Literary Translation 2

Importance of Literary Translation

The importance of literary translation is immeasurable. It enables people to understand the world. Students are able to understand philosophy, politics and history through the translated works of Sophocles and Homer. Many more readers are able to enjoy new insights into the different ways of life through contemporary translations. More people are able to enjoy the creative, fertile and highly imaginative minds of foreign authors.

Without the translation of literature, people would not be able to read the vast majority of literary works that are available in archives and libraries around the world. They would not be able to enjoy the ways ancient authors view the many facets of life and how they express their myriad emotions. They would not be able to understand how people back then think, compared to people who live in the modern era. Translation allows you to travel back in time and relive such moments. Audiences are likewise given the chance to compare how things are done in the past and see some of the similarities as well as the changes that occur in the modern world.

Literary translation involves the translation of the dramatic and creative poetry and prose of ancient and modern authors from different cultures. This assures that more people worldwide are able to enjoy the literary creations in their own language.

Literariness and artistic or aesthetic properties of Literary texts.

The famous Arabic scholar and writer Al-Jahiz (الجاحظ),in his *Eloquence and Exposition* (البيان والتبيين), maintains that:

"Literature is based upon beautifying texts; it is based on the beauty that literature adds to the meaning of discourse and not on the meaning itself"

" الأدب قائم على تحلية النص وهو قائم على الزينة التي يضيفها الى المعنى لا على المعنى"

The ornamentations (beautifications) here, refers to all what language lend the author at any of its levels (phonological, lexical, syntactic, semantic, pragmatic, graphological) to produce an artistic piece of art. Figures of speech such as simile, metaphor, personification, symbol, metonymy, synecdoche, allusions, etc. are among the many literary devices which are manipulated to give literature this aesthetic value. Scholars considered literary translation as a **process of textual transfer** that should grasp the syntactic, lexical, stylistic and pragmatic aspects of the texts in question.

Literary translation is a type of translation where the source documents are fictious i.e., not real, even if sometimes they denote to real people or places or events such as biographical or autobiographical creative writings or those records which are highly based on historical facts. It is a different kind of reality that is created by literary artists. Translation of literature is fundamentally different from other categories. This is because the main principle of literary translation is the dominance of poetic communicative function. It means that in addition to rendering information to the reader, literary translation also has aesthetic functions. The artistic image created in the particular literary work (be it the image of a character or nature) will certainly have an impact on the reader.

Therefore, the literary translator should take into account specific features of the text. It is the poetic focus of the text that makes this type of translation different from, say, texts of an informative type. When reading a story, poem or any other type of literary work translated from a foreign language, we perceive the text itself with its meaning, emotions and characters. It is quite a challenging task to achieve the main goal of the translation - creating a particular image for the reader. Therefore, literary translation might involve some deviations from the standard rules. A literal translation cannot reflect the depth and meaning of the literary work. A literary translator reproduces a non-literal rendition of the original text. It all depends on how the translator perceives it. He/she rewrites the text from the beginning to the very end. This applies, for example, when an obvious expression is replaced by synonyms or the structure of sentences is changed.

On occasions, in an original literary text, there may be some information or a literary device that does not make any sense when translated and put in the same place as in the original text. The translator has, in this case, to carefully review the original text and the target language and decide where the best place is to insert the information or literary device. This decision is referred to as compensating, because it is when the translator has to "compensate" for any loss that might be suffered by the original text if the translated text is kept in the original place, or, sometimes due to a decision made by the translator to omit it from the text altogether. A pun in the native language is a typical example of literary translation problems.

The pun is a form of word play that exploits multiple meanings of a term, or of similar-sounding words, for an intended humorous or rhetorical effect. These ambiguities can arise from the intentional use of homophonic, homographic, or figurative language. A pun involves expressions with multiple (correct or fairly reasonable) interpretations. Puns may be regarded as in-jokes or idiomatic constructions, especially as their usage and meaning are usually specific to a particular language or its culture. Non-humorous puns are a standard poetic device in English literature. Puns and other forms of wordplay have

been used by many famous writers, such as Alexander Pope, James Joyce, Vladimir Nabokov, Robert Bloch, Lewis Carroll, John Donne, and William Shakespeare.

In fact, Shakespeare is estimated to have used over 3,000 puns in his plays. Even though many of the puns were bawdy (rude), Elizabethan literature considered puns and wordplay to be a "sign of literary refinement" more so than humor. This is evidenced by the deployment of puns in serious or "seemingly inappropriate" scenes, like when a dying Mercutio quips "Ask for me tomorrow, and you shall find me a grave man" in *Romeo and Juliet*.

The Translation of rhetorical devices

A **rhetorical device**, **persuasive device**, or **stylistic device** is a *technique* that an author or speaker uses to convey to the listener or reader a meaning with the goal of persuading them towards considering a topic from a perspective, using language designed to encourage or provoke an emotional display of a given perspective or action. Rhetorical devices evoke an emotional response in the audience through use of language, but that is not their primary purpose. Rather, by doing so, they seek to make a position or argument more compelling than it would otherwise be.

Rhetorical Devices

These devices include:

1-*Sonic devices*: Sonic devices depend on sound. They are used as clearer or swifter way of communicating content in an understandable way. They deliver messages to the reader or listener by prompting a certain reaction through auditory perception. (Alliteration, Assonance, Consonance, Cacophony, Onomatopoeia)

2- *Word repetition*: Word repetition rhetorical devices operate via repeating words or phrases in various ways, usually for emphasis. (a-Anadiplosis/Conduplicatio b-Anaphora/ Epistrophe/ Symploce/ Epanalepsis c- Epizeuxis/Antanaclasis d-Diacope)

3-*Word relation*: Word relation rhetorical devices operate via deliberate connections between words within a sentence. (a. Antithesis/Antimetabole/Chiasmus b. Asyndeton/ Polysyndeton c. Auxesis/Catacosmesis d. Oxymoron e. Zeugma/Syllepsis)

4- *Discourse level*: Discourse level rhetorical devices rely on relations between phrases, clauses and sentences. Often they relate to how new arguments are introduced into the text or how previous arguments are emphasized. (a. Amplification/Pleonasm b. Antanagoge c. Apophasis d. Aporia e. Diasyrmus f. Derision g. Enthymeme h. Hyperbole i. Hypophora j. Innuendo k. Metanoia l. Procatalepsis m. Understatement)

5- *Irony and imagery*

a. Irony: Irony is the figure of speech where the words of a speaker intends to express a meaning that is indirectly opposite of the said words.

b. Metaphor: Metaphor connects two different things to one another. It is frequently invoked by the *to be* verb. The use of metaphor in rhetoric is primarily to convey to the audience a new idea or meaning by linking it to an already familiar idea or meaning.

c. Personification: Personification is the representation of animals, inanimate objects and ideas as having human attributes.

d. Simile: Simile compares two different things that resemble each other in at least one way. It uses the *as... as* construction as compared to metaphor which is direct equivalence.

e. Metonymy: Metonymy is a figure of speech where a thing or concept is referred to indirectly by the name of an attribute or adjunct for that of the thing meant.

Examples:

- *"crown"* to denote king or queen.

- *Oval Office* or *Washington* to refer to the President of the United States of America.

f. Synecdoche: A synecdoche is a class of metonymy, often by means of either mentioning a part for the whole or conversely the whole for one of its parts. Examples from common English expressions include "suits" (for "businessmen"), "boots" (for "soldiers"), and "America" (for "the United States of America")

Stylistic devices

1. *Figurative language*: A figure of speech is any way of saying something other than the ordinary way. Figurative language is language using figures of speech. (Simile, Metaphor, Metonymy, Synecdoche, Personification, Apostrophe (Similar to 'personification' but direct. The speaker addresses someone absent or dead, or addresses an inanimate or abstract object as if it were human), Symbol, Allegory, Imagery, Motif, Paradox

2. *Sound techniques* **(**Rhyme, Alliteration, Assonance, Consonance, Rhythm, Onomatopoeia

3. *Structure*

a. Formal structure: Formal structure refers to the forms of a text. In the first place, a text is either a novel, a drama, a poem, or some other "form" of literature. However, this term can also refer to the length of lines, stanzas, or cantos in poems, as well as sentences, paragraphs, or chapters in prose. Furthermore, such visible structures as dialogue versus narration are also considered part of formal structure.

b. Storyline and plot The storyline is the chronological account of events that follow each other in the narrative. The plot includes the storyline, and is more; it includes how elements in the story interact to create complexity, intrigue, and surprise. The plot is often created by having separate threads of storyline interact at critical times and in unpredictable ways, creating unexpected twists and turns in the overall storyline.

c. Plot structure Plot structure refers to the configuration of a plot in terms of its exposition, rising action, climax, falling action, and resolution/denouement. For example, Dickens' novel *Great Expectations* is noted for having only a single page of exposition before the rising action begins, while *The Lord of the Rings* by J. R. R. Tolkien has an unusually lengthy falling action. The plot can also be structured by the use of devices such as flashbacks, framing, and epistolary elements.

d. Foreshadowing: This is when the author drops clues about what is to come in a story, which builds tension and the reader's suspense throughout the book.

Example: The boy kissed his mother and warmly embraced her, oblivious to the fact that this was the last time he would ever see her.

e. Allusion <u>Allusion</u> is a reference to something from history or literature

4. Irony

a. Verbal irony
This is the simplest form of irony, in which the speaker says the opposite of what he or she intends. There are several forms, including euphemism, understatement, sarcasm, and some forms of humor.

b. Situational irony
This is when the author creates a surprise that is the perfect opposite of what one would expect, often creating either humor or an eerie feeling.

c. Dramatic irony

Dramatic Irony is when the reader knows something important about the story that one or more characters in the story do not know.

5. *Register*

a. Diction: <u>Diction</u> is the choice of specific words to communicate not only meaning, but emotion as well. Authors writing their texts consider not only a word's denotation but also its connotation. For example, a person may be described as stubborn or tenacious, both of which have the same basic meaning but are opposite in terms of their emotional background (the first is an insult, while the second is a compliment). Similarly, a bargain-seeker may be described as either thrifty (compliment) or stingy (insult). An author's diction is extremely important in discovering the narrator's tone, or attitude.

b. *Syntax*

Sentences can be long or short, written in the active voice or passive voice, composed as simple, compound, complex, or compound-complex. They may also include such techniques as inversion or such structures as appositive phrases, verbal phrases (gerund, participle, and infinitive), and subordinate clauses (noun, adjective, and adverb). These tools can be highly effective in achieving an author's purpose.

c. *Voice*

In grammar, there are two voices: active and passive. These terms can be applied to whole sentences or verbs. Verbs also have tense, aspect and mode. There are three tenses: past, present, and future. There are two main aspects: perfect and progressive. Some grammarians refer to aspects as tenses, but this is not strictly correct, as the perfect and progressive aspects convey information other than time. There are many modes (also called moods). Some important ones are: declarative, affirmative, negative, emphatic, conditional, imperative, interrogative and subjunctive.

d. *Tone*

Tone expresses the writer's or speaker's attitude toward the subject, the reader, or herself or himself.

Characteristics of a Literary Translator

There are certain characteristics of a literary translator that sets him or herself apart from other translators. This includes being well acquainted with literary texts so that a clearer understanding can be reached of how a literary writer puts across an intended message. Developing writing skills to the utmost is a core characteristic of a literary translator. This means translation techniques examples can only be showcased after the translator has reached complete mastery of both the source language and the target language. Literary translators sometimes study other texts written by the author before taking on the task of translating a literary text by that author.

This ensures familiarity with the style and tone and writing skills the writer has used to produce the literary work. Sometimes, the translator has to gain some biographical knowledge and the personality of the writer which permeates through literary texts.

The literary translator needs to consider the culture of the target audience so the translated literary works put across its message to the audience in a way it will be understood without having to detract too much from the message that the author intended. The translator needs to try and preserve the author's own style, meaning, and tone.

Literary translation requires exceptional skill and attention. A skilled translator must exhibit strengths in creative problem-solving and decision-making in the course of his/her work, making changes as necessary but always retaining the author's style and meaning whatever types of literary translation are being translated.

Problems and Solutions in Literary Translation

The translation of literary texts differs so much from any other form of translation. Being able to recreate an artistic text into a new language (TL) and not lose any of the beauty and message transmitted in the original work is the biggest challenge faced by a translator.

In order to **overcome these translation barriers**, the translator has to try moreover appropriate words and phrases until the right ones are found that suit the intended meaning conveyed by the writer. There is not necessarily a complete solution to overcoming barriers of literary translation problems when translating a literary text but sometimes compromises have to be made that have the least effect on the original meaning of the original text. At least this helps to deal with literary translation problems.

TECHNIQUES OF LITERARY TRANSLATION

In her book *Translation and Translation Studies: Introduction to Translation* (2001), Albir, a translation specialist, defines five literary translation techniques:

1. ADAPTATION

Albir describes adaptation as a "technique whereby one cultural element is replaced by another which is typical of the receiving culture. This technique is very useful when translating advertisements, slogans, etc., which employ a number of different linguistic processes. In these cases, the most important thing is the actual meaning of the message rather than the words making it up."

2. LINGUISTIC AMPLIFICATION

This technique of literary translation "adds new linguistic elements in the target text. It is the opposite of the linguistic compression technique." It means using a paraphrase in order to explain a word with no equivalent in the target language.

3. COMPENSATION

Compensation is a "translation technique whereby a piece of information or stylistic device is moved to another location in the text, because it does not have the same effect if maintained in the same place as in the original text". This process is intended to compensate for the losses that a text suffers from when it is translated. Such technique is useful especially when it comes to wordplays. If, for instance, translators are unable to adapt a pun —it tends to happen quite often— then they try to create another play on words in another part of the text.

4. ELISION

Elision is a process that "involves removing items of information in the original language text so that they do not appear in the target text. As with the linguistic

compression technique, elision is the opposite of the amplification process." Literary translators are frequently compelled to condense the information contained in some parts of a text being translated. To do this, some items considered as non-essential must be removed because their elision will improve the stylistic quality of the translated work.

5. BORROWING

Borrowing is a technique often used in literary translation, and is also applied for example in medical and business translations. Albir writes that this translation technique involves "using a word or an expression in the original text and placing it as it is, with no modification, in the target text." This can be an expression taken from a third language (e.g., Latin), or a familiar expression by speakers of the target language, or even an untranslatable expression not worth explaining. Sometimes, it is called '*Transliteration*' as the act or process of writing words using a different alphabet. As in:

New York	/nyü yürk/	نيو يورك
Wall Street	/üal strEt/	وول ستريت
Sarah Ferguson	/sar-& fErgsün/	سارة فيرغسون
Clinton	/klntn/ /klEntün/	كلنتن كلنتون
Abu Kamal	/abu kema:l/	أبو كمال
Umm Qasir	/um kasir/	ام قصر

This clear in the translation of the titles of literary works:

Thebes at war كفاح طيبة

The Merchant of Vince تاجر البندقية

Macbeth مكبث

Othello عطيل

Another important point in relation to the techniques used by a literary translator to achieve accuracy is getting to know the culture of the intended audience for the translation. At times, a translation has to be adjusted so that it is culturally appropriate for the audience.

Though, mostly literal translation sometimes is highly needed in literary translation specially in some titles, proper nouns, specialized terms and codes, a non-literal translation of parts of a text are unavoidable in literary translation. This because there is no exact equivalent available in the target language to play with. Finding suitable words to substitute in a literary translation often requires a certain amount of creativity in order to solve this type of literary translation problems on the part of the translator. Too often in a literary work finding exactly the same words that convey the same meaning and effect or image just is not possible. When this situation arises, the translator may have to use a specific phrase rather than a single word so that the true meaning and effect is retained as much as possible.

Example:

ذَلِكَ وَمَن يُعَظِّمْ شَعَائِرَ الله فَإِنَّهَا مِن تَقوى القُلُوب (22:32)

'Such (is the Pilgrimage): whoever honors the sacred rites of Allah, for him it is good in the Sight of his Lord'. (Ali, 1968, p. 224)

'That (is the command). And whoso magnifieth the offerings consecrated to Allah, it surely is from devotion of the hearts'. (Pickthall, 2001, p. 138)

'That (shall be so); and whoever respects *the signs* of Allah, this surely is (the outcome) of the piety of hearts'. (Shakir, 1999, p. 157)

As seen in these examples, Ali translated the Quranic word شَعَائِر as 'sacred rites', Pickthall translated it as 'the offerings' and Shakir translated it as 'the signs'. According to Jaber, the most accurate translation is that of Shakir. Having discussed how rhetorical devices are challenging in translation, certain coping strategies can be suggested: literal translation, modulation, free translation or functional equivalent-based translation, and ideational equivalence-based translation.

Example: (repetition)

Epizeuxis, in literature, a form of repetition in which a word is repeated immediately for emphasis:

It's not enough, It's not enough, young man (A Midsummer Night's Dream, II, ii, 124)

أفلا يكفي، أفلا يكفي، أيها الشاب

Enough, enough my lord, you have enough!
I beg the law, the law upon his head!
They would have stol'n away, they would Demetrius!

(A Midsummer Night's Dream, IV, i, 153-155)

يكفي يكفي، يا مولاي! لقد سمعت ما يكفي!

أطالب بالقانون. القانون على راسه

(أطالب بتطبيق القانون عليه!)

كان يريد الفرار! الفرار, يا ديمتريوس!