The Problems Of "Literary Prose" In Translation

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Abstract: *This article deals with the problems in translating literary prose and reveals some pertinent solutions and also concentrates on the need to expand the perimeters of Translation Studies. Unfortunately, the translators lay more emphasis on the translation of poetry; there should be more research regarding the particular problems of translating literary prose. One explanation of this could be the fact that the status of poetry is considered higher, but it is more possibly due to the notable flawed notion that the novels, essays, fiction etc. possess a simple structure compared to that of a poem and is thus easier to translate. However, many debates have been organised over when to translate, when to apply the close local equivalent, when to invent a new word by translating clearly, and when to copy.*

Keywords: translation, prose, problems, solutions, distant-author, prosaic-ideas, go-between

I. INTRODUCTION

Evidently, 'prose-translation' is the translation of novels, essays, fiction, short stories, comedy, folk tale, hagiography, works of criticism, science fiction etc. It is a type of literary creativeness where the written-work of one language is re-created in another. It is an inherent idea that the translation of poetry is very problematic, yet we have to agree that the translators also have to face lots of difficulties when it comes to translating prose. For example, the *Wycliffe Bible* (ca. 1382) was the original grand English translation and it illustrated the flaws of an English prose that was weak in nature. The great epoch of English prose translation started at the closing stages of the 15th century with Thomas Malory's *Le Morte d'Arthur*, which was an adaptation of Arthurian romances and we can scarcely call it a proper translation. Accordingly, the earliest great Tudor renditions were the *Tyndale New Testament* (1525), which impacted the *Authorized Version* (1611), and Lord Berners' version of Jean Froissart's *Chronicles* (1523–25).

However, when the source and target languages belong to different cultural groups, the first problem faced by the prose-translator is finding terms in his or her own language that express the highest level of faithfulness possible to the meaning of certain words. For example, there are some words that are related to typical fabrics, cookery specialties, or jobs; they also represent specific culture and the translators should be very careful in translating such words. They also find it difficult to render ambiguous puns. Similarly, the titles of stories and novels provide many examples of such ambiguities, which are hard or even impossible to translate.

II. METHODS

Many people think that the translation of literary works is one of the highest forms of rendition because it is more than simply the translation of text. A literary translator must also be skilled enough to translate feelings, cultural nuances, humour and other delicate elements of a piece of work. In fact, the translators do not translate meanings but the messages. That is why, the text must be considered in its totality. Alternatively, Peter Newmark (1988) delineates translation as "rendering the meaning of a text into another language in the way that the *author intended* the text" . A further point is that there are examples in which the source text contains 'facets' that are advocated in an apt manner by Lawrence Venuti (*1995)*: "*…discursive variations, experimenting with archaism, slang, literary allusion and convention"* Additionally, it is no less than potentially contradictory that the translator should be "visible" and make use of "foreignising" attributes simultaneously, as foreignising attributes, at any rate in the Schleiermacher tradition, were chiefly initiated into the *Target Text* (T.T) from the *Source Text* (S.T), not by the translator's innovation.

Language has more than a communicative, or societal and connective purpose in literary-prose translation. The word works as the 'key ingredient' of literature, i.e. it has an arty function. A tricky course of action emerges between the start and the conclusion of an innovative work of translation, the 'trans-expression' of the life incarcerated in the framework of imagery of the work being translated. Hence, the problems in 'prose-translation' are within the area of art and they depend on its particular laws.

The subject, Translation Studies, was not given much importance earlier. Now, people's mentality seems to be changing; Octavio Paz (1971) abridges the case for Translation Studies saying that all texts are 'translations of translation of translations' as they are element of a literary system that not only slid down from other systems but also are connected with them. His view moderately echoes the notion of Terry Eagleton (1977) who supposes that "every text is a set of determinate transformations of other…" . According to Paz,

Every text is unique and, at the same time, it is the translation of another text. No text is entirely original because language itself, in its essence, is already a translation: firstly, of the non-verbal world and secondly, since every sign and every

phrase is the translation of another sign and another phrase. However, this argument can be turned around without losing any of its validity: all texts are original because every translation is distinctive. Every translation, up to a certain point, is an invention and as such it constitutes a unique text.

The translation of literary prose is different from literary creativity because its existence depends on the existence of an object of translation, a work to be translated. However, it is not always possible to sketch a separate border line in the real literary procedure between prose-translation and all creative literature. In some examples, a work may not be a translation in the common sense, but it may not be possible to express it absolutely as a work of literary creativeness. Several labels that are used to designate these works include- "open translation", "faux", "a work on the themes of", and "founded on". The particular meanings of these designations rely on the language and the eon.

Translation is a challenging activity and there are few difficulties that emerge throughout the translation process since every language portrays the world in diverse way and has its own grammar structure, grammar rules and syntax variance. For example, Greek has separate words for 'light blue' and 'dark blue', while other languages, such as Welsh and Japanese, have words that can denote 'blue' or 'green', or something in between.

III.   RESULTS

The difficulty in translation just lies in the fact that both the content and the style are already existent in the original and as a result, you will have to do your best to reproduce them as they are in quite a different language.
The most particular problems that the translators face include- illegible text, missing references, several constructions of grammar, dialect terms and neologisms, irrationally vague terminology, inexplicable acronyms and abbreviations, untranslatability, intentional misnaming, particular cultural references etc. Nonetheless, there are some theorists who think that 'literal translation' is not possible. They present three main reasons supporting their stance:

1. Because a particular word in one language often contains meanings that involve several words in another language. For example, the English word 'wall' might be rendered into German as *Wand* (inside wall) or as *Mauer* (exterior wall),

2. Because grammatical particles (verb tenses, singular/dual/plural, case markers etc.) are not available in every language, and

3. Because idioms of one language and culture may be utterly perplexing to speakers from another language and culture.

Unfortunately, many prose-translators fail to understand that a literary text is a combination of a complex set of systems that exist in a dialectical relationship with other sets outside its boundaries; this kind of failure has regularly led them to concentrate on particular parts of a text at the cost of others. It seems to be easier for the (careless) prose-translator to consider *content* as *separable* from *form*. In this connection, a suitable example shows what may happen when a translator emphasises content at the expense of the entire *structure*. The first chapter, titled "Arrival", of Thomas Mann's (1984) *The Magic Mountain* begins in the following manner:

An unassuming young man was travelling in midsummer, from his native city of Hamburg to Davos-Platz in the Canton of Grisons, on a three weeks' visit.

Initially, the translation of literary works - novels, short stories, plays, poems, etc. - is considered a literary recreation in its own right. However, as far as the solutions are concerned, the prose-translators should start with the careful adherence to the following principles:

1. a great understanding of the language, written and verbal, from which he is translating i.e. *the source language*;
2. an excellent control of the language into which he is translating i.e. *the target language*;
3. awareness of the subject matter of the book being translated;
4. a deep knowledge of the etymological and idiomatic correlates between the two languages; and
5. a delicate common sense of when to *metaphrase* or 'translate literally' and when to *paraphrase*, in order to guarantee exact rather than fake *equivalents* between the source- and target-language texts.

Moreover, the prose-translators can unite some of the following methods to deal with the translation problems efficiently.

1. Back Translation: "Comparison of a back-translation with the original text is sometimes used as a check on the accuracy of the original translation…". It is one of the most familiar practices used to search for equivalents through:
a.   The translation of items from the source language to the target language.
b.   Free translation of these back into the source language.
2.   Conference with Other People: Discussions about the use and meaning of words with bilingual people around a table to make decisions about the best terms to use.
3.   Interviews or Questionnaires or Any Kind of Tests: These are used to remove translation-related difficulties.
IV. DISCUSSION

Besides, the translators should keep the *translation shifts* in mind. J.C. Catford (1965) describes them as "departures from formal correspondence in the process of going from the S.L to the T.L" . He believes that there are two major kinds of translation shifts, i.e. *level shifts,* where the S.L item at one linguistic level, e.g. grammar, has a T.L equivalent at a different level, e.g. lexis, and *category shifts* that have been categorised into four kinds:

1. *Structure-shifts* involving a grammatical alteration between the structure of the *Source Text* and that of the *Target Text*;

2. *Class-shifts,* when a *Source Language* item is translated with a *Target Language* item belonging to a diverse grammatical group, i.e. a verb may be translated with a noun;

3. *Unit-shifts* involving alterations in position;

4. *Intra-system shifts,* which occur when "S.L and T.L possess systems which approximately correspond formally as to their constitution, but when translation involves selection of a non- corresponding term in the T.L system" (Catford, 1965: 80). For example, when the S.L singular becomes a T.L plural.

In the end, since translation is simultaneously a theory and a practice, the translators, beside dealing with the difficulties inherent to the translation of prose, must think about the artistic features of the text, its exquisiteness and approach, as well as its marks (lexical, grammatical, or phonological). They should not forget that the stylistic marks of one language can be immensely different from another. "As far as the whole text is concerned, it is simply impossible to transfer all the message of the original text into the target text" (Yinhua, 2011: 169). However, the translators can try to find equivalence in translation and show the cautious nature of their assertions accordingly and request the readers to join and select which translation renders the thoughts, notions and words of the original text correctly.

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