

The Effect of Cultural and Stylistic Features on Literary Translation

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ABSTRACT:

The study aims to investigate translation difficulties that encounter literary translators due to cultural and stylistic features when translating literary texts. The study has adopted the descriptive analytical descriptive method, the researcher has collected data by using a questionnaire for (30) Sudanese University teachers. To analyze the data the researcher has used the Statistical Package for Social Science (SPSS).

The findings of the study revealed that literary translators encounter serious problems when translating literary texts because of differences between cultures, religions and beliefs. In the light of the findings of the study, the researcher recommends that literary translators should have a good grasp of literary genres and sub-genres in both languages and they should consider both cultural and linguistic elements.

Key words: literary translation, genres, cultural and stylistic features.

المستخلص:

تهدف هذه الورقة لتقصي الصعوبات التي تواجه المترجمين الأدبيين الناتجة عن اختلاف الثقافات و الأسلوب عند ترجمة النصوص الأدبية. استخدمت الباحثة طريقة الوصف التحليلي و جمعت البيانات بواسطة الاستبانة الذي اجريت لعدد (30) معلما للغة الانجليزية بالجامعات السودانيه. استخدمت الباحثة برنامج التحليل الاحصائي لتحليل البيانات.

أظهرت نتائج الدراسة أن المترجمين الأدبيين يواجهون صعوبات عديدة عند ترجمة النصوص الأدبية بسبب الاختلافات بين الثقافات , الديانات و المعتقدات.

بناء على تلك النتائج فان الباحثة توصي بأن علي المترجمين الأدبيين الألمان التام بكل ضروب اللغة و فروعها لكلا اللغتين مع الأخذ في الاعتبار بعناصر اللغة و الثقافه.

INTRODUCTION:

Literary translation is one of the main ways of communication across cultures as literary texts display many linguistic features in addition to social and cultural aspects of human lives since translation is a social practice that involves two different languages and two different cultures. (Chall 2008) p.34.

The variation across languages and cultures made translation important in communication as it helps to exchange culture and knowledge , literary translation is not an easy task for the translator since it requires more than looking for a semantic equivalent; when translating,

the literary translator should take into consideration sociolinguistics aspects of language and discourse characteristics. He should also consider language and culture with the aim to find suitable equivalence between terms and concepts from one language to another.

Lason (1998) stated that " one of the most difficult problems facing a translator is how to find lexical equivalents for objects and events which are not known in the target culture". Nord (1997) uses the term "cultureme" to refer to cultural concept that are present in one language but absent in the other.

Literary translators face numerous deficiencies when translating some specific cultural items from SL into TL . This paper attempts to investigate the effect of cultural and stylistic features on literary translation.

2. Statement of the problem:

The researcher has noticed that many literary translators face numerous serious deficiencies in translating literary texts; they find it difficult to translate the intended message. Furthermore, when it comes to translating literary and cultural – specific items, they fail to recreate these situations from SL into TL.

So, the researcher finds it important to explore these translation hurdles with the intention of suggesting the appropriate rectifications.

3. Research Objectives:

The study is carried out to achieve the following objectives:

1. To shed light on the causes of cultural and stylistic problems that face literary translators.
2. To propose some suitable solutions to overcome these translation problems.

4. Questions of the Study:

- 1 . To what extent is good knowledge of culture and stylistic features important in literary translation?
2. How can literary translators overcome translation difficulties due to cultural and stylistic features when translating literary texts?

5. Research Hypotheses:

The following hypotheses are postulated:

1. Good knowledge of culture and stylistic features is important in literary translation.
2. Literary translators can overcome translation difficulties by increasing their

awareness of both cultural and linguistic elements.

6. Significance of the Study:

This study is significant for a number of reasons:

It contributes to the existing literature in the field of translation of literary texts.

Literary translators will benefit from the findings of this study and become aware of the cultural and stylistic features when translating into the TL.

Students of translation will be aware of the factors that contribute to translation difficulties.

The study shall also form a point of departure for translators, teachers of translation and educators in the field of their literary translation.

7. Limits of the Study:

This study is limited to expert EFL Sudanese university teachers during the academic year (2018-2019) in order to investigate the cultural and stylistic factors that affect literary translation and propose some suitable solutions to overcome them.

8. Methodology of the Study:

As has been mentioned, the purpose of this research is to investigate the effect of cultural and stylistic features on literary texts, to achieve this goal and in an attempt to answer the research questions, data has been collected through using a questionnaire which was administered to (30) expert Sudanese university teachers who have long experience in teaching English and doing research in English. Then the data has been analyzed statistically by using Statistical Package for Social Science SPSS.

Review of Relevant Literature:

9. Definition of Translation:

The word "translation" is derived from the latin word translation (which itself comes from trans- and fero , the supine form of which is latum , together meaning "to carry across" or to "bring across".(Kasperek ,1983: 83).

There have been various definitions for the term "translation";

Catford (1965) defined translation by saying that " translation is the replacement of textual materials in one language (SL) by equivalent textual material in another language (TL)" (P.20).

According to Bell (1991) " translation is an expression in another language (or target language) of what has been expressed in another (source language), preserving semantic and stylistic equivalence" (P.5).

Ghazella (2012) claimed that " as a subject , translation refers to all the process and methods used to render and / or transfer the meaning of the SL into the TL.

10. Literary Translation:

The term literary translation has often been used o refer to translation of literature from SL into TL.

According to Chaal (2018) literary translation is a type of translation which is different from translation in general ; it is a mode of cross-cultural communication , it is not only a TL replica of a text in SL but it is also a creative process by which meaningful experience is transferred from one language to another.(p.42)

Anani(1997) defined literary translation as " the translation of the different genres of literature including poetry , narrative

and drama. Like other types of non-literary translation , it involves transforming a verbal code into a different code , but unlike them , it is concerned not only in the referential meaning of words but also in their significance and effects"(p.45)

Landers(2001) described literary translation as the " most demanding type of translation".

Newmark(1998) stated the following five main features of literary language that have to be considered by the literal translator:

- (1) Figurativeness and allegory.
- (2) Onomatopoeic nature.
- (3) Rhythm.
- (4) Each word counts
- (5) Collocations and polysemous words.

The most comprehensive definition was given by Ghazala (2015) , he said that " literary translation is a special type of translation that is concerned solely with translating literary genres and sub-genres into literary piece of work in the TL , accounting for all features of literariness and creative style of the original , especially , re-registration , semantic density , syntactic and lexical intricacies , polysemy , displaced interaction , multi-layeredness , symbolism / hypersemanticization , aestheticism , figurativeness, and , most importantly , tone: the involvement of human feelings , sentiments and emotions.

11. Characteristics of Literary Translation:

As literary texts involve linguistic, social and cultural aspects of human lives, the literary translator has to be aware of the style of writing, choice of vocabulary and grammatical structures.

According to Belhaag (1997) the literary translator is the person who should consider the following characteristics of literary translation:

A . Literary translation should be expressive, connotative and symbolic.

B . It should focus on both form and content.

C . It should be subjective.

D. It should allow multiple interpretations.

E. It should be timeless and universal.

F. It should use special devices to heighten communicative effect.

H. It should not have tendency to deviate from the language norms.

12. Factors Affecting Literary Translation:

Cultural Concepts:

Translating literary texts is a difficult task for the translator, Nida(1982) pointed out that one of the problems a translator can face come from the fact that some words or phrases expressing objects , facts..etc are so deeply rooted in their source culture and so specific to the culture that produced them that have no equivalent in the target language because they are not yet codified in the target language. Nord (1997) uses the term "cultureme" to refer to cultural concept that are present in one language but absent in the other.

According to Santoyo(1987) when translating literary texts we face untranslatability with terms which are culture- bound and culture- specific. Nida (1982) argues that differences between cultures may cause more severe complications for the translator than do differences in language structure.

Cultural differences represent the most serious problems for the translator and can result in far-reaching

misunderstanding among readers (Brooks 1968 p:128) .

According to Newmark(1988 p.21) cultural concepts are classified into the following five categories:

1. Ecology (flora, wind , climate..etc).
2. Material culture (food, clothes, towns, houses, transport).
3. Social culture (work and leisure).
4. Organizations, customs, activities , procedures or concepts.
5. Gestures and habits.

Ku (2006) stated that culture reveals itself in the following aspects:

A . Environment, including ecology, place names..etc.

B. Cultural heritage e.g. religious beliefs, historical events, characters , folklore , housing..etc.

C. Social culture e.g. conventions, beliefs, habits , social organization.

D. Linguistic culture e.g. fixed expressions and idioms.

Literary translation is one of the many ways of communication across culture , the translator should be bilingual , bicultural if not multicultural to transfer culture effectively from SL to TL.(Chaal 2008).

Stylistic features:

According to Ghazala (2015) style is the master key to be considered when translating literary texts since it is essential to understanding , interpreting , the main features that characterize literary stylistics are creativity , figurativeness , lexical and syntactic elaboration expressivity , rhetoric , impressiveness, effectiveness , aesthetics , inventiveness , pragmaticality , tone , resonance , emotionality , human feelings, formality , flexibility , humility and captivation of TL readers.

Rojo(2009) stated that " translators usually dream of achieving an ideal replica off the SL text, but in practice they often have to accept that not everything can be translated exactly from a language to another".(p.22).

According to Ghazalla (2015) the translator finds it difficult to find the exact replica of meaning(linguistics , pragmatics) , equivalence (semantics, stylistics , syntactic , functional), sense (general , neutralized meaning), grammar , style, function , intention or a combination of these features.

13. Data Analysis and Discussion:

The researcher has used a questionnaire to collect the data of the study , it

consists of fifteen statements in order to investigate the causes and solutions of the difficulties that literary translators face in translating literary texts. The questionnaire was given to (30) respondents who represent the teachers' community at Sudanese Universities.

The following table shows the mean and standard deviation and chi-square values for the following study Hypotheses:

1. Good knowledge of culture and stylistic features is important in literary translation.
2. Literary translators can overcome translation difficulties by increasing their awareness of both cultural and linguistic elements.

Nom.	Statement	mean	SD	Chi square	p-value
1	Good knowledge of Cultures is very important in literary translation	3.6	0.8	29	0.023
2	Language is an expression of culture and individuality of the speakers, who perceive the world through language.	2.4	0.5	28	0.010
3	Translating literary works requires the ability to read between the lines.	3.3	0.7	23	0.006
4	Though all cultures are dynamic, they are reluctant to undergo any change..	2.5	3.8	15	0.046
5	The deeper context is embedded in its culture, the more difficult it is to work on.	3.4	2.5	22	0.000
6	Lots of changes that appear in a culture lead to linguistic differences, creating permanent modifications to the language according to the situation.	2.8	1.7	12	0.000
7	Translator must get in touch with different cultures which help him / her to translate correctly.	2.9	4.8	34	0.000
8	The literary translator should have a good grasp of literary genres and sub-genres in both languages.	2.7	0.5	22	0.000
9	The literary translator should have personal suitability to lend him/her to construct a matching literary text in the TL through translation.	2.9	0.7	32	0.023

10	The cultural equivalence as the same as the linguistic one in literary translation.	2.6	0.5	22	0.036
11	Dealing with the process of finding equivalence is the most significant issue existing among translators.	3.6	0.8	22	0.023
12	Upon translating, translator must consider both cultural and linguistic elements.	3.4	0.5	28	0.010
13	Differences between cultures cause more complications for the translator than do differences in language structure.	3.6	0.8	29	0.023
14	The notion of culture is essential to considering the implications for translation.	2.4	0.5	28	0.010
15	Translator faces difficulties in translation of literary terms because of the differences between different cultures, religions, and beliefs.	3.3	0.7	23	0.006

Source: The researcher from applied study, SPSS 24

It is clear from the above table that the calculated value of chi-square for the significance of the differences for the respondents' answers in the (15) statements are greater than the tabulated value of chi-square at the degree of freedom (4) and the significant value level (5%) which indicates that, there are statistically significant differences at the level (5%) among the answers of the respondents.

The findings of the study revealed that literary translators encounter serious problems when translating literary texts because of differences between different cultures, religion and beliefs and that literary translators can overcome their translation difficulties by considering both cultural and stylistic elements, therefore, we can conclude that the hypotheses of the study are verified.

14. Conclusion and Recommendations:

According to the findings of the questionnaire which conveys the views of teachers about the problem of the study,

literary translators face stylistic and cultural problems when translating literary texts .

On the basis of the findings of the study, the researcher recommends the following points for literary translators:

- Good knowledge of Cultures is very important in literary translation.
- Translating literary works requires the ability to read between the lines.
- Translators must get in touch with different cultures which help him / her to translate correctly.
- The literary translator should have a good grasp of literary genres and sub-genres in both languages.
- The literary translator should have personal suitability to lend him/her to construct a matching literary text in the TL through translation.
- Upon translating, translator must consider both cultural and linguistic elements.

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