



Translating Artwork Titles: A Study of Persian–English Bilingual Titles in an Iranian Painting Gallery Brochure

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Abstract

Artwork titles constitute an important part of the meaning-making process in visual art, as they interact with the image and may shape viewers' interpretation of an artwork. Despite their significance, the translation of artwork titles, particularly in gallery and exhibition contexts, has received relatively limited attention. This study investigates the translation of Persian artwork titles into English, focusing on the strategies employed and the ways in which titles are represented in the target language. Drawing on Boyko's (2011) framework for translating titles in art discourse, the study adopts a qualitative descriptive approach to examine bilingual artwork titles presented in an exhibition brochure published by O'Gallery in Tehran. A total of 38 titles were analyzed and classified according to the strategies proposed by Boyko (2011). Cases that did not correspond to any of the strategies were additionally classified. The findings show that semantic translation was the predominant strategy, accounting for 26 cases (68.42%), followed by transcription with 5 cases (13.16%). Translation by convention/tradition occurred in only 1 case (2.63%), while no instances of reproduction in the original spelling were identified. The findings suggest that although semantic transfer constitutes the dominant pattern in the dataset, artwork-title translation cannot always be explained through conventional strategies. The study therefore highlights the need to consider the linguistic, interpretive, cultural, and visual dimensions of artwork titles in translation.

Keywords: Art discourse, artwork title translation, Lyudmila Boyko, translation strategies, visual arts

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1. Introduction

When encountering a work of art such as a painting, viewers often come across its title before they begin to interpret the artwork. Although a title may appear to be merely a name, it can sometimes serve as the first sign through which the viewer enters the world of the artwork. A title may highlight what is visually represented, reveal a hidden meaning, suggest a particular way of reading the work, or even alter the viewer's interpretation of the image. Therefore, in the visual arts, the title cannot be considered separately from the image it names. Title and image jointly contribute to the construction of meaning, and this relationship makes the translation of art titles a process that extends beyond the substitution of words between two languages and involves a sensitive, multilayered form of mediation. In this process, the translator is not concerned solely with the lexical meaning and linguistic structure of the title, but must also consider its relationship with the visual artwork, its interpretive potential, and the context in which the title is presented. A short title, or even a single word, may carry several potential meanings in the source language, making the selection of an appropriate equivalent in the target language difficult without access to the image or knowledge of the context surrounding the artwork.

Moreover, some titles contain cultural, historical, geographical, or identity-related references and may therefore require decisions that go beyond direct equivalence when transferred into the target language. In such circumstances, the translator must negotiate between preserving the meaning of the title, its cultural identity and distinctive features, its relationship with the image, and its accessibility to the target audience. Accordingly, the translation of an art title cannot be regarded merely as a linguistic process; rather, it takes place at the intersection of language, image, culture, and interpretation. Each translated form selected by the translator may consequently influence how the artwork is presented and received in the target language.

Despite this significance, the translation of titles, particularly the titles of artworks presented in galleries and exhibitions, has received relatively limited empirical attention. Against this background, the present study investigates the translation of artwork titles from Persian into English in an exhibition brochure. The aim of the study is to identify and analyze the strategies employed in transferring artwork titles and to examine how art titles are represented in the target language. To this end, the study employs Boyko's (2011) proposed framework concerning the translation of titles in art discourse as its analytical framework. The data were extracted from a PDF brochure published by *O' Gallery*. The brochure presents a collection of artworks exhibited at the gallery between November 2020 and November 2021.

2. Literature Review

Recent studies in the field of translation in art galleries have moved beyond viewing translation merely as the transfer of meaning from one language to another and have instead conceptualized it as a form of multimodal mediation that emerges through the interaction of text, image, audience, and institutional context. From this perspective, the translation of artworks in exhibitions and galleries is not examined as an independent element but in relation to the artwork itself and the ways in which it is presented to the audience. The findings of McDonagh (2025), Novozhilova (2023), and Mertens and Decroupet (2024) likewise emphasize the multimodal and mediating nature of translation in galleries and artistic and cultural spaces. Neather (2020), through the concept of the "translation zone," similarly regards galleries and exhibitions of artworks as spaces in which translation operates not only at the textual level but also at the levels of representation and cultural mediation. From this perspective, translation in artistic environments cannot be examined independently of the visual, cultural, and institutional context of the artwork. One of the important linguistic elements in this

environment is the title of the artwork, which is directly connected to the visual work and may contribute to shaping the audience's experience of it.

Although artwork titles may initially appear to function merely as means of identifying and distinguishing individual works, they occupy a position beyond that of simple labels in studies of art discourse. A title can contribute to shaping the audience's perception of an artwork, directing the interpretive process, and establishing a connection between verbal and visual elements. This feature becomes particularly significant in visual arts such as painting, where the title is placed alongside an image that itself constitutes an independent system of signs, and meaning emerges through the interaction between the two systems.

Bosredon (2002), in his examination of artwork titles, identifies three main functions: labeling, maintaining the status of a proper name, and establishing a relationship with the image. Among these functions, the relationship between the title and the image is particularly significant because, although the title and the visual artwork constitute two distinct semiotic domains, they interact in creating the overall coherence and unity of the work. From this perspective, the title is neither entirely independent of the artwork nor merely an external explanation of it; rather, it forms part of the meaning-making process of the artwork. This communicative role of titles has also been emphasized in empirical studies of visitors' experiences. Reitstätter et al. (2022) demonstrate that visitors use titles and accompanying labels during the processes of viewing and interpreting artworks and that these elements can influence how visitors attend to and perceive the work. Therefore, a title cannot be regarded merely as an identifying element; rather, it forms part of the viewer's encounter with the artwork and the process through which its meaning is constructed.

Along similar lines, Boyko (1989) distinguishes between monosemiotic verbal discourse and the multisemiotic discourse of the visual arts and emphasizes the difference in how titles are perceived in these two domains. In verbal texts, the title is generally encountered before the body of the text and can establish initial expectations that anticipate the reader's subsequent interpretation. In visual arts, by contrast, viewers often encounter the image first and then refer to the title to confirm, modify, or reinterpret their initial perception. Accordingly, in art discourse, the title has not only a predictive function but also hermeneutic and integrative functions.

In this regard, Nord (1995) identifies several functions of titles in verbal texts, including distinctive, metalinguistic, communicative, referential, expressive, and appellative functions. These functions demonstrate that a title cannot be regarded merely as a collection of words; rather, it can simultaneously provide information about the text, attract the audience's attention, shape expectations, and participate in the process of interpretation. When these characteristics are considered in relation to titles of visual artworks, the significance of the relationship between title and image becomes even more apparent, since the title is positioned alongside a nonverbal semiotic system and its function is shaped through interaction with the image.

Despite the importance of titles in shaping meaning and the audience's experience, the translation of artwork titles has received comparatively limited attention in translation studies. Boyko (1989) likewise points to the scarcity of studies addressing artwork titles and their translation within translation studies. A considerable body of research on titles has focused on verbal texts, while the study of artwork titles, particularly in relation to visual elements, has received less attention. This is noteworthy because artwork titles, by occupying the intersection between linguistic and visual systems, give rise to translation issues that differ from those encountered in other types of titles.

One of the most important of these issues is the dependence of the title on the image. In art discourse, the translator may need access to the artwork, its cultural context, and information about the artist to select an appropriate equivalent. Thus, the translation of a title cannot always be regarded as a process independent of the visual artwork. Boyko (2011) specifically emphasizes the importance of making the

image available to the translator. According to Boyko (2011), receiving only the verbal component of an artwork may not be sufficient to resolve ambiguity and polysemy. This issue becomes particularly significant in the case of short or single-word titles, as a word may have several potential meanings in the absence of the image, and only viewing the artwork may make it possible to determine which meaning is intended. Under such circumstances, the image constitutes part of the contextual information required by the translator to make decisions about the title. This view is consistent with recent research on the translation of art-related texts. Eljazouli and Azmi (2026) show that the presence of visual elements in texts related to artworks can influence translators' choices, as translators need to establish a degree of coherence between text and image. Thus, the image does not merely provide supplementary information for the translator; it can constitute part of the interpretive context required for translation decision-making.

Another factor that complicates the translation of artwork titles is the presence of cultural, historical, and identity-related references. Some titles refer to particular places, figures, traditions, historical concepts, or culturally specific references that may not have a direct or familiar equivalent for target-language audiences. Studies of the translation of artworks in galleries and exhibitions have likewise shown that such cultural elements are not always readily transferable into the target language (Song, 2023; Ovieta et al., 2026). This issue is particularly significant in the case of artwork titles because, unlike explanatory exhibition texts, titles provide very limited space for the translator to explain, elaborate on, or resolve ambiguity. The translator must therefore make decisions within a highly condensed space, negotiating between preserving the cultural specificity of the title and making it accessible to the target audience.

Artwork titles may also change over time, or a single artwork may be known under more than one title. The existence of alternative titles, previous translations, and established forms in different languages constitutes another issue that translators need to consider. Boyko (2011) demonstrates that in such situations, selecting a target-language title is not limited to finding an appropriate lexical equivalent; rather, the translator must make decisions by considering different sources, existing titles, and requirements concerning consistency and stability in naming.

Another issue concerns the distinction between translating a title and retaining the original title. According to Boyko (2011), in certain artistic traditions, particularly in the case of well-known works with French and Italian titles, retaining the original form of the title is common, whereas in some cultures, translating foreign titles is expected. Thus, translating or not translating a title is not necessarily a consequence of untranslatability; rather, it may be influenced by cultural conventions, the intended audience, exhibition policies, or the considerations of the commissioner. Studies of the translation of artworks and cultural materials have shown that the choice of a target-language form can be influenced by cultural context and audience expectations (Song, 2023; Ovieta et al., 2026). Furthermore, translation in exhibition environments is shaped by institutional factors, including exhibition policies, commissioners' requirements, and the manner in which the artwork is presented (Neather, 2020; Mertens & Decroupet, 2024).

Given these characteristics, the selection of a translation strategy for an artwork title cannot be regarded merely as a lexical issue. Udovichenko and Stadniichuk (2024) likewise emphasize the multifunctionality of titles and the complexity involved in translating them. Ke (2025), in turn, demonstrates that in translating artwork titles, the choice of strategy should take into account the function of the title in relation to the artwork itself rather than being based solely on the degree of lexical similarity between the source and target titles. In addition, studies of art catalogue translation and gallery communication indicate that translation in this field extends beyond a purely linguistic issue and is closely connected to interpretive and communicative processes (Pireddu, 2020; Tilii, 2024).

According to Boyko (2011), although the multisemiotic nature of artworks makes title translation a distinctive process, strategies used in translating other types of proper names can still be applicable in this context. Boyko (2011) proposes four main strategies for translating artwork titles: semantic translation, tradition- and convention-based translation, transliteration, and reproduction of the title in its original spelling. These four strategies provide a framework for examining different ways of transferring titles from the source language into the target language.

Semantic translation is used when the translator transfers the title into the target language while attempting to preserve its lexical or conceptual meaning. For titles with relatively explicit meanings, this strategy can facilitate a more direct transfer of the concept. However, when a title contains ambiguity, cultural connotations, or a metaphorical function, transferring its lexical elements alone does not necessarily preserve its overall function.

Tradition- and convention-based translation becomes relevant when an artwork has an established title in the target language. In such cases, using the commonly accepted title can prevent variation and confusion, even if the target form is not a fully literal translation of the original title. This strategy demonstrates that the cultural and historical status of an artwork may take precedence over a direct lexical equivalent.

Transliteration is applicable when preserving the linguistic and nominal identity of the title takes priority over transferring its lexical meaning. This strategy is particularly relevant to names, proper titles, and works that are known in the target culture by their original forms. In such cases, transferring the phonological form of the title can preserve its nominal and cultural identity without necessarily conveying its lexical meaning in the target language.

Finally, retaining the title in its original spelling constitutes another option available to the translator. This strategy becomes relevant when the original title is also recognized in the target-language art discourse or when professional and exhibition conventions favor maintaining its original form. Thus, title translation does not always entail producing a new linguistic form; in some cases, the translation decision may instead involve retaining the title in the source language.

Nevertheless, Boyko (2011) emphasizes that none of these strategies can be applied mechanically without taking into account the multisemiotic nature of the artwork. Consequently, the translation strategy adopted for an artwork title is not merely the result of choosing among lexical equivalents; rather, it emerges from the interaction between the characteristics of the title, the visual artwork, the cultural context, and communicative requirements.

3. Methodology

The present study adopts a qualitative and descriptive-analytical approach to examine the translation of artwork titles from Persian into English in an exhibition brochure. The aim of the study is to identify and analyze the strategies employed in transferring artwork titles and to examine how artwork titles are represented in the target language. To this end, Boyko's (2011) proposed framework concerning the translation of titles in art discourse was adopted as the analytical framework of the study.

Boyko's (2011) framework was selected because it does not regard an artwork title merely as a linguistic unit or a proper name, but rather as part of a multisemiotic discourse that is formed through interaction with the visual artwork. From this perspective, translating an artwork title requires simultaneous attention to the form and meaning of the title, its function, and its relationship with the visual artwork.

The data were extracted from a PDF brochure published by *O' Gallery*. Managed by *Orchid Doroodi*, *O' Gallery* opened its doors to the public in the heart of Tehran in the autumn of 2014. The gallery seeks

to establish a suitable position for young and emerging artists in the broader regional and international art market by introducing their works and, through close collaboration with art specialists, presenting outstanding works that reflect the culture and perspectives of their creators. The brochure examined in the present study contains a collection of artworks presented at the gallery between November 2020 and November 2021 and consists of 100 pages in total.

The brochure includes 40 artworks, two of which had no titles. Therefore, 39 titles were examined in the present study. The titles were presented bilingually (Persian-English) alongside each artwork.

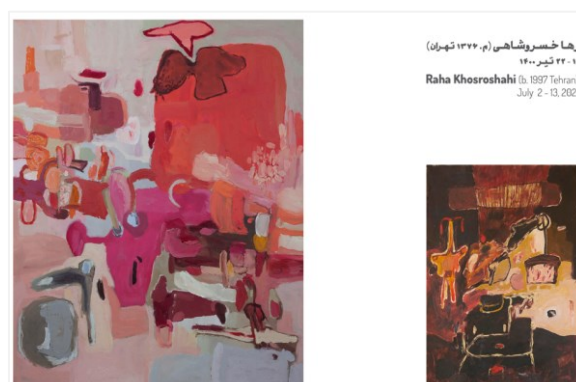


Figure 1. An Example of an Artwork Without Title

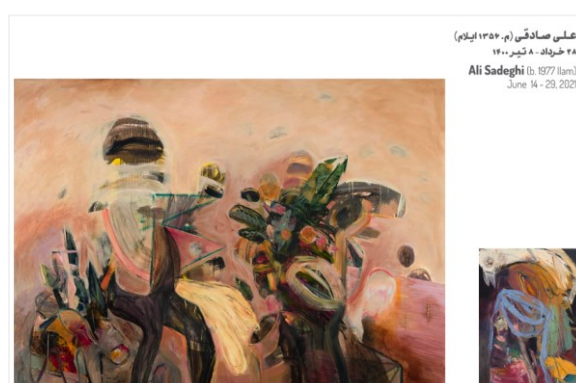


Figure 2. An Example of an Artwork Without Title

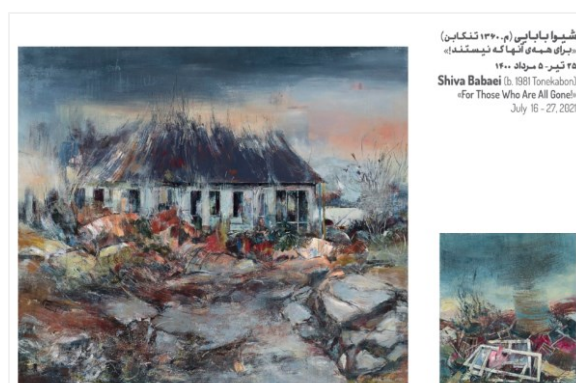


Figure 3. An Example of an Artwork with Bilingual (Persian-English) Title

The data were analyzed based on Boyko's (2011) framework concerning the translation of titles in art discourse. Taking into account the distinctive characteristics of artwork titles and their relationship with the semiotic system of the image, Boyko (2011) proposes several main ways of transferring titles between languages. These categories were used as the initial analytical categories in the present study.

The strategies examined were as follows:

- Semantic Translation: Transferring the semantic content of the source title into the target language;
- Translation by Convention/Tradition: Using a recognized or established form of the title in the target language;
- Transcription: Transferring the phonological form of the source title into the writing system of the target language;
- Reproduction in Original Spelling: Presenting the title in the same language and written form as in the source, without translation.

Each title was assigned to one of these categories based on its actual characteristics. In cases where the transfer of a title displayed combined features, classification was based on the dominant strategy and the primary function of the translation choice. During the analysis, whenever a strategy other than those proposed by Boyko (2011) was identified, that strategy was also presented separately.

After all the data had been classified, the frequency of each translation strategy was calculated to determine the overall pattern of translation choices in the dataset. Thus, the quantitative analysis served a descriptive purpose only and was used to indicate the frequency with which each strategy was employed. The final interpretation of the data, however, was based on qualitative analysis, comparison of the source and target titles, and consideration of the relationship between the title and the visual artwork.

4. Findings

4.1. Data Analysis Based on Boyko's (2011) Framework

The data collected for this study are analyzed within the framework proposed by Boyko (2011) and examples for each category are provided in the following sections.

4.1.1. Semantic Translation

In this category, the English and Persian titles are directly related in terms of semantic and conceptual content, and the target title conveys the primary meaning of the source title. Some examples include:

- تماس در دوردست (Tamas) — Touching at a Distance
- در برابر فراموشی (Dar Barabar-e Faramooshi) — Opposing Oblivion
- برای همه آنها که نیستند! (Baraye Hameh Anha Ke Nistand!) — For Those Who Are All Gone!
- تبار بی آرام (Tabar-e Bi-Aram) — Uneasy Ancestry
- کهن شهر نیشابور (Kohan-Shahr-e Neyshabur) — The Ancient City of Neyshabur
- حواشی لیلی (Havashi-ye Laili) — Annotation for Laili

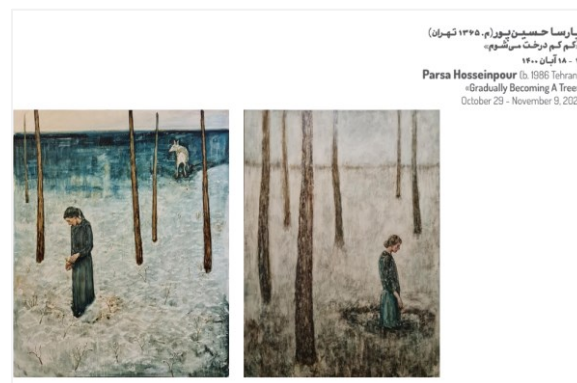


Figure 4. An Example of Semantic Translation – 1

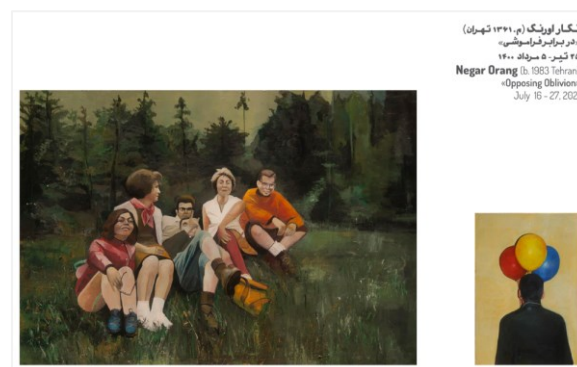


Figure 5. An Example of Semantic Translation – 2

In some of these cases, such as *Laili* in *Annotation for Laili* and *Neyshabur* in *The Ancient City of Neyshabur*, the proper name has been retained in the translation. However, the dominant strategy remains semantic translation of the title as a whole. Therefore, these cases are not counted as instances of transcription as an independent strategy.

4.1.2. Translation by Convention/Tradition

This category applies when the Persian form of a title is based on an established and recognized name or equivalent in the target language.

- باغ شازده (Bagh-e Shazdeh) — Shazdeh's Garden

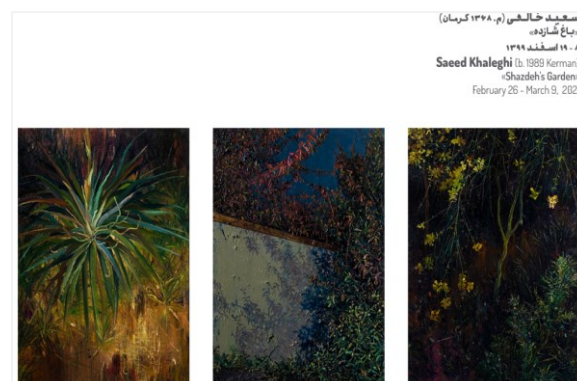


Figure 6. An Example of Translation by Convention/Tradition

In this case, *Shazdeh* is retained as a proper name, while *Garden* is translated semantically. Given the established Persian–English naming convention for the well-known Shazdeh Garden as a cultural and historical site, this case can be classified under Translation by Convention/Tradition.

4.1.3. Transcription

In this category, the Persian title primarily represents the phonetic or orthographic form of the original title or name, while the transfer of lexical meaning is not the primary objective.

- کله‌سر (Kollah Ser) — Kollah Ser
- کلاستروفیلیا (Kelostrofilia) — Claustrophilia
- آرت‌فر آنلاین درایینگ روم مادرید (Art-Fair Online Drawing Room Madrid) — Drawing Room Online Fair Madrid
- آرت‌فر پیپر پوزیشنز بازل (Art-Fair Paper Positions Basel) — Paper Positions Art Fair Basel
- آرت‌فر آرتیسیما تورین (Art-Fair Artissima Turin) — Artissima Art Fair Turin

The latter cases refer to art events, and their Persian forms combine transcription with a degree of reordering or adaptation of the original English names.

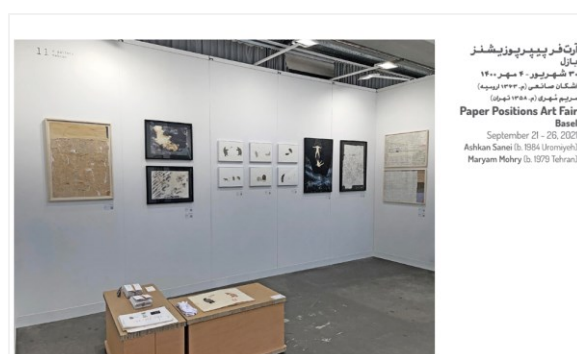


Figure 7. An Example of Transcription

In the case of *Kollah Ser*, the transfer from «کله‌سر» (*Kollah Ser*) to *Kollah Ser* is clearly based on the phonetic and orthographic representation of the Persian name in the Latin script. In the Persian title, however, the absence of diacritics may create ambiguity in pronunciation. The intended form is «کَلَه‌سِر» (*Kollah Ser*), whereas the unvocalized form «کله‌سر» may also be read differently by Persian readers, for example (*Kollah Sar*). Thus, this example illustrates how the lack of explicit vowel marking in Persian can affect the accuracy of transcription into the Latin script.

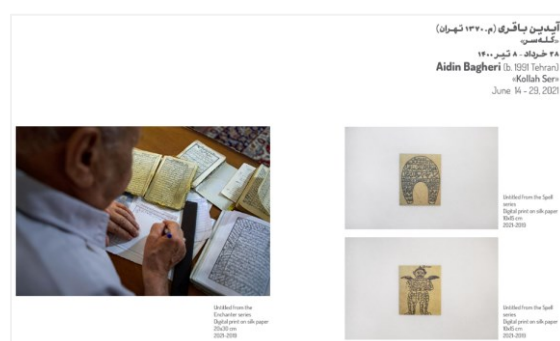


Figure 8. An Example of Transcription (Kollah Ser)

In the case of *Claustrophilia*, the Persian title «کلاستروفیلیا» (*Kelostrofilia*) is a phonetic rendering of the English title rather than a semantic translation. The target-language form therefore preserves the sound-based representation of the original term rather than transferring its lexical meaning.

4.1.4. Reproduction in Original Spelling

No pure and unchanged instance of this strategy was identified in the dataset. Unlike translation or transcription, the strategy of retaining the complete title in its original linguistic and orthographic form was not independently employed in the analyzed collection.

4.2. Cases Outside Boyko's (2011) Four Strategies

Several cases could not be adequately classified within Boyko's (2011) four strategies because the relationship between the Persian and English titles is better characterized as recreation, title modification, free translation, or alternative naming.

1. «لا» (*Lā*) — Peeping

The Persian title «لا» (*Lā*) and the English title *Peeping* are not semantically equivalent, and no direct translational relationship can be identified between the two titles.

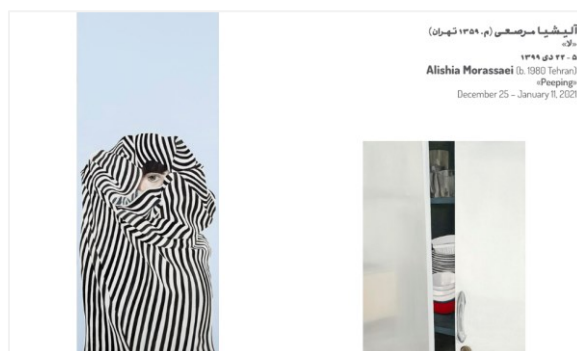


Figure 9. An Example of Cases Outside Boyko's Four Strategies (Peeping)

2. «نمایش گروهی به انتخاب سمانه صمیمی» (*Namāyesh-e Gorūhī Be Entekhāb-e Sāmeheh Samīmī*) — Group Exhibition selected by Samaneh Samimi

This item is better understood as an exhibition title or exhibition description rather than the title of an individual artwork. It should therefore also be separately marked in terms of the nature of the dataset.

3. «موسیزیم» (*Musīziyūm*) — Muse-um

This case appears to involve wordplay and orthographic recreation. The English form *Muse-um* cannot be precisely classified as semantic translation, translation by convention/tradition, transcription, or reproduction in the original spelling.



Figure 10. An Example of Cases Outside Boyko's Four Strategies (Muse-um)

4. «آو آرت اند آو تایم» (Av Art and Av Time) — Ham az Zamin Ham az Zamoon

The two titles do not correspond lexically or semantically. The English title therefore cannot be regarded as a direct translation of the Persian title.



Figure 11. An Example of Cases Outside Boyko's Four Strategies (Av Art and Av Time)

5. «در پرده زمان» (Dar Pardeh-ye Zamān) — Now-HerEscape

These two titles likewise do not constitute direct equivalents. The English title appears to involve a form of creative recreation or title modification, rather than a straightforward transfer of the source title.

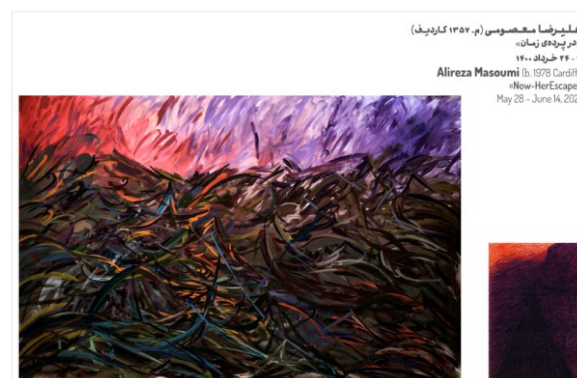


Figure 12. An Example of Cases Outside Boyko's Four Strategies (Now-HerEscape)

6. «گرگ و میش ماندن» (Gorg-o Mish Māndan) — *Fading Away*

Although the two titles share a conceptual relationship, *Fading Away* is not a direct equivalent of «گرگ و میش ماندن» (Gorg-o Mish Māndan). Part of the imagery and semantic content of the Persian title has

been modified in the target title. This case can therefore be classified as a form of free translation/recreation rather than as one of Boyko's (2011) four strategies.

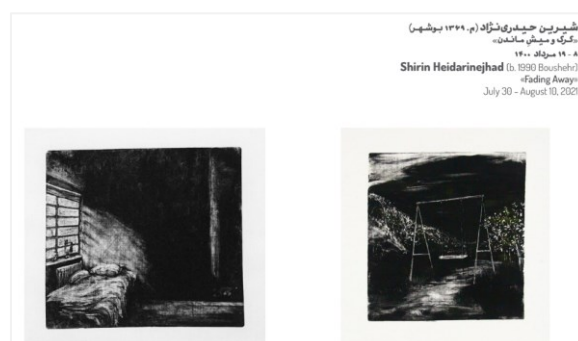


Figure 13. An Example of Cases Outside Boyko's Four Strategies (Fading Away)

Table 1. Frequency and Percentage of Translation Strategies

Translation Strategy	Frequency	Percentage
Semantic Translation	26	68.42%
Translation by Convention/Tradition	1	2.63%
Transcription	5	13.16%
Reproduction in Original Spelling	0	0%
Other / Outside Boyko's Four Strategies	6	15.79%
Total	38	100%

The findings showed that semantic translation, with 26 cases accounting for 68.42%, was the most frequent strategy in the dataset. Following semantic translation, transcription, with 5 cases accounting for 13.16%, was the second most frequent strategy. The findings showed that translation by convention/tradition was observed in only one case, accounting for 2.63%, while reproduction in the original spelling had no instances in the dataset (Table 1). As shown in Table 1, six cases, accounting for 15.79%, were in the "Other/Outside Boyko's Four Strategies" category.

5. Discussion and Conclusion

The present study aimed to identify and analyze the strategies employed in translating artwork titles from Persian into English and to examine how these titles are represented in the target language. To achieve this aim, 38 bilingual titles from an exhibition brochure of O'Gallery in Tehran were examined and classified based on the framework proposed by Boyko (2011). Boyko's (2011) framework comprises four main strategies: semantic translation, translation by convention/tradition, transcription, and reproduction in the original spelling. In the present study, in addition to these four categories, cases that did not correspond precisely to any of these strategies were separately classified under "Other/Outside Boyko's Four Strategies." The frequencies and percentages of the strategies were analyzed alongside a qualitative comparison of the Persian and English titles, with attention to the relationship between the titles and the visual artworks.

The findings showed that semantic translation, with 26 cases accounting for 68.42%, was the most frequent strategy in the dataset (Table 1). This substantial proportion indicates that, in the majority of the titles examined, the English versions were based on the transfer of the semantic content of the Persian titles. In other words, the predominant approach in this dataset was to transfer the Persian title as a meaningful unit into the target language while largely preserving the conceptual relationship between the source and target titles. The predominance of this strategy is consistent with Boyko's (2011) view of semantic translation as one of the principal ways of transferring artwork titles. However,

the nature of an artwork title and its relationship to the image mean that, even in semantic translations, the choice of target-language words may be influenced by the context of the artwork and the translator's interpretation of its intended meaning. Thus, the findings indicate that, in the dataset examined, the transfer of meaning remained the primary consideration in translation decision-making, although such transfer cannot be considered independently of the interpretive nature of an artwork title.

Following semantic translation, transcription, with 5 cases accounting for 13.16%, was the second most frequent strategy (Table 1). The presence of this strategy indicates that, in some of the data, preserving the nominal form and identity of the title was prioritized over transferring its lexical meaning. This finding is consistent with Boyko's (2011) framework, as the transfer of the formal shape of a title may replace semantic translation, particularly in the case of proper names and titles with prominent nominal or cultural characteristics.

Translation by convention/tradition was observed in only one case, accounting for 2.63%, while reproduction in the original spelling had no instances in the dataset (Table 1). The low frequency of translation by convention/tradition may indicate that the use of established and conventional forms was limited, at least within the dataset examined.

One notable finding of the study was the presence of 6 cases, accounting for 15.79%, in the "Other/Outside Boyko's Four Strategies" category (Table 1). The significance of this finding lies in the fact that, although Boyko's (2011) framework provided a basis for classifying the majority of the data, it did not fully account for all the translation choices found in an actual collection of artwork titles. In this respect, the findings are consistent with Boyko's (2011) emphasis on the complex and multisemiotic nature of artwork titles, as the translation of titles in practice may result in choices that cannot be readily categorized within conventional strategies for translating proper names.

This aspect of the findings also highlights the importance of considering an artwork title as a unit that cannot be reduced to lexical translation. When a target title departs substantially from the source title, explaining the change solely in terms of linguistic equivalence becomes difficult, and the title needs to be examined in relation to its artistic, interpretive, and communicative functions. From this perspective, the finding is consistent with studies that have emphasized the multifunctional nature of titles and the need to consider their relationship with the artwork (Udovichenko & Stadniichuk, 2024; Ke, 2025).

Based on these findings, it can be concluded that, within the dataset examined, the transfer of title meaning into the target language constituted the predominant translation pattern. Nevertheless, part of the data demonstrated that the translation of artwork titles cannot always be explained through conventional strategies. The presence of cases outside Boyko's (2011) four-strategy framework indicates that some artwork titles undergo recreation, modification, or creative choices in the process of transfer into the target language. This, in turn, highlights the distinctive nature of artwork-title translation in comparison with purely lexical translation. Therefore, the study of artwork-title translation, particularly in the context of contemporary galleries and exhibitions, requires simultaneous attention to the linguistic form of the title, its meaning, and its relationship with the visual artwork. By focusing on an actual collection of bilingual artwork titles in the context of an Iranian art gallery/exhibition, the present study contributes to the empirical description of this process and to the identification of actual patterns of strategy selection in the translation of artwork titles.

AI-assisted writing statement

A generative AI tool (ChatGPT, 5.6) was used solely to assist with language editing, grammatical refinement, and improving the clarity and readability of the manuscript. The author remains fully responsible for the content, analysis, interpretation, and conclusions presented in this article.

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