## The challenges of literary translation

When translating literary texts, translation must be done in a way to create a balance expressing of effects, feelings and emotions in an artistic-aesthetic context such that formal-aesthetic traits, linguistic levels, and individual style are represented in the target text.

However, there is normally no full equivalence through translating the S.T but, as Roman Jakobson (1959) suggests a translator may ends with a satisfactory analyses of code units or messages.

A good literary translation shows that language has not only a communicative purpose but also societal and cultural flavors that distinguish the Source Text. The literary translator cannot escape the complexities of differences between cultures. Benjamin (1968) describes cultural difference which is a problematic issue in translation as "the irresolution, or liminality (ambiguity) of 'translation', the element of resistance in the process of transformation, that element in a translation which does not lend itself to translation". In this context, a straightforward word-for-word substitution may not always be possible.

Some believe that the central problem of translation practice is that of finding TL equivalents (Catford, 1965). The translator finds himself or herself caught between the desire to translate literally or metaphrase (the translation of poetry into prose) which is difficult in this context, to paraphrase in order to avoid wrong equivalents between the Source and Target Texts, or desperately to transliterate many words in the SL.

One of the biggest challenges in literary translation is the balance to remain true to the original work while creating an entirely unique piece that evokes the same responses as the original piece. Even a single word can be a bother as the author has chosen a particular word for a particular reason, so it's up to the translator to ensure it is rightfully delivered in the target language. When the written work of one language is recreated in another, the translator faces many challenges, which require bold and creative steps on his/her part to introduce an illegible text in the target language (T.L.).

The difference in culture between the source language (S.L.) and the target language (T.L.) may result in a confusing reading and an ambiguous translation. One problem faced by the literary translator is finding terms in his or her own language that are faithful as much as possible to the meaning of certain words in S.L. For example, there are words which describe specific rituals or those related to typical

architecture, fabrics, and cookery; these and many others represent the specific culture of the original text and the translator needs to be careful when translating them.

One of the most common challenges to the literary translator is cultural differences.  That is, when an equivalent word does not exist in the T.L. and that word may have a host of cultural connotations which are not part of the Target culture as well. Lacking exact equivalents in Arabic, for instance, motivates the translator to hoist the white flag, use transliterations and add footnotes. Ironically, such technique which is sometimes the translator's lifebuoy, serves to remind him or her of what is missing in the translation. Though the translator's notes may result in many stops during the process of reading the Target Text (T.T.), sometimes, without them the text will be less fluently-readable. Notes prevent the T.T. from being more foreign and distant to the reader who belongs to a different culture. The translator does his or her best to introduce a more authentic picture of the source culture.

E. A. Nida (1982) believes that translation tries to connect a wide cultural gap and it is not possible for the prose translators to remove all the marks of foreign setting. According to her, it is normal that the source and receptor languages may possibly represent very different cultures that may include many basic themes and descriptions, which cannot 'naturalize' by the process of translating

The good literary translator tries his best to create a balance between comprehensibility and truth to the original text, its local setting and specific culture. In addition, the literary translator does not simply translate the content of the S.T. but he or she tries to find out its message and what culture it tries to communicate.

Johnson (1999:1) says that literature is: "an apparently nebulous body of knowledge in oral or written form, an imitation of life, which reflects civilization and culture, and which covers every angle of human activities-culture, tradition, entertainment, information among others." It is necessary then to point out that literary translation is a very challenging activity mainly because creative writing is itself characterized by a very sophisticated, symbolic and figurative language. In this respect, Widdowson (1984: 151) says that"" *no matter how literature may be expressed, its effects are certainly attained via language.*

Literary translation is regarded as the most challenging type of translation. In addition to all the problems that exist in all translations mainly at the lexical, grammatical, cultural and semantic levels, literary translation has to deal also with

the aesthetic aspects of the literary text, a task which requires special competence and skills of the translator.

A literary translator for Peter Newmark (1988) generally respects good writing by taking into account the language, structures, and content, whatever the nature of the text. The literary translator participates in the author's creative activity and then recreates structures and signs by adapting the target language text to the source language text as closely as intelligibility allows. He needs to assess not only the literary quality of the text but also its acceptability to the target reader, and this should be done by having a deep knowledge of the cultural and literary history of both the Source and the Target Languages.

Talking about literary translation means discussing constraints in translating the aesthetic features of literary texts; Landers (1999) says that only literary translation lets one consistently share in the creative process. Here alone does the translator experience the aesthetic joys of working with great literature, of recreating in a new language a work that could otherwise remain beyond reach. According to Jackson (2003): one of the central requirements of literary translation is to afford a firm interpretation about both meaning and effect. Hence, literary translators are usually much more involved in finding out a corresponding mood, tone, voice, and effect than in literal translation. However, it is more complicated to preserve the creative and imaginative feel of a literary text while adapting it perfectly to the target language.

Literary translation mainly involves translating fictious or imaginative in a poetic function of language. To offer the reader this poetic quality, translators carry out extensive preparatory work.

**The requirements for producing a high-quality literary translation**

Literary translation must follow certain fundamental rules. First and foremost, **a perfect command of both languages** is required, in order to know the style of the literary work. Themes, plays on words, author's style, double meanings, stylistic devices, word choice and cultural references (a song, a festival, etc.) must all be kept in the translation.

When starting a translation, literary translators' aim is to **be faithful to the original**. The quality of the final result must be flawless. The produced TT must be received by target readers, and they should not be able to guess that they are reading a translation.

**The main difficulties**

The translator must perfectly master the grammar, lexical choice and spirit of the text professionally. However, he/she must also cope with pitfalls, cultural differences and other challenges.

*Common pitfalls*

- Barbarism → writing a word that does not exist in a language
- Opposite meaning → a translation that means the opposite to what was originally written
- Incorrect meaning → choosing one word instead of another
- Omission → a refusal to translate certain elements, owing to complexity
- Solecism → using syntax which does not exist in a language

**Literary translation's most common mistakes**

When it comes to literary translation, it's important to capture the feeling and emotion, as well as the meaning of the piece of work. It can be tough trying to translate a book accurately without losing the soul of the book.

Here are 7 mistakes literary translators often make:

1. Literal translations

Translating a script word for word is almost sure to change the meaning of the translation from the original.

2. Exaggerating the meaning of words

An effective translation shouldn't over-emphasize any word so that it alters the intended meaning.

3. Depending too much on translation programs

Software programs can't always determine context or recognize tones or determine emotional states.

4. Misunderstanding the context of a word

If the translator misunderstands the context that a word is used in, he will translate it differently which can alter the original meaning.

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**5.** Getting the tone wrong

It is most times very difficult to accurately convey the tone used in the source text as it can change constantly.

**6.** Ignoring cultural differences

Translating without considering cultural differences can result in uncomfortable or even offensive situations.

**7.** Over-confidence

Regardless of the skills and abilities possessed mistakes are always possible even among the best. Not having work proofread is not only over-confident but also foolish.

Gibran"s The prophet belongs to what is called "prosaic or free verse" (الشّعر المنثور) أو الشعر الحر represented by many poets like Ralph Waldo Emerson and Walt Whitman and others. This type of poetry focuses on language more than musicality.

From: **The coming of the Ship**
Almustafa, the chosen and the beloved, who was a dawn onto his own day, had waited twelve years in the city of Orphalese for his ship that was to return and bear him back to the isle of his birth. And in the twelfth year, on the seventh day of Ielool, the month of reaping, he climbed the hill without the city walls and looked seaward; and he beheld the ship coming with the mist. (p.1)

Anthonio Bachir's translation:

وظل المصطفى، المخْتار الحبيب، الذي كان فجراً لذاته، يترقب عودة سفينته في مدينة اورفيليس اثنتي عشرة سنة ليركبها عائداً الى الجزيرة التي ولد فيها.
وفي السنة الثانية عشرة، وفي اليوم السابع من أيلول شهر الحصاد صعد الى قمة احدى التلال وراء جدران المدينة و القى نظرة عميقة الى البحر، فرأى سفينته تمخر عباب البحر مغمورة بالضباب.

Sargon Boulous's translation :

أمضى المصطفى، الذي كان هدياً لحاضره، هو المخْتار والحبيب، اثني عشر عاما في مدينة اورفيليس بانتظار سفينته التي كانت ستعود لتأخذه الى الجزيرة التي ولد فيها.
وفي العام الثاني عشر، في اليوم السابع من أيلول, شهر الحصاد, ارتقى التلة الواقعة خرج أسوار المدينة وتطلع صوب البحر ، فاذا به يلمح تتهادى أتية من مع الضباب.

The Prophet is a book of 26 prose poetry fables written in English by the Lebanese-American poet and writer Kahlil Gibran. It was originally published in 1923

by Alfred A. Knopf. It is Gibran's best-known work. The Prophet has been translated into over 100 different languages, making it one of the most translated books in history, as well as one of the best-selling books of all time. It has never been out of print.

The prophet Al Mustafa has lived in the city of Orphalese for 12 years and is about to board a ship which will carry him home. He is stopped by a group of people, with whom he discusses topics such as life and the human condition.