

A Descriptive Analysis on Process of Translation

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Abstract

This paper attempts to study how **essence of word classics and poetry**. Translation is very often referred to be as an art. So the task of a translator is to make an art from art keeping the aesthetic value of the work. **Robert Frost** once described poetry as *“what gets lost in translation”*. He meant, of course, that it is impossible to carry over from one language into another the special qualities of a poem-its sound and rhythm, its meter syntax and connotations. Some critics have felt that in translating poems *“translators betray them, inevitably turning the translation into something which at best may approximate, but which invariably distorts, the original”*. This point of view, however, has not prevented translators from continuing their difficult, but important work. In poetry, rhythm, style, and word choice breathe life into the feelings and ideas of the writer. So how, then, can poems be translated? What happens when a poem is subject to a new set of sounds, a new alphabet, or a slight shift in word choice? What, if anything, is lost in translation?. The field of linguistics and comparative literature has long sought to answer these questions. Translating a text word for word may cause unnatural or hollow-sounding language, or could even leave readers in the dark with idioms or colloquialisms that don't translate well. Meanwhile, attempting to translate the essence or meaning of a poem without regard for meter, rhythm, and word choice may border on creating an entirely new poem with little basis in the original. While this certainly isn't against any laws, some may argue that it is not a true translation.

Key words: Translation; Metre; Rhyme; ideas of the writer; colloquialisms; literature; poetry

Introduction

Another theorist in TS, **Friedrich Schleiermacher**, highlights the importance of the sound in poetry as one of the major problems in translation and defines poetry as a work, *“where a most excellent and indeed higher meaning resides in the musical elements of language as they are manifested in rhythm”*. According to him *“whatever seems to have an impact on sound qualities and the fine-tuning of feeling and thus on the mimetic and musical accompaniment of speech- all this will have to be rendered by our translator”*. American poet, critic and translator **Ezra Pound** whose experience in poetry translations goes far beyond theory, believes that much depends on the translator. *“He can show where the treasure lies, he can guide the reader in choice of what tongue is to be studied...”*. He calls this as an “interpretive translator” of poetry. Parallel to it he offers “other sort” of translation, *“where the translator is definitely making a new poem”**. Thus there are two types of poetry translation, one which directly renders the thought of the author, and the second, which is based on the original, but transfuses some new spirit. Admittedly, if the translator succeeds in rendering both the form and the content, the translation is considered to be a successful one. This point of view has been sphere of investigation for **Eugin Nida**, professional linguist and Bible translator. He underlines the difference between prose and poetry highlighting the importance of form. *“Only rarely can one reproduce both content and form in a translation, and hence in general the form is usually sacrificed for the sake of the content”*. The translator of poetry aims at producing *“on his reader an*

impression similar or nearly similar to that produced by the original".* In fact "every poem is a poem within a poem; the poem of the idea and the poem of words" (Wallace Stevens). Without idea words are empty, without words idea is empty. The translator is to avoid of the emptiness.

In an attempt to capture both the meaning and form of a poem, translators must walk the line between being faithful to the text and transforming it. It's a careful art that takes a lot of research, practice, and awareness. This balancing act is well demonstrated in an episode of RadioLab titled "[100 Flowers](#)." RadioLab hosts interview [Douglas Hofstadter](#), Professor of Cognitive Science and Comparative Literature, as he discusses his attempts to translate the poem, "[A Une Damoyelle Malade](#)" (To a Sick Young Lady) by Clement Marot.

Simply put, the poem is a get-well-soon message to a young girl who has fallen ill. Hofstadter struggled to capture the kind, lighthearted tone of the poem while maintaining its form—which he believed was essential. He wanted to preserve the poem's with three syllables per line, 28 lines, and its catchy AABCCDD rhyme scheme. However, he must take certain liberties with the text to meet these constraints. In one place, Hofstadter replaces the french phrase "confitures" (jam) with the term "buttered bread." He says, "Jam and jelly, they are words, but the words represent concepts and the concepts have kind of a halo around them." Not yet satisfied with his own translation, the professor sent the poem and its constraints to about 60 more people to be translated, including colleagues, doctoral students, friends, and family members. The project became a 700-page book of translations of a single French poem

Objective:

This paper intends to explore and analyze true core of world classics / **poetry** lies in its intrinsic **meaning** and power. Also need for **translations** and translators to extend the reach of the **poets** and their subtext

Process of translation

The problems accuring in the process of translation may be concerned with the different elements of poetry. We can learn to interpret, appreciate and translate poems by understanding their basic elements. The elements of a poem include a speaker whose voice we hear in it; its **diction** or selection of words, its **syntax** or order of those words; its **imagery** or details of sight, sound, taste, smell, and touch; its figurative language or nonliteral ways of expressing one thing in terms of another, such as symbol and metaphor; its sound effects, especially rhyme, assonance, and alliteration; its rhythm and meter or the pattern of accents we hear in the poem's words, phrases, lines, and sentences, and its structure or formal pattern of organization.

We would like to discuss another matter causing a lot of problems in translating poetry, which is the **grammatical difference** between the languages. The grammatical rules compulsory for the prose are not obligatory for the poems or we could just say that the poets do not follow them strictly wherefore the translators are usually puzzled over such very creative works. Sometimes, the poets in their imaginativeness offer really unusual, striking, new and surprising works,

which are difficult for translation. The translator should be combinative in order to transfer this novelty, hidden sense or specific grammatical structure. So as to clarify the situation we can pay attention to the second person pronoun and its usage. This transition in styles should be preserved in the target language because it carries the whole emotional and psychological world of a poet. For instance, the word “you” is sometimes difficult to translate. It can either be “*áõ*” or “*áõù*”. In this case the translator must catch the intension of the author. Of course the grammatical shifts are possible in poetry translation, because here the translator aims at transmitting more the content. So any choice of the translator to change the grammatical form can be justified until it spoils the meaning.

Poetry has always been closely related to music. It “*is an art of rhythm but is not primarily an effective means of communication like music*”. It, as well as being something that we see, is also something that we hear. “*There remains even now a vibrant tradition of poetry being delivered orally or “recited”; and even the silent reading of poetry, if properly performed, should allow the lines to register on the mind’s ear.*”

When speaking about the sound the first thing to mention is **rhyme**, which can be defined as the matching of final vowel or consonant sounds in two or more words. Though there are unrhymed poems, they give in in the point of view of their sound value. Robert Frost, who wrote traditional rhymed styles, growled that writing without rhyme is like “*playing tennis with the net down*”. It is a little strict, because many rhymed lines look and sound better in an unrhymed shape. In fact, sound is anything connected with sound cultivation including rhyme, **rhythm**, which refers the regular recurrence of the accent or stress in a poem, **assonance** or the repetition of vowel sounds, **onomatopoeia**, which implies that the word is made up to describe the sound, **alliteration** or the repetition of the same sounding letters, etc. A translator must try to maintain them in the translation. As Newmark (1981: 67) states, “*In a significant text, semantic truth is cardinal*”, whilst of the three aesthetic factors, sound (e.g. alliteration or rhyme) is likely to recede in importance -- rhyme is perhaps the most likely factor to “give” -- rhyming is difficult and artificial enough in one language, reproducing line is sometimes doubly so.” In short, if the translation is faced with the condition where he should sacrifice one of the three factors, structure, metaphor, and sound, he should sacrifice the sound.

On the other hand, the translator should balance where the beauty of a poem really lies. If the beauty lies more on the sounds rather than on the meaning (semantic), the translator cannot ignore the sound factor.

The fourth thing that can cause problems in translation is the cultural differences. I would like again to refer to Osers’s article “*Some Aspects of the Translation of Poetry*”. A profound knowledge is necessary for the translation of idioms and phrases too, which are a product of the specific traditions and mentality in one’s country. Words or expressions that contain culturally-bound word(s) create certain problems. The socio-cultural problems exist in the phrases, clauses, or sentences containing word(s) related to the four major cultural categories, namely: ideas, behavior, product, and ecology (Said, 1994: 39). The “ideas” includes belief, values, and institution; “behavior” includes customs or habits, “products” includes art, music, and artifacts, and “ecology” includes flora, fauna, plains, winds, and weather.

In translating culturally-bound expressions, like in other expressions, a translator may apply one or some of the procedures: Literal translation, transference, naturalization, cultural equivalent, functional equivalent, description equivalent, classifier, componential analysis, deletion, couplets, note, addition, glosses, reduction, and synonymy. In literal translation, a translator does unit-to-unit translation. The translation unit may range from word to larger units such as phrase or clause.

He applies 'transference procedure' if he converts the SL word directly into TL word by adjusting the alphabets (writing system) only. The result is 'loan word'. When he does not only adjust the alphabets, but also adjust it into the normal pronunciation of TL word, he applies naturalization.

Componential analysis procedure

In addition, the translator may find the cultural equivalent word of the SL or, if he cannot find one, neutralize or generalize the SL word to result 'functional equivalents'. When he modifies the SL word with description of form in the TL, the result is description equivalent. Sometimes a translator provides a generic or general or superordinate term for a TL word and the result in the TL is called classifier. And when he just supplies the near TL equivalent for the SL word, he uses synonymy.

In componential analysis procedure, the translator splits up a lexical unit into its sense components, often one-to-two, one-to-three, or -more translation. Moreover, a translator sometimes adds some information, whether he puts it in a bracket or in other clause or even footnote, or even deletes unimportant SL words in the translation to smooth the result for the reader.

These different procedures may be used at the same time. Such a procedure is called couplets. (For further discussion and examples of the procedures, see Said (1994: 25 - 28) and compare it with Newmark (1981: 30-32)).

The writer does not assert that one procedure is superior to the others. It depends on the situation. Considering the aesthetic and expressive functions a poem is carrying, a translator should try to find the cultural equivalent or the nearest equivalent (synonym) first before trying the other procedures.

The global context is also important. It includes the system of conditions under which the author has written, to whom the poem is directed or dedicated, and makes the author's psychological situation explicit for the translator. If the poem contains a hidden irony towards somebody, than a translation must have it as well. Buy this of course depends on the content of its value.

Conclusion

Great poems are open to interpretation, which means their translations will be, too. Many works have been translated by different people from different backgrounds, time periods, and schools of thought, rendering new meanings with each translation. While there's no one way to translate a poem, there are thousands of ways to breathe new life into a poem by translating it for a new audience. Summarizing all these points which are just a small part from the obstacles that the translators should overcome we realize how hard and difficult is the process of translation and how gifted, creative and knowledgeable should the translator be.

And he should have the same inspiration as the author has had when writing. As Plato states "*the poet is the light and whinged holy thing, and there is no invention in him until he has been inspired and is out of his senses, and reason is no longer in him...*". The translator of a poem must equate the author, the artist and be inspired from the poem. There are

lots of translations of poetry which are not successful. The reason is: *"nobody else can alive for you; nor can you be alive for anybody else. There is the artist's responsibility and the most awful responsibility on earth. If you can take it, take it and be. If you can't, cheer up and go about other people's business..."*

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