International Journal of Ethics & Society (IJES)
Journal homepage: **www.ijethics.com**
Vol. **3**, *No.* **3. (2021)**

(Review article)

The Musts and the Must-nots for Translators

(A Glance at Principles of the Free Translation of Literary Texts from English to Persian)

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Abstract

Background: The present article tried to investigate the musts and the must-nots for translators. In other words, the present researcher did her best to take an analytic look at the principles of the free translation of literary texts from English to Persian.
Method: The library-based descriptive data was collected from a variety of academic databases such as *Google Scholar*, *Eric*, and *ISC* from 1960 to 2021.
Conclusion: According to the literature theoretically and analytically reviewed as well as the present researcher's investigation, sixteen translators' commitments were considered as the most significant commitments of the translators as follow: avoiding word for word translation, considering characters' positions and gender, utilizing foreign words in a translated text, following the speech of the source text, being committed to society, re-translating a text, regarding an editor for the translated text, reviewing and revisiting a translated text, domesticating SL expressions and idioms, reading other works of the same author, consulting with dictionaries, glossaries and references, omitting and adding a word if necessary, expanding vocabulary, mastering SL and TL grammars, dividing SL long sentences into smaller ones in TL and vice versa, and considering the author's point(s) of view. The findings of the present paper may have some theoretical and practical implications for the translation trainers and trainees as well as translation researchers.

Keywords: Source language; Target language; Transference of the message; Translator's commitments; Translator's maneuver

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[DOI: 10.52547/ijethics.3.3.1]

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Received: 02 Apr 2021
Accepted: 03 May 2021
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Introduction

First, I like to elaborate on the translation of verse 22 of Chapter Al-Hijr (i.e., The Rocky Tract) by Mehdi Afshar as a celebrated Iranian translator, who believes in free translation for rendering literary texts (although to translate verses of the Holly book, word for word translation is recommended and preferred). By putting forward of this verse, I intend to shed light on some significant points in the free translation of literary texts. The verse in Arabic is as follows:

وَأَرْسَلْنَا الرِّيَاحَ لَوَاقِحَ فَأَنْزَلْنَا مِنَ السَّمَاءِ مَاءً فَأَسْقَيْنَاكُمُوهُ وَمَا أَنْتُمْ لَهُ بِخَازِنِينَ

The underlined phrase of Verse 22 of Chapter Al-Hijr has been translated by Afshar in Persian as follows:

Persian Translation: و بادها را به دامادی گل‌ها فرستادیم

English Transcription: *Badha ra be damadi-ye golha ferestadim*

The verse can be translated into English as such: "And we sent the winds as the bridegroom for roses"[1]. This phrase and its free translation in English as a criterion are considered to explain what type of specifications one could find in free translation method[2]. Accordingly, the following points should be considered (1, 2):

1. Translator is free to employ the aesthetic words.
2. Translator is committed to the meaning, not the form of the words.
3. Translator is committed to the target language and should try to add to the beauties of the language as the product of her/his work.
4. Translator is free to fly to the summits, but s/he is not permitted to divert the meaning of the source language.
5. The job of translation is not merely rendering a language into another language, but it is also transferring a culture to another culture.
6. Translator should observe the social, cultural, and intellectual position of her/his addressees.
7. Translator, before being a translator, should be a woman/man of literature and possess good talent of the source and target languages.

Research Literature

• *Translation*

Translation has been defined as transferring the words of a language to another language; the first language is called 'source language' and the second one is called 'target language' and whatever is transferred, is called 'subject or message'. We can although define translation as a bridge between two cultures, the bridge that one of its pillars locates on a cultural area and its other pillar is on another cultural area; therefore, translation is not merely rendering or translating, but it is a type of interpreting, which is somehow connected with hermeneutics. It means that the translator gets a sentence, or a paragraph, and digests it in the digestive system of her/his mind and wears it in a new garment, but within this transformation, many events happen that I plan to refer to some of them.

First, let us talk about the word *tarjama* in Persian language. Arab language speakers assume that this word (*tarjama*) is an Arabic word and its root is *rajm,* which means, "casting stone". (4). They do not know or deny the fact that the word *Tarjamani* is the Arabic form of Persian word *Tarzabani*, and that *Tarzaban* is the one who knows various languages and talks eloquently and helps two persons or two groups of people understand each other's languages and it is not related to 'stone casting'.

1. In spite the fact that "inseminator winds", not only "impregnate" roses, but also other plants, we have ignored it, because it is not so important in our main discussion of the present article.
2. Word for word translation of the mentioned phrase by some Iranian great Quranic interpreters are made in a wholly different manner:
   - Elahi Qomshehei: We sent the inseminator winds (of the world of nature)
   - Ansariyan: And we sent the winds to inseminate
   - Fooladvand: And we sent inseminating winds
   - Ayati: And we sent the winds to impregnate
   - Makarem Shirazi: And we sent the impregnating winds (for the womb of nature)

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Yahya Marouf, one of the masters of Arabic language says, "From a collection of various ideas, one can infer that the word 'Tarjoman' has entered from Persian language into Arabic language, because in the Arabic language the rhythm of "folan" in the meaning of a gerund does not exist; and even Sibeveyh, who combined the first Arabic grammar, has not mentioned such an issue. Based on this idea, the verbs of "Tarjam" and "Yotarjem" are made of Persian word *Tarzaban.* (4)

- ***Hermeneutics***

As previously mentioned, translation is not merely rendering the words of a language to another language, but it is a type of hermeneutics. To clarify this definition, I refer to Meqdadi's *Dictionary of Literature* that presents a complete meaning of hermeneutics. Meqdadi (5) says, "Hermeneutics is an ancient sacred belief". As at the beginning of John's Bible, we read, "first, it was word and the word was with God and the word, was God".

Hermeneutics is the study of general principles of sacred book that is called 'exegeses. During the history, the main goal of the Jews and the Christians as for hermeneutics has been discovering the facts and the values hidden in the holy books; in other words, the act of cryptanalysis; and they look at it from four main views: literary, ethical, allegorical, and mystical. According to hermeneutics, any text (either sacred or non-sacred) possesses two meanings. The main shaft of hermeneutics is to believe in the issue that the apparent meaning is adjacent to the inner or hidden meaning. Martin Heidegger, the German philosopher says that the outer factors such as time, place, history, and especially the translator or interpreter, possess determinant roles in interpreting the text. Heidegger and Hans George Gadamer believe that the interpreter has no choice but to move around the orbit of hermeneutics and any effort to this orbit means to negate the historical motif of the interpreter. (5)

Against this theory, a philosopher [Rush] believes that there is a difference between meaning and purpose. Meaning is whatever a translator infers from the text and the purpose is determination of what s/he writes on the paper; and they indispensably are not identical. In fact, a translator is the one who is able to superpose the meanings and concepts of the text of an author as much as possible. In this way, if the creator of the source text knew the target language, s/he would decide to write the same things that the translator has created. Of course, it is so better if the translators present a text more beautiful and brighter than the source language. The book that Ahmad Aram translated into Persian from Seyyed Hossein Nasr under the title of "Science and the Civilization in Islam" is an outstanding example of such translation. Nasr said, "If I was asked to write this book in Persian, of course I would present a book like it".

Perhaps you become surprised to know why Nasr has employed the word 'creation' for the act of translation. I believe he purposely has used this word. To me, if a translator possesses a good knowledge of the subject of the text that s/he is translating and could create a fluent and an eloquent text in the target language, her/his position is equal to the creator of the source language. Such a translation is not fair to be called 'imitation'. (6)

Bahaeddin Khorramshahi, in his book entitled "Probing into Translation" writes, "When he was asked this question: 'Is translation a technic or an artifice?' he answered that there was no doubt that translation is a technic, but it is not a mere technic, it is an artistic technic." He adds, "If it is not the mere creation, undoubtedly, it is a re-creation. The idealistic limit of Persian translation for the scientific and research text is, if the owner of the source language knows Persian language, he has no choice, but to confess that his main text is almost the same thing that the translator has translated. In other words, when he reads the translated text, he would ceaselessly say, "O my dear; you are talking out of my own tongue". The skill of the translator and her/his rich knowledge and his domination over the words and the beauties of expressions and employing the proposed combinations could make the simple insipid text into an artistic text." (6)

As the concluding remarks in this section, translation regardless of which language to which language is rendered and regardless of which culture is rendered into which culture, is based upon observing three principles: 1. domination over the source lan-

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guage; 2. possessing the knowledge of target language and if this knowledge turns into domination, much better; and 3. possessing knowledge of the subject of translation.

Translators' Commitments

When I am talking of commitments, in fact I am talking exactly of ethics too; obviously, any job or any profession should observe some principles and should be carried out in a definite framework; encroaching these principles is encroaching the ethics. As the physicians swear an oath to cure any patient who is suffering, regardless of ideology, race and nationality, which is called the "Hippocratic Oath", the same applies to translators too; the translators have concluded an unwritten treaty with the culture and the literature of their homeland to write nothing, but in the direction of enlightening the world society and never divert the purpose of the writer of the source language. Observing or denying these conventions, distinguishes a good translator from a bad one. One of the important specifications of translation is that a text, going to be translated, is almost at reach of every one, and any researcher could compare the original text with its translation(s).

Undoubtedly, the people of culture respect and regard great translators like Najaf Daryabandari, Abulhassan Najafi, Reza Seyyed Hosseini, and Manoochehr Badiei as the committed translators and place them in a higher place, comparing to non-committed translators, who are careless of any principle in their works. The works that the aforementioned translators have created are examples for the younger generations to follow.

Today, because of the translation courses in the universities at B.A, M.A and Ph.D levels, every year, a great number of translators are sent to the Translation market, and most of them are absorbed to the professions that are not related to the issue of translation. Unfortunately, up to the present time, no precious work has been presented to the cultural society by these translators, or at least, I have not found any work that could be called a valuable translation. What is surprising is that none of the celebrated names I mentioned as the committed translators is among the people who are graduated from these academic courses. Therefore, this question would be raised: Is there any relation between the impressive translated works like the works of Mohammad Qazi (graduated from the Faculty of Law of Tehran University) and the courses of translations in the universities in any level? If the answer is "no", is it not necessary that these academic courses should be reconsidered carefully?

In the list of the first page of the present article, I mentioned the cases that a translator is free or permitted to maneuver and now I plan to describe each of those items.

Since the realm of ethics is the realm of "must" and "must not"; therefore, the reader feels that these items are a little instructive.

- ***Avoiding Word for Word Translation***

A translator should avoid word for word translation. I do not know how one could translate in this way, even in the technical texts. Because the grammatical structure between two languages are different, as an example, in Persian and English. No one can translate in this way, because in the English declarative sentences, verbs are placed at the beginning of the sentences, while in Persian language, the place of the verb is at the end of the sentence and even the most pedant translators could not place the verb at the beginning of the sentence. At the following, I have brought a paragraph of an acceptable translation to show how a translator could render a text into her/his mother tongue without the least derivation from the original text. The paragraph has been taken from the book of Hemingway's (7) *Farewell to Arms,* translated by Mehdi Afshar.

It was dusk when the priest came. They had brought the soup and afterward taken away the bowls and I was lying looking at the rows of beds and out the window at the treetop that moved a little in the evening breeze. The breeze came in through the window and it was cooler with the evening. The flies were on the ceiling now and on the electric light bulbs that hung on wires. The light was only turned on when someone was brought in at night or when something was being done. It made me feel very young to have the dark come after the dusk and then remain. It was like being put to bed after early supper. The orderly came down between the beds and stopped.

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Someone was with him. It was the priest. He stood there small, brown-faced, and embarrassed.

رو به غروب بود که کشیش آمد. سوپ آورده بودند و بعد از آن که کاسه‌ها را بردند، هم‌چنان دراز کشیده، به ردیف تخت‌خواب‌ها و به بیرون پنجره، به نوک درختان می‌نگریستم که از نسیم غروبین اندک جنبشی داشت. نسیم از پنجره به درون راه می‌یافت و با فرا رسیدن غروب هوا خنک‌تر شده بود. اکنون مگس‌ها بر سقف نشسته و گاه گاهی پیرامون لامپی می‌نشستند که از رشته سیمی آویزان بود. چراغ‌ها فقط زمانی روشن می‌شد که شب هنگام مجروحی را می‌آوردند یا کاری در دست انجام بود. تاریکی بعد از غروب و تاریک ماندن هوا، یاد روزهای کودکی را در خاطرم زنده می‌کرد؛ درست مثل این بود که بعد از شام زودهنگام مرا در بستر می‌گذاردند. گماشته آمد بین تخت‌خواب‌ها ایستاد و همان‌جا ماند. کسی همراه او بود. کشیش بود. کوچک اندام و جمع و جور؛ آفتاب سوخته، دستپاچه و پریشان احوال.

It is a fluent translation and the translator is committed to the source text. Now let us analyze the same paragraph from the view of the list that I have enumerated at the beginning of the present article.

In English text, the pronoun "it" at the beginning of the paragraph, refers to 'weather' and word 'dusk' is a few minutes before the dominancy of darkness; for this reason, the translator has employed Persian word 'sunset' for this time. In the second sentence: "they have brought soup" the translator in his Persian text has omitted the visible pronoun 'they', because in Persian language we have a non-visible pronoun and utilizing the visible pronoun 'they' shows that Persian text is severely affected by the English text. The experienced translators avoid using the visible pronouns, unless they want to put emphasize on a definite point. In the above paragraph, the translator skillfully has used the phrase 'as before' rather than the continuous form. In the sentence "I was laying looking at the rows of beds" there are two verbs and the translator has expanded it, to two sentences, because in Persian language, any verb is a complete sentence and the translator has joined these two sentences to each other by a conjunction, and to avoid placing two appositive verbs, he has placed each verb at the end of a sentence. The definite article 'the' before the word 'flies' shows that the word 'flies' is a noun and the source text is about insects that stick on the ceiling. In the next sentence the word 'wounded' is not used, but from the ambience one could guess "when someone was brought in…" that 'someone' should be the wounded one and the translator has added this word to his own text. Using the word "wounded' shows that the translator has not been under the influence of the source text, on the contrary, he has been dominated over the source text. The translator has rendered the sentence "It made me feel young". In this way, it reminds me the years of childhood rather than rendering the word 'feeling' and this manner of translation shows; he is not lost in the English manner of speech. The hero of the novel remembers the years of his childhood that they were obliged to sit at the darkness of dusk, because there was no electric power and when this memory becomes complete that he was obliged to have dinner very soon and sleep after the arrival of darkness. I do not know whether the translator knew the meaning of the word 'orderly' or not, perhaps he has consulted with dictionary. In any case, this word in this sentence, despite its appearance that seems to be adverb, is a noun and it is used for a certain person, for example he could be one of the personnel of the hospital, but the translator correctly has chosen Persian word 'Gomashteh' that means a soldier who offers service to officers. In the English text, three adjectives have been given to the priest (*He stood there small, brown faced and embarrass*) and Persian translator has shown these attributions with their synonyms which is a manner of writing in Persian language.

The ambience that the translator has depicted possesses the same situation that Hemingway (7) has depicted and in this translation, no one can catch the whiff of translation.

- ***Considering Characters' Positions and Gender***

A translator should consider social, financial, and educational positions and the gender of characters. In translation, especially in translation of fictions, the author talks of the register of characters. Those characters may be university professors, truck drivers, cashiers, augurs or ignoble men; each of them possessing a special dialect and even a special register and the translator should observe this issue and translate their words according to their register in

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the target culture. Besides, the translator is not permitted to translate in general language the professional text, but in the jargon language.

- ***Utilizing Foreign Words in a Translated Text***

A translator is free to use the foreign words in a translated text. One of the outstanding ethical aspects of a translator is to render the source text into target language in a language that his/her addressees could understand it easily without any difficulty to get the purpose of the author of source language. In other words, the purpose of translating is not Persian prattling. Some translators emphasize on this point to use a pure language even in price of making the text meaningless. I am obliged to mention here the name of translators like Mir-Jalaleddin Kazzazi and Adib Soltani as the great masters; but the outcome of their translations, should be translated again in the target language. Against these pure writing translators, are those who try to use the grandiloquence words, they write in a manner, as if the goal of writing is not transferring the concept, but to show their knowledge of language.

- ***Following the Speech of the Source Text***

A translator should avoid diverting the speech of the source text. If a translator does not like some points in the source text, s/he is not permitted to omit or divert them: if s/he does not like the work, s/he could leave it aside totally, but if s/he is obliged to translate it, s/he should translate the text sound and safe, free from any prejudice. In the case, there are some points in the source text that are not true; s/he can mention these points in the footnotes by relying to convincing documents or logical arguments. Any effort for enervating the source text is an unethical conduct.

- ***Being Committed to Society***

A translator is committed to her/his society. There are some precious works in the source language that only a few persons could translate them into the target language. Evading from translations that terminate in deprivation of a generation from a precious idea is an unethical conduct.

- ***Re-translating a Text***

A translated work could be translated by other translators too. I am at the side of people who believe that a single precious work should be translated by various translators, because any translator possesses a special point of view that affects the text of the target language and also the readers could enjoy the various talents.

- ***Regarding an Editor for the Translated Text***

Any translated text should be edited by an editor. Editing the translated text by an experienced editor is the sign of respecting the reader, because the skilled editor makes the text readable. In many cases, the translator because s/he is affected by the source text, assumes that s/he has chosen appropriate words; as a result, the outcome of the work becomes insipid and even ambiguous; therefore, an editor could clarify the text in such a way that the reader could enjoy it.

- ***Reviewing and Revisiting a Translated Text***

The translated work should be reviewed totally by a translator at least after a week. Translator at the time of translating assumes s/he is choosing the best equivalents in the target language, because s/he is under the influence of the source language, but after at least a week, when s/he returns to her/his work, since s/he is not under the influence of the source language any more, s/he reads the text, as a third person or as a critic, not a translator, and sometimes could correct his own text even better than the editor.

- ***Domesticating SL Expressions and Idioms***

A translator should translate the expressions and idioms of the source language in the form of expressions and idioms in the target language. Human beings according to gaining common experiences in their collective life produce and forge common expressions and idioms. Therefore, any man of literature could find an equal expression of the source language in the target language; for example, when the translator faces the expression "strike while the iron is hot" s/he can translate it into Persian expression "place the dough as long as the oven is hot" or against the expression of "sufficient unto the day is

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the evil thereof" s/he can place its Persian equivalent, namely, "Be not distressed before the arrival of disaster" or s/he can place against "practice makes perfect", "a perfect practicing is the outcome of ceaseless practicing."

- ***Reading other Works of the Same Author***

A translator, for rendering a work, should read the other works of the same author. The writers, regardless of the depth and expansion of their knowledge possess a definite treasure of words, definite manner of thinking, a definite structure of thought and a definite manner of approach in writing; familiarity with the style and thought of the writer and her/his approach to various issues helps the translator transfer the author's ideas much more understandable and the outcome of her/his effort would be much more congruent with the manner of speech of the writer.

- ***Consulting with Dictionaries, Glossaries and References***

A translator should consult with dictionaries, glossaries and other references. Before the invention of internet, consulting with the reference books was much more difficult than today. Fortunately, nowadays, all the references of any type are available and the translator should incessantly consult with them, especially when s/he is not sure about the equivalent of a word or s/he hesitates about a point. An experienced translator knows that all the words possess a definite application and the synonym has no meaning in language; in other words, we have no synonyms in any language and any word possesses the load of its own meaning; therefore, a good translator should probe into the depth of the meaning of a word to find an appropriate equivalent for it. In addition, most of the words in any language have a range of meanings that their applications are different and any translator should check the meaning of any word that is not placed in the sentence easily and appropriately. Perhaps, it possesses another meaning rather than the popular or well-known one. Let me tell you my own experience: once I was translating a psychological text and I encountered with the word 'prejudice'; I knew that it means "distrust or dislike of a person, group, custom and so on, that is based on fear or false information, rather than on reason or experience and that influences one's attitude and behavior towards them"; but this meaning was nonsense in that sentence. I looked it up in a dictionary and I found out the other meanings of the word that is to damage and to cause harm to a case, which was placed in my sentence very appropriately.

- ***Omitting and Adding a Word if Necessary***

A translator, in the case of necessity, could add a word or omit a word from the main text. In the Quranic phrase of the beginning of the present article, the translator had added the word 'rose' and 'bridegroom' to the phrase and omitted the word "lavagheh" (literally, sexual intercourse). In this way, he had tried to clarify the meaning, while making the phrase much more beautiful, although he had not taken distance from the meaning of the phrase. This manner of translation is the crystallization of the expression that says, "Sometimes between the lines is more important than the lines".

- ***Expanding Vocabulary***

A translator should expand the range of his/her words. Expanding and deepening the treasure of words in both source and target language, help the translator understand the concept of the source better, and transfer the idea of the first writer, more effectively and more delicately to his/her addressees (8). One of the old literary Persian books [*Char Maqaleh Aroozi*] puts the issue in this way: "A poet, in addition to possessing poetical talent, should keep at least 10,000 couplets in his mind to be able to compose an excellent poem". The same point applies to the translators, too. A translator, whose treasure of words is rich, could find more appropriate words for transferring a concept.

- ***4.14. Mastering SL and TL Grammars***

A translator should master the grammars of both languages (9). It is true that knowing the speech patterns in both languages are more important than the knowledge of grammar, but knowing grammar helps the translator discover the trifle issues. Of course, any translator is scarcely sensitive about the grammatical identity of the word; s/he uses a gerund in the sentence unconsciously and without knowing that this word is gerund, but knowing the

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grammatical identity, helps him translate more effectively.

- ***Dividing SL Long Sentences into Smaller Ones in TL and Vice Versa***

A translator should divide the long sentences of the source text into smaller ones. An experienced translator fears not to divide a long sentence into smaller sentences, and vice versa; namely, s/he renders a short sentence of the source text into a long sentence in the target text. The structure of Persian language is very flexible, any verb in its structure possesses a grammatical subject too, and this flexibility lets the translator divide the long sentences into smaller units that is natural for addressees. For example, at the following, two sentences have been placed in a single sentence while in English all the verbs need a subject:

Persian Sentence: آمدیم، نبودید.

English Transcription: *Amadim, nabudid*

English Translation: We came, you were not.

- ***Considering the Author's Point(s) of View***

A translator is responsible for the way of looking of an author. S/he cannot render a liberalistic text into a socialistic one. As an example, some of the authors of 1978 Revolution in Iran inclined to socialism. They interpreted the Islamic text of "Nahj al-Balagha" as a socialistic book, which was exactly a violation of the author's rights.

Material & Methods

In this descriptive paper, the sixteen translators' commitments as the most significant ones have been theoretically and practically reviewed in order to present the musts and the must-nots for translators, because this paper tried to be a glance at principles of the free translation of literary texts from English to Persian).

Conclusion

Based on the findings, as translators' commitments are as follow: avoiding word for word translation, considering characters' positions and gender , utilizing foreign words in a translated text, following the speech of the source text, being committed to society, re-translating a text, regarding an editor for the translated text ,reviewing and revisiting a translated text, domesticating SL expressions and idioms, reading other works of the same author, consulting with dictionaries, glossaries and references, omitting and adding a word if necessary, expanding vocabulary, mastering SL and TL grammars, dividing SL long sentences into smaller ones in TL and vice versa, and considering the author's point(s) of view. As the ethical considerations, the samples and others' words, if needed, have been presented with in-text citation. Undoubtedly, I could add many other items to these 16 titles, but the limitations placed for article writing, made me stop this process; and naturally, I put forward the most important ones. According to Hafez, the Iranian poet, "there are more than thousand points, more delicate than a string of hair that has been remained unsaid," that observing them as principles, means observing the ethics of translation. They distinguish an ethical translator from an unethical one. In short, the main professional ethics in this field can be summarized into the following three points:

1. Observing the rights of the author
2. Observing the right of the message
3. Observing the right of the addressees

Ethical Consideration

Ethical issues (such as plagiarism, conscious satisfaction, misleading, making and or forging data, publishing or sending to two places, redundancy, etc.) have been fully considered by the writers.

Acknowledgement

Thanks to all colleagues and students who patiently shared their knowledge in this research.

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[DOI: 10.52547/ijethics.3.3.1]