

AYDI EST.

Open Learning & Translation

2021-2022

Fourth Year

Second Term

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Literary Translation

14.05.2022

أ. وعد الزعبي

Literary Translation 4. 1



AYDI 2022

HELLO EVERYONE!

In literary translation we are going to translate some poems and some pages from literary novels and some pages from drama.

We will start with the famous Arabic writer محمود درويش , as a poet غسان كنفاني , also نجيب محفوظ and صلاح عبد الصبور .

Literature as well contains literary criticism. We are going to translate some of the criticism, we have the famous critic ادوارد سعيد .

We will also tackle some of the problems that translator faces when he translates literature.

Translating literature is one of the hardest jobs that translator faces because it is about language. When we translate from one language into another, there are some false, the language is lost in translation. When you translate a poem, you have to keep the sense, the theories of equivalence.

'Theory of equivalence' is like when you read a poem or a novel in Arabic language, you test the language, you test the rhythm, the letters. So, you experience the Arabic language. The translator has to convey this experience into English or into the other language. This is almost very hard to do, but actually some translators can do it.

We have a text from الأجنحة المتكسرة , the poet is جبران خليل جبران .

وسلمى - سلمى الجميلة العذبة قد ذهبت إلى ما وراء الشفق الأزرق ولم يبق من آثارها
في هذا العالم سوى غصات أليمة في قلبي، وقبر رخام منتصب في ظلال أشجار السرو.
فذلك القبر وهذا القلب هما كل ما بقي ليحدث الوجود عن سلمى كرامة.

Student:

Salma, the pure beautiful Salma has gone beyond the blue twilight and there is nothing left from her in the world but a painful pit in my heart and an upright marble tomb in the shadow of the cypress trees. That tomb and that heart are all the left from the existence of Salma.

Student:

O sweet Salma, Salma has gone beyond the blue twilight and there is nothing left from her in the world but a painful pit in my heart and an marble tomb standing in the shades of the cypress trees. That tomb and that heart are all the left to tell the story of Salma.

Instructor: Good.

The beauty of language may be lost. There is something that cannot

be translated from one language to another. For example, here ذهب الى ما وراء الشفق الأزرق. This is so expressing in Arabic, but in English if we translate it literally: she had gone beyond the blue twilight, this doesn't have any sense and the English reader will not understand that this means that she is dead.

I will tell you the best translation I think it is:

And my beloved beautiful Salma is dead, and nothing has left to commemorate her except that she is living in my broken heart and tomb surrounded by cypress trees. That tomb and this heart are all that is left to bear witness of Salma.

- Commemorate means يخلد ذكرى.

In this type of translation, the translator is more interested in the meaning of the text rather than the effect of the text.

Student: Can I say for the last sentence: That tomb and this heart are what I have in this life to remember Salma.

Instructor: Yes good.

Let's move to another piece of work and translate the other way round; from English to Arabic:

(Alice in Wonderland)

Alice was beginning to get very tired of sitting by her sister on the bank, and of having nothing to do: once or twice she had peeped into the book her sister was reading, but it had no pictures or conversations in it, 'and what is the use of a book,' thought Alice 'without pictures or conversation?'

Student:

بدأت أليس بالشعور بالملل الشديد من جلوسها بجانب أختها على ضفة النهر وليس لديها ما تفعله. اختلست مرة أو مرتين نظرة إلى الكتاب الذي كانت تقرأه أختها، ولكن لم يكن به صور أو محادثات، ففكرت أليس: "ما هي فائدة الكتاب بدون صور أو محادثة؟"

Professor: Yes good.

We will discuss this next time.

For next lecture we will have poetry (يا عنثرة).

Thank You

Handout 1

4th Year 2nd Term

Literary translation is the translation of creative and dramatic prose and poetry into other languages. This includes the translation of literature from ancient languages and the translation of modern fiction so that it can reach a wider audience.

Why is literary translation important?

Literary translation is of huge importance. It helps to shape our understanding of the world around us in many ways. Reading Homer and Sophocles as part of a classical education in school helps to build an understanding of history, politics, philosophy and so much more. Meanwhile, reading contemporary translations provides fascinating insights into life in other cultures and other countries. In a fast-paced world so rife with misunderstanding and confusion, such efforts to share knowledge and experiences across cultural boundaries should be applauded.

The history of literary translation

An entire history of literary translation is far too big for the scope of a single article. Indeed, The Oxford History of Literary Translation in English runs to five whole volumes, such is the depth and complexity of the subject. Suffice to say that literary translation has been taking place for thousands of years.

History has seen countless translators come and go. Many of their names we will never know, but some – King Alfred the Great and Geoffrey Chaucer, for example, who both translated Boethius from the original Latin – had the power and influence to ensure that their translation efforts were not lost to the sands of time.

What makes literary translation so difficult?

The translation of literature differs greatly from other forms of translation. The sheer size of the texts involved in literary translation sets it apart. Tackling a translation that runs to hundreds of thousands of words is not a task for the faint-hearted. Nor is recreating poetry in a new language, without losing the beauty and essence of the original work.

One of the key challenges of literary translation is the need to balance staying faithful to the original work with the need to create something unique and distinctive that will evoke the same feelings and responses as the original. This can be particularly challenging when it comes to translating poetry.

Poems are written with incredible attention to detail. Not only are the words and phrases important, but the number of syllables and the entire rhythm of the completed work. It's a challenging task to complete just in one language, let alone when trying to recreate a poet's work during a translation. Daniel Hahn, director of the British Centre for Literary Translation, sums up the issue beautifully:

"There's not a single word in any of the languages I translate that can map perfectly onto a word in English. So it's always interpretative, approximate, creative. Anything that is, itself, a 'linguistic' quality will by definition be anchored in a particular language — whether it's idiom, ambiguity, or assonance. All languages are different."

As literary translators will attest, a single word can be extremely troublesome. The author of a work of fiction has chosen that word for a good reason, so the translator must ensure that it is faithfully delivered in the target language. However, what if no direct translation is available? Or what if several options exist, each with a slightly different nuance? Urdu language translator Fahmida Riaz outlines her approach to such thorny issues:

"Every piece you translate comes from the pen of an individual, so you have to give it an individual treatment. I try to retain the ambience of the original culture, rather than the language, as it is reflected in the text."

Translating novels

Translating novels is just as tricky as translating poetry – and can often be more so. Best-selling author Patrick Rothfuss explains that it is not just the length of the text involved which is problematic:

“Names are important things. And real names, names that actually exist in the world, don’t make a lot of literal sense. This is because real names tend to accrete and evolve over time.

“I work hard to create real-seeming names for things in my world. Names that give a strong impression without actually saying anything. Names like Mincet lane, and Cricklet, and Downings.

“These real-seeming (but in reality made-up) names sound really good in English, but they’re a huge pain to translate.”

Then there’s the need to stay true to the original text while not translating it literally. It’s about recreating the atmosphere of the original novel without translating it word for word. Humour, irony, plays on words and plotlines revealed by implication rather than explanation all serve to make this even harder.

A further complication is the assumed knowledge of the reader. References to customs, practices and traditions may be easy to understand when reading a novel in one’s own language, but how does a translator deliver that level of built-in knowledge to a reader in another country who may be unfamiliar with the original language’s cultural quirks?

What skills does a literary translator need?

Clearly, literary translation requires a very particular skillset. The translation of literature is a far more creative art than many forms of translation. When translating a pharmaceutical product information leaflet, for example, it’s essential to deliver text that is a word for word interpretation of the original. However, for the translation of prose and poetry, creative writing ability is just as important as linguistic prowess.

Confidence in one’s ability is also essential. It’s fine to get bogged down with how to truly represent the meaning of a sentence – or even a single word – but the translator also needs to know when it’s time to

make a choice and move on (and also when, several pages later, that nagging doubt about going back and making changes needs to be listened to!).

The ability to deliver continuity is also essential →, particularly in long novels.

Gibran's Arabic work The Broken Wings

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وسلمى - سلمى الجميلة العذبة قد ذهبت إلى ما وراء الشفق الأزرق ولم يبق من آثارها في هذا
(ص: ١٠١). العالم سوى غصبات أليمة في قلبي، وقبر رخام منتصب في ظلال أشجار السرو

ST

(Alice in Wonderland)

Alice was beginning to get very tired of sitting by her sister on the bank, and of having nothing to do: once or twice she had peeped into the book her sister was reading, but it had no pictures or conversations in it, 'and what is the use of a book,' thought Alice 'without pictures or conversation?'

Poetry:

يا عنتره

عبس تغلت عنك... هذا دأجم

كفكف دموعك وانسجت يا عنتره

فعيون عبله أصبحت مستعمرة

لا ترج بسمة نغرها يوماً، فقد

سقطت من العقد الثمين الجوهرة

قيل سيوف الغاصبين.. ليصفحوا

واخفِضْ جَنَاحَ الحِزْبِيِّ وارْجُ المَعْدِرَةَ

يا دارَ عِبِلَةَ بالعِراقِ تَكَلِّمِي

هل أَصْبَحْتَ جَنَّاتِ بابلَ مَقْفِرَةَ؟

هَلَّا سَأَلْتَ الحَيْلَ يا ابْنَةَ مالِكِ

كَيْفَ الصِّمُودُ؟ وأَيْنَ أَيْنَ المَقْدِرَةَ!

وعِيونُ عِبِلَةَ لا تَزالُ دَموعُها

تَتَرَقَّبُ الجِيسَرَ البَعِيدَ.. لِتَعْبُرَهُ

هذي يدُ الأوطانِ تَجْزِي أهلها

من يَقْتَرِفُ في حَقِّها شِراً... يره

الشاعر مصطفى الجزار (٢٠٠٨)

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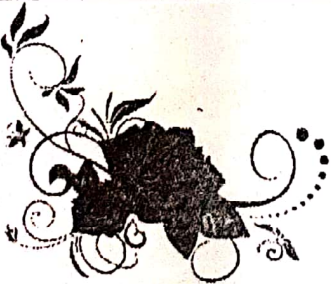


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