

**Tense Variations in the Process of Translation of Sadeq Hedayat's
"The Blind Owl"
From English into Persian**

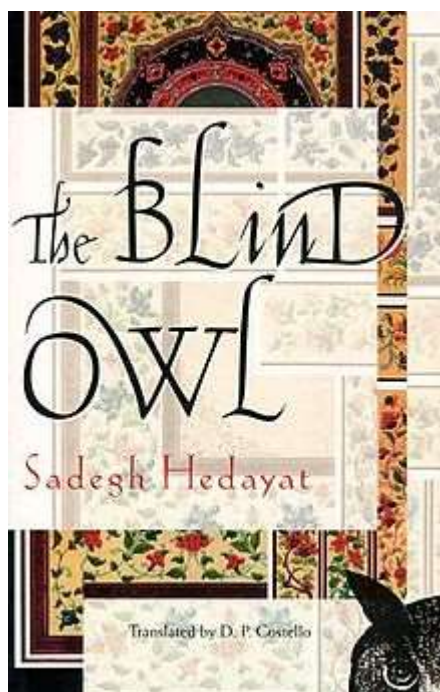
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Abstract

This study is an attempt to compare the present perfect and past perfect tenses in the Persian and English versions of a famous novel by Sadeq Hedayat. After a detailed review of both "Boofe Koor" and its English translation, "The Blind Owl", translated by D.P. Costello, 217 verbs in

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past perfect and 60 others in present perfect tenses were listed. The comparison of these verbs and their equivalents in the English translation of the book revealed that 68% of the past perfect verbs in the Persian version were translated in the same way in English, 18% were translated into simple past, 6.5% into past continuous and 7.5% into passive voice. It was also revealed that 43.5% of the present perfect verbs in the Persian version were translated in the same way in English, 35% into simple past, and 21.5% into past perfect. The study showed that both past perfect and present perfect tenses are translated either in the same way or into other tenses in the receptor language.

Key words: Translation, Present perfect tense, Past perfect tense



Sadeq Hedayat 1903-1951

1. INTRODUCTION

As a matter of fact, teachers can be claimed to be an essential part of education, as Finocchiaro and Bonomo (2006) referred to the role of teachers as vital to learning skills and habits (Moshayedi, 2009). They might be involved in different steps which students want to take. As an EFL teacher, one of the obsessions, particularly in lower levels, can be how to deal with the students' first language.

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Speakers of every language use all the means available in their language to convey their meaning. Because of the variety of such means in different languages, when translating a text from one language to another, it may not be possible to use the same capacities available in the source language. One of the structures which have been a cause of dispute among different grammarians and linguistics is **Tense**. Tabatabaei (2011) believes, it is of more challenge when translating a text from the English language to another one. Reading novels has for long been of great interest among people of different cultures and communities. Famous novelists have emerged all over the world through time and left great novels for the future generations. But, what is important is that not all societies in the world have had such novelists who had written novels in the language in which the people of those societies were communicating. This raised the necessity for translation of novels into other languages. Through time, more and more novels and short stories were translated and people from different societies could read and understand novels which were translations of books not originally written in their own language.

Some Persian novels have been translated into different languages. One of these is Sadeq Hedayat's "The Blind Owl" which is considered as a masterpiece of literature in the 20th century. The book has been translated into several languages including English and French.

Many famous authors around the world admired Sadeq Hedayat for his book and Henry Miller, the American contemporary writer, having read the novel, hoped he could once write a book similar to "the blind owl".

The writers of this research report analyzed the English version of "the blind owl" translated from Persian to English by D.P. Costello. As it is clear from the topic of the research, the researcher has taken into consideration the present perfect and past perfect tenses in both Persian and English versions of the book to see what has happened to verbs in these tenses in the course of translation.

1.1. Significance of the Study

The researchers have chosen this topic to indicate:

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- 1) Whether the time of actions in the story has been expressed in a way that an English native reader can truly imagine what actions happened at what time in the story, and
- 2) Whether the author's ideas have been fully transferred and are completely understandable to English native readers.

1.2. Literature Review

1.2.1. What is Translation?

Translation has been defined by different linguists in different ways:

According to Newmark (1988), translation is “rendering the meaning of a text into another language in the way that the author intended the text”.

According to Larson (1984), Translation is studying the lexicon, grammatical structure, communication situation, and cultural context of the source language text, analyzing it in order to determine its meaning, and then reconstructing this same meaning using lexicon and grammatical structure which are appropriate in the receptor language and its cultural context.

1.2.2. Types of Translation

Larson (1984) divided two major types of translation:

1. *Form-based translations* attempt to follow the form of the source language and are known as literal translations. If the two languages are related, the literal translation can often be understood, since the general grammatical form may be similar. However, the literal choice of lexical items makes the translation sound foreign.

2. *Meaning-based translations* make every effort to communicate the meaning of the source language text in the natural forms of the receptor language. Such translations are called idiomatic translations. Idiomatic translation uses the natural form of the receptor language, both in the

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grammatical constructions and in the choice of lexical items. A truly idiomatic translation does not sound like a translation. It sounds like it was written originally in the receptor language. The translator's goal should be to reproduce in the receptor language a text which communicates the same message as the source language but using the natural grammatical and lexical choices of the receptor language, his goal is an idiomatic translation.

Newmark (1995), distinguishes eight kinds of translation.

1. Word-for-word translation. This is often demonstrated as interlinear translation, with the TT immediately below the ST words. The ST word-order is preserved and the words translated singly by their most common meanings, out of context. Cultural words are translated literally. The main use of word-for-word translation is either to understand the mechanics of the source language or to construe a difficult text as a pre-translation process.

2. Literal translation. The ST grammatical constructions are converted to their nearest TT equivalents but the lexical words are again translated singly, out of context. As a pre-translation process, this indicates the problems to be solved.

3. Faithful translation: A faithful translation attempts to reproduce the precise contextual meaning of the original within the constraints of the TT grammatical structures. It 'transfers' cultural words and preserves the degree of grammatical and lexical 'abnormality' (deviation from ST norms) in the translation. It attempts to be completely faithful to the intention and the text-realization of the ST writer.

4. Semantic translation differs from 'faithful translation' only as far as it must take more account of the aesthetic value of the ST, compromising on 'meaning' where appropriate so that no assonance, word-play or repetition jars in the finished version. Further, it may translate less important cultural words by culturally neutral third or functional terms but not by cultural equivalents and it may make other small concessions to the readership.

5. Adaptation: This is the 'freest' form of translation. It is used mainly for plays (comedies) and poetry; the themes, characters, plots are usually preserved, the ST cultures converted to the TT culture and the text rewritten.

6. Free translation reproduces the matter without the manner, or the content without the form of the original. Usually it is a paraphrase much longer than the original, a so-called 'intra-

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lingual translation', often prolix and pretentious, and not translation at all.

7. Idiomatic translation reproduces the 'message' of the original but tends to distort nuances of meaning by preferring colloquialisms and idioms where these do not exist in the original.

8. Communicative translation attempts to render the exact contextual meaning of the original in such a way that both content and language are readily acceptable and comprehensible to the readership. The types of translation of number 1 to number 4 is what called SL oriented translation while number 5 to number 8 is called TL oriented translation. Besides the types of translation above, the types of translation could also divide based on the language that involved in the process of the translation.

Present Perfect Tense in English

It is an aspect of the verb expressing an action that began in the past and which has recently been completed or continues into the present. The present perfect is formed by combining *has* or *have* with a past participle.

Have/Has + Past Participle

e.g. Mary has bought her car 4 years ago.

Past Perfect Tense in English

It is an aspect of the verb that designates an action which has been completed before another past action. Formed with the auxiliary *had* and the past participle of a verb, the past perfect indicates a time further back in the past than the present perfect or the simple past tense.

Had + Past Participle

e.g. Charles had seen the movie many years before.

Present Perfect Tense in Persian

It is used to express an action that has been done in uncertain past or that has been started in the past and is continuing to the present. It is formed by combining the objective adjective with Persian suffixes: *am*, *ei*, *ast*, *im*, *id*, and.

(am, ei, ast, im, id, and) + Objective adjective

e.g. *Man kelidhayam ra gom **karde am***

Past Perfect Tense in Persian

It is used to express an action that has taken place before another action. It is formed by combining the objective adjective of the main verb with simple past

Simple past + Objective adjective

e.g. *Naharam ra **khorde boodam** ke Majid vared shod.*

Based on what has been discussed so far the following hypothesis has been formulated:
H₁: In the process of translation from Persian into English, the Present perfect and past perfect tenses are not changed.

2. METHODOLOGY

2.1. Instruments

The instruments used in this research were as follows:

- 1) “Boofe Koor” book written by Sadeq Hedayat
- 2) “The Blind Owl”, the English version of Boofe Koor, translated from Persian to English by D.P. Costello

2.2. Procedure

The investigators took the following steps in carrying out the research:

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At the first step, the researchers read “Boofe Koor” not only to obtain an understanding of the whole story, but also to see how frequently the author had used the present perfect and past perfect tenses to narrate his story. Since the book has been narrated from first person view and the narrator has most of the time been talking about the events related to the past, the past tense, more, and the past perfect less frequently, has been used in the narration. The investigators listed 217 verbs in past perfect and 60 others in present perfect tense.

In the next step, each and every verb in the list was compared to its equivalent in the translated version of the book, the English verbs were added to the list each being written in front of its related equivalent.

Next, the researcher tried to compare in details the Persian and English equivalents and see how the verbs had been translated. The results were tabulated, and pie charts were developed, accordingly to show the percentage of each tense variation.

Tense	Total	Number of verbs translated into past perfect
Past Perfect	217	149 (68.66%)

Table 1: Total number of past perfect verbs in “Boofe Koor” and the portion that have been translated in the same way into English

3. Results and Discussion

Comparison of the present perfect and past perfect verbs in the Persian and English versions

As shown in table “1”, 149 out of 217 past perfect verbs were translated in the same way into English. This means that about 69% of the present perfect and about 44% of the past perfect verbs in “Boofe Koor” have been translated into English in “the Blind Owl”.

For instance, the verb “*pichide bood*” which is a past perfect verb in Persian used by Sadeq Hedayat in the 6th page of “Boofe Koor” was translated into “*had wrapped*” in “the Blind Owl”, which is also a past perfect verb in English.

As another instance, the verb “*Peida nakarde ast*” which is a present perfect verb in Persian used in the 1st page of “*Boofe Koor*”, was translated into “*has not found*”, which is also a present perfect verb in English.

Therefore, H₁ is accepted, because both past perfect and present perfect tenses in Persian language have been translated in the same way into English language (see appendixes A and B).

Comparison of the past perfect verbs in the Persian and English versions

As shown in table 2, the past perfect verbs have been translated into different tenses in the English version of the book. 149 out of 217 verbs in past perfect tense have been translated into past perfect, 38 into simple past, 14 into past continuous and 16 into passive voice.

Table 2: Number of past perfect verbs translated into other tenses

Tense	Total	Past Perfect	Simple Past	Past continuous	Passive voice
Past Perfect	217	149	38	14	16

As shown in Figure “1”, about 18% of the past perfect verbs have been translated into simple past, 6.5% into past continuous, 7.5% into passive voice, and 68% into past perfect.

For instance, the verb “*gom karde boodam*” which is a past perfect verb in Persian used in the 4th page of “*Boofe Koor*” was translated into “*I lost*” in “*the Blind Owl*”, which is also a simple past verb in English.

In another sentence in the 10th page, the verb “*pooshide bood*” which is a past perfect verb in Persian, was translated into “*was wearing*”, which is a past continuous verb in English.

Also, the verb “*baste shode bood*” in page 19 which is a past perfect verb in Persian, was translated into “*were closed*”, which is a passive voice in English.

As indicated through the instances above, the past perfect tense in Hedayat’s “Boofe Koor” has been translated into different other tenses in the English book “the Blind Owl”.

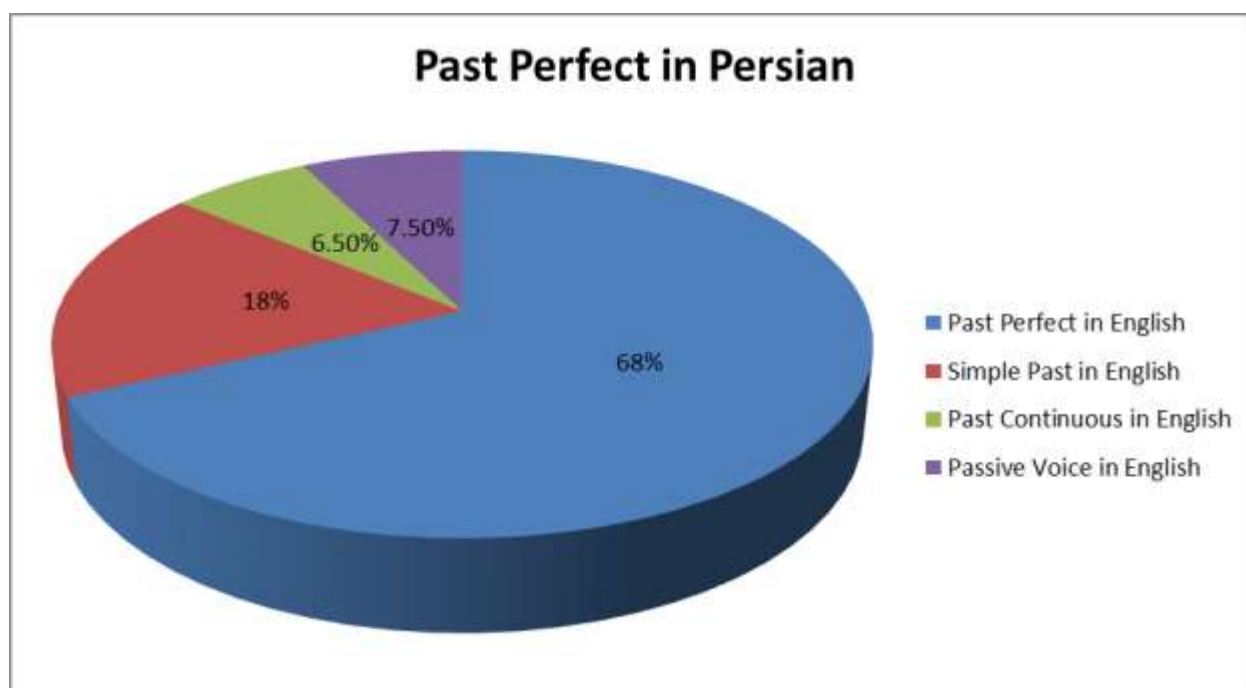


Figure “1”: Past perfect translated into other tenses (in %)

Comparison of the present perfect verbs in the Persian and English versions

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As shown in table 3, the present perfect verbs have been translated into different tenses in the receptor language. 26 out of 60 verbs in past perfect tense have been translated into present perfect, 21 into simple past, and 13 into past perfect.

Tense	Total	Present Perfect	Simple Past	Past Perfect
present Perfect	60	26	21	13

Table 3: Number of present perfect verbs translated into other tenses

As it is clear from figure “2”, 43.5% of the present perfect verbs have been translated into present perfect, 35% into simple past, and 21.5% into past perfect.

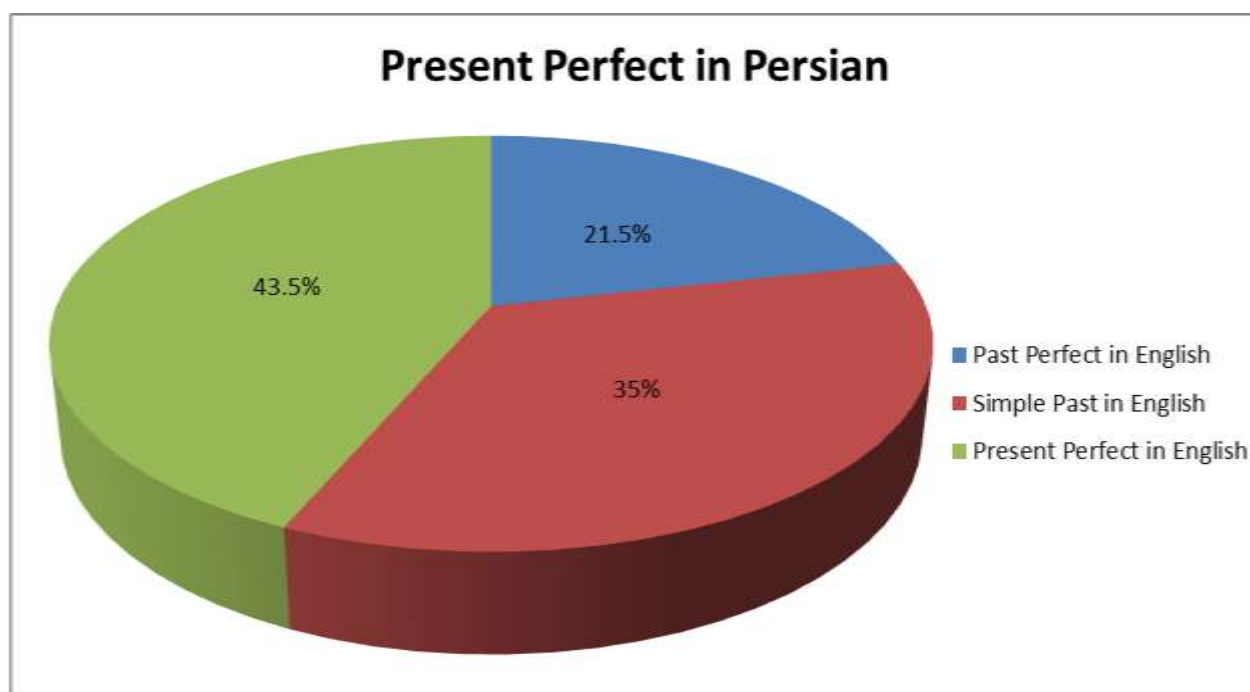


Figure “2”: Present perfect translated into other tenses (in %)

For instance, the verb “*boode ast*”, a present perfect verb in Persian, which has been used in page 6 of “*Boofe Koor*” was translated into “*was*” which is a simple past verb in English.

Similarly, the verb “*dashteh am*”, a present perfect verb in Persian, was translated into “*had*” which is a simple past verb in English.

As another instance, the verb “*bargashteh am*”, a present perfect verb in Persian was translated into “*had returned*”, which is a past perfect verb in English.

Similarly, the verb “*mordeh ast*”, a present perfect verb in Persian was translated into “*had died*” which is also a past perfect verb in English.

4. Conclusion

In order to carry out this study, “Boofe Koor” novel written by the Iranian famous novelist, Sadeq Hedayat, was compared with its English version “the Blind Owl”, translated by D.P. Costello. All verbs used in present perfect and past perfect tenses were listed and compared to their translated equivalents and the following results were obtained:

- the present perfect and past perfect verbs in Persian are translated in the same way into English.
- the past perfect tense is translated into different other tenses.
- the present perfect tense is translated into different other tenses.

This reflected the fact that the translator, having fully realized the story, tried his best to reflect the ideas of the author in his translation in a way that the reader could imagine at what time and under what circumstances the events have occurred in the story. The research also showed that the author’s feelings and ideas have been perfectly transferred and the readers in the target language will be able to fully understand the ideas and analyze the story events.

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APPENDIX A: Past perfect verbs in Persian and English versions of the book

No	Past Perfect in Persian	Translation in English
1	Etefagh oftde bood	It concerned
2	Tekan dade bood	It shattered
3	Gom karde boodam	I lost
4	Ekhtiar karde boodam	I had chosen
5	Mande bood	It remained
6	Pichide bood	It had wrapped
7	Baste bood	It had wore
8	Andakhte boodand	Had been laid down

9	Be serafat nayoftade boodam	Had never given
10	Veghe shode bood	Was
11	Hojoom avarde boodand	They had gone out
12	Baste boodam	I had shut
13	Nadide boodam	I had never seen
14	Rafte bood	Had been
15	Shenide boodam	I understood
16	Mande bood	It had left
17	Reside bood	Had been left
18	Yadam rafte bood	I had forgotten
19	Khoshk shode bood	Wore
20	Dide bood	Had looked
21	Gerefte bood	Was framed
22	Chasbide bood	Was clung
23	Pooshide bood	Was wearing
24	Rafte bood	Had gone
25	Baz gozashte bood	Had left open
26	Dide boodam	I had seen
27	Nadookhte bood	Had not been fashioned
28	Keif borde boodam	I had experienced joy
29	Nadide bood	Had not seen
30	Haram shode bood	Was denied
31	Adat karde boodam	Had become a habit
32	Adat karde boodam	Had become addicted
33	Molaghat karde boodam	Had encountered
34	Masdood shode bood	Was blocked
35	Pichide bood	Had fallen
36	Gozashte bood	Was spent
37	Bidar shode bood	Had developed

38	Nadide boodam	Hadn't seen
39	Amade bood	Had come
40	Gom karde bood	Had lost
41	Amade bood	Had become
42	Zamin khorde boodam	Had fallen
43	Keif karde boodam	Should have experienced
44	Divar keshide boodand	A wall had risen
45	Baste shode bood	Were closed
46	Ers reside bood	Had been left
47	Khabide bood	Was sleeping
48	Eshtebah nakarde boodam	I was not mistaken
49	Zahralood karde bood	Had poisoned
50	Oftede bood	Was lying
51	Fara gerefte bood	Had enveloped
52	Foroo rafte bood	Had penetrated
53	Monjamed shode bood	Were numbed
54	Bargharar shode bood	Transmitted
55	Dakhel shode bood	Admitted
56	Mahv shode bood	Have been effaced
57	Amade bood	Had come
58	Taslim karde bood	Had surrendered
59	Mahboos karde bood	Swatched
60	Shoroo shode bood	Had set
61	Nagofte boodam	Hadn't uttered
62	Baste shode bood	Were harnessed
63	Dorost shode bood	Had been built
64	Nadide boodam	Had never seen
65	Pooshide shode bood	Was covered
66	Nagozashte bood	Had ever set

67	Istade boodam	Stood
68	Ghargh shode bood	Was submerged
69	Chasbide bood	Smearred
70	Fara gerefte bood	Had enshrouded
71	Tark karde boodand	Had rejected
72	Paein amade bood	Had descended
73	Pichideh bood	Muffled
74	Neshaste bood	Was seated
75	Istade bood	Was standing
76	Khabide boodam	Had slept
77	Gheibash zade bood	Had disappeared
78	Dar amade bood	Had turned
79	Sar zade bood	Had committed
80	Keshide boodam	Had painted
81	Holool karde bood	Had taken possession
82	Naghashi karde bood	Had decorated
83	Tei nakarde bood	Had not undergone
84	Bidar shode boodam	Awoke
85	Motevalled shode boodam	I had been born
86	Oftade bood	Was unrolled
87	Be donya amade boodam	I was born
88	Gozashte boodand	Had been laid
89	Tahlil rafte bood	Had been effaced
90	Maskhare karde bood	Was mocking
91	Avaz shode bood	Had changed
92	Faghat be man resande boodand	I only learnt it
93	Andakhte boodand	Had been shut up
94	Dorost karde bood	Had prepared
95	Negah dashte bood	Had sprinkled

96	Shart karde boodam	Made a resolution
97	Nayamadeh bood	Would be out
98	Shenide boodam	I heard
99	Dide boodam	Had seen
100	Bozorg karde bood	Had brought up
101	Entekhab karde bood	Selected
102	Be range ... dar amade boodand	Looked like ...
103	Etefagh oftade bood	Had happened
104	Motevalled shode boodam	Had been born
105	Gom karde boodand	Had lost
106	Khoshktar shode boodand	Had grown more arid
107	Nagozashte bood	Had ever set
108	Khoshkam zade bood	Remained petrified
109	Khab dide boodam	Had seen a dream
110	Gerefte boodand	Hung up
111	Neshaste boodand	Was sitting
112	Neshaste bood	He sat
113	Gozashte bood	Was holding
114	Gerefte bood	He took
115	Barpa karde boodand	Had been erected
116	Avikhte boodand	Was hanging
117	Khire shode boodam	I gazed
118	Shoroo shode bood	Had begun
119	Mahv shode bood	Had faded
120	Paein keshide bood	Had been stretched out
121	Sharik karde bood	Had made a participant
122	Hes nakarde boodand	Had never experienced
123	Saeide nashode bood	Had never felt
124	Neshaste bood	Was depicted

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125	Andakhte boodand	Had been shut up
126	Taghir karde bood	Had changed
127	Baghi mande bood	Remained
128	Shode bood	Had become
129	Nazaeide bood	Had not had the baby
130	Avarde bood	Brought
131	Khabide boodam	Was lying
132	Shode boodam	Had become
133	Faramoosh karde boodand	Had forgotten
134	Takhte karde boodand	Shuttered up
135	Khoo gerefte boodam	Had grown accustomed
136	Penhan shode bood	Had been lurking
137	Zaher shode bood	Had seen
138	Dide boodam	Had seen
139	Vaghe shode bood	Had moved
140	Peida shode bood	Took possession of
141	Door shode boodand	Had receded
142	Dorost karde boodam	I created
143	Gozashte bood	Had passed
144	Khoshk shode boodand	Were standing motionless
145	Zakhim shode bood	Had grown thick
146	Keder shode bood	Had become dim
147	Tasmim gerefte boodam	Had made
148	Tasmim gerefte boodam	Made up my mind
149	Be yade ... oftade boodand	Their thought had turned
150	Be fekr oftade boodam	Had reflected on
151	Forookesh karde bood	Had subsided
152	Poshte saram penhan shode bood	Surrounded me
153	Ab nashode boodam	Had not dissolved

154	Damide bood	Had breathed
155	Nabat shode boodam	I lived in a world of vegetable existence
156	Shenide boodam	Had heard
157	Fekram zaeif shode bood	Had sapped my mental strength
158	Javab dade bood	Had rejected
159	Khabarash ra avarde bood	Had told
160	Be hame gofte bood	Had passed it on to all
161	Asar karde bood	I had felt in
162	Bozorg shode bood	Had expanded
163	Zire abrooyash ra bardashte bood	Her eyebrows were plucked
164	Khal gozashte bood	Was wearing a spot
165	Arayesh karde bood	Her face was made up
166	Hokme Ra peida karde bood	Had become
167	Az dast dade bood	Had gone
168	Shode bood	Had become
169	Mande boodam	Had remained
170	Faramoush karde boodam	Had forgotten
171	Shode boodam	Had become
172	Hak karde boodam	Had been incised
173	Pichide bood	Had reverberated
174	Shenide boodam	Had heard
175	Avarde bood	Had brought
176	Rikhte boodam	Had filled
177	Hal shode bood	contained
178	Lahroom lande boodam	Had been deprived
179	Gerefte boodand	Had been taken
180	Mahroom karde boodand	Had been deprived
181	Vasvas shode bood	Had become obsession

182	Gozashte boodam	Had hidden
183	Nashnide boodam	Had not heard
184	Khabar nayamade bood	Had not given pause
185	Jolid karde bood	Had suggested
186	Nakhabide boodam	Had never slept
187	Dava rah andakhte bood	Was lamenting
188	Gozashte bood	Had placed
189	Pishbini karde bood	Had shaped
190	Zendegi karde boodand	Had lived
191	Taghir dade boodand	Had transmitted
192	Bakhshide boodand	Had bequeathed
193	Nayoftade bood	Hadn't had
194	Jam shode bood	Had settled
195	Dide boodand	Had seen
196	Shode boodam	Had become
197	Morde boodam	Had transcended
198	Shode bood	Had become
199	Ehate karde bood	Had surrounded
200	Pichide boodam	Was wearing
201	Shode bood	Had become
202	Shode boodam	Had become
203	Shode bood	Had become
204	Fara gerefte bood	Had enveloped
205	Khabide boodam	Was lying
206	Ghayem karde boodam	Had hidden
207	Shenide boodam	Had heard
208	Shode bood	Had become
209	Forood avarde boodam	Bowed my head
210	Sard shode bood	Was cold

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211	Biroon zade bood	Sprouted
212	Holool karde bood	Had taken possession
213	Bidar shode bood	Had awoken
214	Shode boodam	Had become
215	Gerefte boodand	Pressed
216	Sard shode bood	Had burnt to cold
217	Khakestar shode bood	Had become ashy

APPENDIX B: Present perfect verbs in Persian and English versions of the book

No	Present Perfect in Persian	Translation in English
1	Peida nakarde ast	Has not discovered
2	Boride am	I broke
3	Be vojood amade and	Have come into existence
4	Oftade ast	Is stretched
5	Gozashte ast	Has passed
6	Boode ast	Was
7	Tazaro karde am	begged
8	Be komak talabide am	Entreated
9	Boode am	Had lived
10	Boode ast	Had been
11	Be khialam zende ast	I thought she was alive
12	Dashte am	I had
13	Vojood dashte ast	There had been
14	Bargashte am	I had returned
15	Az dast dade am	I have allowed to slip away
16	Dide ast	Saw
17	Dide am	Have seen
18	Shenide am	Have heard

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19	Saeide shode ast	Have seen
20	Keshide ast	Have erected
21	Dide ast	Saw
22	Oftade ast	Have relled
23	Bereshte va zoghal shode ast	Has been scorched and charred
24	Sookhte ast	Has burnt
25	Mande ast	Has remained
26	Khafe shode	Has been choked
27	Bastari shode am	Have been confined to my bed
28	Motehammel shode ast	Have supported
29	bode and	Have been
30	Natavaneste ast	Has not been able
31	Negah dashte and	Have kept
32	Baghi gozashte and	Have left
33	Boride and	Have been cut off
34	Foroo karde and	Have been plunged
35	Negah karde am	Have watched
36	Neshaste ast	Sits
37	Rooeide ast	Have grown up
38	Mande ast	Was left
39	Shir dade ast	Were suckled
40	Nadide am	I never saw
41	Shenide am	I have heard
42	Asan naboode ast	It was no easy
43	Vojood deshte ast	Existed
44	Dar khedmat boode ast	Served as
45	Boode ast	Was
46	Naboode am	Was not
47	Dade ast	Gave

48	Tasavor karde ast	Conceives
49	Baste ast	Forced
50	Naboode ast	Was
51	Morde ast	Had died
52	sakhte shode and	Are turned out
53	Boode ast	There was
54	Kharej shode am	I was out
55	Be zahmat andakhte am	Had given trouble
56	Nadashte am	Have never had
57	Rafte ast	Had gone
58	Bardashte am	Had taken
59	Boode ast	Had been
60	Dide ast	Had noticed

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