup> The prophet *Zoroaster* is regarded as the founder of Zoroastrianism, which is arguably the world's oldest monotheistic faith.

<sup>iii</sup> *Ahura Mazda* is the creator and highest deity of Zoroastrianism.

<sup>iv</sup> *Ahriman* is the evil, destructive spirit in the dualistic doctrine of Zoroastrianism.

<sup>v</sup> Friedrich Spiegel, *Avesta, die heiligen Schriften der Parsen*, I, der Vendidad, Wien, 1853; II, Vispered and Yaçna, Wien, 1858.

<sup>vi</sup> Hübschmann "Zur Beurtheilung der traditionellen Übersetzung des Avesta" in Sitzungsberichten der philo-phil. Kl. der K. b. Akademie der Wissenschaft zu München, Bd. II, 1872, 639.

<sup>vii</sup> Jamaspji Dastur Minochehrji Jamasp-Asana "Pahlavi-Vendidad", Bombay, 1913.

<sup>viii</sup> Degener, A., "Neryosanghs Sanskrit-Übersetzung von Škand gumānik vicār" in *Corolla Iranica*, ed. by Emmerick, R. and Weber, D., Frankfurt am Main 1991, 49-58.

<sup>ix</sup> G. Gropp "Zādsprams Interpretation des ahunavaoiryo- Gebetes" in *Corolla Iranica* 1991, 79-89.

<sup>x</sup> Bahramgore T. Ankelsaria, "Pahlavi Vendad, Zand-I Jvit-Dev-Dat", Cama Oriental Institute, Mumbai, 1949.

<sup>xi</sup> Josephson Judith, "The Pahlavi Translation Techniques as Illustrated by Hom Yast", Uppsala universitetsbibliotek, Sweden, 1997.

<sup>xii</sup> Skjærvø, Prods Oktor, online in introduction to Zoroastrianism: Zoroastrian. [http:// www. Fas. Harvard. Edu/ Iranian/ zoroastrianism/ index.html](http://www.Fas.harvard.Edu/Iranian/zoroastrianism/index.html). University of Harvard, 2006.