

Translation: A Continuous Process of Varied Readings

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Abstract

Translation is a process that includes reading and interpretation. A text can be interpreted in various ways especially a literary one. Thus, there will be multiple translations / readings of different translators / readers of the same text, just as with the various translations / readings of As- Sayyab's poem (*Inshudat al-maTar*) (Rain Song), Rilke's poem *The Panther*, and Wild's Short Story *The Happy Prince*. This study is based on Schulte Rainer's assumption (1985) that translation is a constant process of readings and the text is thought to contain a possible range of interpretations. The findings showed that due to this variety of interpretations of the same texts, there will be multiple translations/ of different translators/readers of the same text. It is recommended that on the pedagogical levels students of translation should be trained on how to develop their interpretative capacities via enriching their comprehension abilities in intensive reading courses.

Key Words: Translation, Interpretation, Reading, Literary Texts

1. Introduction

Reading is a dynamic act which entails uncovering the syntactic, semantic and pragmatic nuances of a given text. A text has got its own social impacts and it should be studied "for the subjective or cultural forms which it realizes and makes available" (Johnson, 1995..., p. 597). In fact, this dynamic process of reading requires the marriage of three components: the reader' knowledge, the information provided by the text itself and the context of the situation of that reading process. The glosses of the lexical item 'read' include "to call, to proclaim, to summon" which semantically refer to given speech acts and not to passive reception (Boyarin, 1993, p. 12). In a similar vein, Victoria (2005: www) states that a general and close reading are required to understand the text. General reading involves getting the essence. In any difficult text, close reading is required, of the words outside and inside their context. In principle, everything that is meaningless in its context must be sought (for detailed information on the process of reading, its theories, and its practices studied through cognitive, sociocultural, critical, transactional, poststructural and motivational theories, see Alvermann, Unrau, and Ruddell, 2013).

It is important to commence reading the original text. In this regard, Mullamaa and Pineiro (2006: www) believe that the task begins with reading the original for two reasons: first, understanding what is going on around it. Second, it is analyzed from the translator's point of view, and it is not the same as that of the linguist or literary critic. The translator must specify his intent and writing method for the purpose of selecting the appropriate translation method and identifying specific problems. Above all, a translator can assume the role of an active participant, a constructor of meaning who used many forms of information to arrive at comprehension" (Halliday, 1969 cited in Alexander and Fox, 2013, p. 6). Comprehension is an important stage which any translator should arrive at through the process of reading a given text.

From the translator's point of view, Newmark, (1988, p.12) argues that reading is an ongoing process of opening up new possibilities for interactions and semantic connections. In the translation process, there are no conclusive answers, only attempts to find solutions to situations that were uncertainly generated through the interaction of fields and semantic sounds of words. Rebuilding these links varies with each reader and translator, and is ultimately responsible for the various interpretations created by different readers of the same text.

In fact, the process of reading itself is already a translation. In essence, the translation process includes the complete

secret of human understanding of the world and social communication. Through the reading process, translators / readers are manipulated in a new situation that does not reflect one clearly defined reality, but rather a variety of different facts. Translators / readers confront various aspects in which they can derive their own interpretations out of the context available. Translation / reading becomes meaning-making and not a description of the already established meanings. In addition, the process of reading can be seen as a source of suspicion, where reading plays the role of a driving force towards decision-making, and reading as the discovery of new interrelationships that can be tried but not described in terms of critical and content-oriented language (Victoria, 2005: www) .

A translator is in a position to read the text first to grasp its meaning and then he / she heads to analyze it. This is to identify its intention and the manner of rewriting it by specifying its purpose. By so doing, the translator can select an appropriate translation method and simultaneously spotting the problems encountered in the process of reading that text. Understanding the text requires a general and a close reading. General reading for the essence. Close reading is required, in any challenging text, of the words both out of and in context (Mullamaa and Pineiro, 2006: www).

The translated text is a creative work and the language here is not only a medium but also a targeting. It is possible to re-write the text and the most important is the

effect of the text on the reader when there is no alienation between him and the text. The translation goes beyond the enrichment of the target language and culture, and the boundaries exceed the renewal of the original text, and even exceed the limits of the expression of mutual relations between languages, to become an introduction to an international language. (Newmark,1988:www). To him, translation at its best is the art of understanding, translation is also the art of chance (Newmark, 2005: www).

On a par with what is mentioned above, one can position the dual role of the reader/ translator. That is, a translator plays the role of a reader of the source text and "author" of the target text. Thus, he is entitled to have a different perspective from the general reader's perspective in the literary process. The translator/ reader re-creates the original work, and the process of translating / reading is reflected in a new form. With each successive act of translating / reading, the original work is rewritten, and the translated text is rebuilt again and again as if it was an original work. (Schulte,1985: www)

From the translator's point of view, reading is an ongoing process of opening up new possibilities for interactions and semantic connections. The spread of multiple translations, which many texts are subjected, to especially poems, confirms the existence of various interpretations created by the same text. Reading sets making meanings through questions in which the ability to answer leads to another question: What if? The translator / reader

makes reading activity a process in which each word begins to assume possible semantic links that prevent the act of interpretation from becoming constant. The translator / reader sees the word as a means to an end, and its final destination cannot be placed within the boundaries of fixed formulas (Victoria, 2005: www).

Finally, it is important to note that " Readers apprehend a work of art from the perspective of their own time, and those values which are ideologically [...] close to them acquire particular intensity. Because translators' conceptions are historically conditioned, the translation is bound up with their [...] national cultural context" (Levý, 2011, p. 28). This testifies to the different interpretations of literary works and thus there appear to be different translations.

This study examines the following question: Is translation a continuous process of varied readings?

2. Methodology

The data used in this study includes As-Sayyab's *Rain Song*, Rilke's *The Panther* and Wilde's short story *The Happy Prince*. The translators of these works are successively:

-Ghareeb Iskader, A. Al-Udhari, I. Boullata, B. Frangieh, S. Jayyusi, A. Lulua, D. O'Gradi, A. Salama and M. Shaheen / Rain Song.

-Stephen Mitchell, C. F. MacIntyre, J.B. Leishman and Walter Arndt, Jessie Lamont and Robert Bly / The Panther.

-Amel Al-Riffa'i, Ahmad Sadiq, Badria Bin Saif and Abdulsalam Al-Ogaili /

This research is based on Schulte Rainer's assumption(1985) that translation is a constant process of varied readings and the text is thought to contain a possible range of interpretations which can be reached in intensive reading.

3. Data Analysis

We cannot, of course, escape our cultural and social background, which in turn affects our methods of translating /reading literary texts. The translation / reading process must be rethought in some basic way, and translators also need to develop reading skills.

There are many ways you can go through translation. They have different purposes (Iskande, 2013, P.76):

1. The literal translation approach attempts to maintain the same linguistic, semantic, and stylistic levels of the source text in the target text.
2. Interpretive approach, trying to move to the depths of the original text to reveal the internal meaning of the text.
3. Creative translation approach, focusing on linguistic and stylistic features of the structure used.

The creative translation approach sometimes ignores the semantic level of the original text by creating a completely different meaning to the translated texts, because the main focus of this approach is the ability to access the translated texts of the target readers as is the diversity of the translation / readings of As-Sayyab's "The Rain Song" poem, Rilke's "The Panther" poem and Wilde's Short Story "Happy Prince".

To understand the general atmosphere and direction of Rilke's thinking in "The Panther" poem, the translators / readers perform a horizontal walk through the poem. In the poem, they think about the direction of thinking that a certain word appears. Rilke opens his poem (Between Space and Shadow). Both words refer to an expansion movement. With this feature in mind, the translators / readers can follow through the poem to search for names, verbs, or other attributes that indicate a similar movement for expansion. Indeed, the poem is full of words that indicate indefinite features and expansion: *dream, wind, sound, bell, smell, noise*, etc.

ثرثر بصوت عالي، حدث ضجة،
أفشى، ...

The semantic level of As-Sayyab's "Rain Song" has different translations/readings, allowing the translators / readers of the poem to approach it on different readings. "Rain Song" has been translated nine times. In fact, the poem is full of words that indicate indefinite features and expansion: forest, recede, smile, depth, ripple, throb, etc.

| English Multiple Meaning Words | Arabic Multiple Words | Meaning |
|--------------------------------|---|---------|
| Dream | حلم، منام، رؤيا، شيء رائع الجمال، ... | |
| Wind | ريح، رياح، ريح البطن، نزعة، الات النفخ، اتجاه، احدى الجهات الأربعة، هراء، نفس، التف، لفة، نفخ في بوق، تسلل الى، التوسي، أراح حتى يسترد أنفاسه، غير اتجاه السفينة، عبأ الساعة، أدار بذراع، ملأ، اخترق متمعا، دار، انعطف المركب، أدار، تمهل، انعطف، ورط، عرض للهواء، ... | |
| Sound | صوت، رنين، مصبار، استطلاع الرأي العام، المئانه الهوائية، مرمى السمع، مادة صوتية مسجلة، مصبار طبي، مضيق، ضجة، لسان بحري داخل في البر، قرع، بقاء، سبر، فحص، تردد، أمر، عبر عن ارائه بحرية، نادى على، رن، بوق، سمع، أعلن، استطلع الاراء، فحص الصدر بالسمع، قاس الأعماق، سبر غور، سليم، معافى، عميق، متين، دقيق، تام، موثوق، ... | |
| Bell | جرس، ناقوس، جوار، خوار، كأس الزهرة، كل ما هو جرسى، تجرس، جار، ... | |
| Smell | رائحة، شم، حاسة الشم، رائحة كريهة، رائحة نتنة، اشم، اكتشف بحاسة الشم، قص الأثر بحاسة الشم، تفوح منه رائحة عفنة، ... | |
| Noise | ضجيج، ضجة، جلبة، دوي، شخشه، تداخل موجات، أشاع، | |

| English Multiple Meaning Words | Arabic Multiple Words | Meaning |
|--------------------------------|---|---------|
| Forest | غابة - غيضة - خميلة - أجمة، ... | |
| Recede | ينأى - يبتعد - نزع عن - فارق - ترك، ... | |
| Smile | تبسم - تضحك - تفرح، ... | |
| Depth | الغور - القاع - القرار - الأسفل - القعر - لعمق، ... | |
| Ripple | يرجه - يحرك - يهز - يقلقل - وهنا - ضعفا - فتورا، ... | |
| Throb | تنبض - تتحرك - تهتز، ... | |

The four translators have translated the same source text, Wilde's short story "The Happy Prince" into the same receptor language and yet the result are very different. Their translations of the same text varied and differed from one translator to another. Therefore, there is not one correct translation of a given text. Actually, the short story is full of words (particles) that indicate indefinite features and expansion: *for, and, but, so, or, etc.*

| English Multiple Meaning | Arabic Multiple Meaning Words |
|--------------------------|-------------------------------|
|--------------------------|-------------------------------|

| Words | |
|-------|---|
| For | بدل، بغية، بدافع، بسبب، حتى، على، عن، كي، لقاء، لأجل، لأن، لكي، ... |
| And | و، أيضا، ثم، كذلك، ... |
| But | لكن، إلا، ما عدا، أما، انما، بل، ... |
| So | هكذا، جدا، كذلك، ... |
| Or | أو، أم، ولا، ... |

Finally, translating approaches should not limit the meanings of a text to one explicit meaning. On the contrary, they should attempt to translate its implicit meanings by reading the hidden features used contextually in it. This is why we have different translations for one text.

4. Conclusion

It can be concluded that the translating / reading of As-Sayyab, Rilke and Wild negates the assumption that "The Rain Song" poem, "The Panther" poem and the short story "The Happy Prince" among others cannot be confined to one final, definitive meaning. This means that the authors have created their work and engaged their readers / translators in an ongoing process of recreating them.

Reading a text, then, by a translator is a very different experience from just reading. He/she needs to understand the text thoroughly, both the words and the cultural connotations of those words. Actually, translation thinking has opened the door to the concept of variety of word / text interpretations, and the translators must be efficient, skilled and ideal readers in order to be able to perform their work professionally in today's world.

Hence, we do not often read in the same way. In case of translation, students must read intensively. For example, reading a literary text which may have varied interpretations / readings, requires them to stop and think about what they are translating / reading to decide the authors' intended meaning.

5. Recommendations

The study comes up with the following recommendations:

1. As translation teachers, we need to continue to think and recognize the new changes being made and act upon the importance of the multiple nature of text interpretations/readings, providing students with an intensive reading experience that will prepare them for their future. We should be adaptable for this change and understand that it is what's best for our students and to realize that it will take time to adjust to a new reading strategy; however it will be a positive change and each student will become in the end intensive readers and thinkers.
2. As translation teachers, we also want educators to think about how intensive reading can fit into our everyday translation classroom instruction and how each one of us can go about effectively and explicitly teaching the intensive read for students to be able to become intensive translators/readers and thinkers.

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