

**LINGUISTIC AND CULTURAL ISSUES IN TRANSLATION WITH SPECIAL REFERENCE ON
NOVELS OF JAMES JOYCE, SAUL BELLOW, AND VLADIMIR NABOKOV TRANSLATED
FROM ENGLISH INTO ALBANIAN BY BETIM MUÇO**

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Abstract

This study is a comparative analysis on linguistic, cultural and literary translation which aims at describing differences and similarities between two languages English and Albanian in order to establish a translation modeling. Subsequently, it will examine lexicogrammatical and syntactic features, cultural issues, stylistic processes of translations, and the occurrences of three aspects of text: macrostructure, microstructure and systemic context in translations from English to Albanian in three modern novels written in English and their Albanian translations by Betim Muço, such as: “A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man” written by James Joyce, “Seize the Day” written by Saul Bellow, and “Lolita” written by Vladimir Nabokov. From the study, it will be also found if there are substantial relations among the metatexts, macrostructures and microstructures. The macrostructures are universals accommodated by language register. The microstructures, however, do not reflect systematic correspondence; they are often determined by language peculiarities and translators’ preference and choice. English is more diverse with its peculiarities allowing many microstructure elements to surface. Albanian, on the other hand, shows moderate usage and less distinctive usage of microstructure elements. Generally, it will be examined if there are substantial intertextual and intersystemic relations between translated versions by all the three novels from the same translator and as proposed by José Lambert and Hendrik van Gorp. Moreover, consideration will be given to the importance of language characteristics, typology and language universals as explained differently by Noam Chomsky in his ‘Universal Grammar’ and Joseph Greenberg in order for the translation to achieve greater acceptability for the readership.

Keywords: linguistic approach, cultural approach, translation strategies, translation theories, literal translation, etc.

1. Introduction

According to Catford, (1965, p.1) “Translation is an operation performed on languages: a process of substituting a text in one language for a text in another. Clearly, then, any theory of translation must draw upon a theory of language - a general linguistic theory.” Whereas, according to Newmark (1982, p.7) he defines translation as “a craft consisting in the attempt to replace a written message and/or statement in one language by the same message and/or statement in another language”. In his opinion, translating a text should begin with a detailed analysis of a text, such as the intention of the text and of the

translator, its readership, attitude, to name just a few. Moreover, André Lefevere (1992, 2004a, p.12) sees translation process as “a rewriting of an original text”.

On the other hand, Petrus Danielus Huetius (cited in Lefevere, 1992, 2004b, p.1) regarding translation says that it is a “text written in a well-known language which refers to and represents a text in a language which is not as well known.” This, to my mind, is the most productive definition of a translation made within the tradition represented here, simply because it raises many, if not all of the relevant questions at once.”

Subsequently, Walter Benjamin (1999, p.279) regarding the real translation adds that “A real translation is transparent; it does not cover the original, does not block its light, but allows the pure language, as though reinforced by its own medium, to shine upon the original all the more fully. This may be achieved, above all, by a literal rendering of the syntax which proves words rather than sentences to be the primary element of the translator. For if the sentence is the wall before the language of the original, literalness is the arcade.”

On the basis of Saussure’s description of language, Derrida observes that meaning made by language depends on systematic play of difference.

As regards the cultural effects on translation, the Canadian translation theorist Sherry Simon (2006, p.16) says that “Translation plays great role in communication and manipulates cultural exchange.” In her view, some translations are “maneuvers that represent shifts in cultural history or which consciously exploit the limit, raising the temperature of cultural exchange.”

The cultural implications for translation may take several forms ranging from lexical content and syntax to ideologies and ways of life in a given culture. The translator also has to decide on the importance given to certain cultural aspects and to what extent it is necessary or desirable to translate them into the target language.

The notion of culture is essential to considering the implications for translation. Accordingly, Nida (1964, p. 130) regarding both linguistic and cultural differences between the SL and the TL and concludes that “differences between cultures may cause more severe complications for the translator than do differences in language structure”. The cultural implications for translation are thus of significant importance as well as lexical concerns.

Relating to this, Bassnett (1991, p. 23) points out that, “the translator must tackle the second language text in such a way that the target language version will correspond to the second language version.

Thus, when translating, it is important to consider not only the lexical impact on the target language reader, but also the manner in which cultural aspects may be perceived and make translating decisions accordingly. Language and culture may thus be seen as being closely related and both aspects must be considered for translation.

Regarding the importance of the translation process in communication, Newmark (1988, p. 96) proposes componential analysis describing it as “the most accurate translation procedure, which excludes the culture and highlights the message”.

While regarding retranslation Venuti (1995, p.305) adds that, “when a text is retranslated at a latter period in time, it frequently differs from the first translation because of the changes in the historical and cultural context.”

Moreover, Venuti argues that “Literary translators must consider the reproduction of the original style as their common goal and strive for it in their work. Taking these last points into consideration, different elements will be discussed in relation to their cultural implications for translation.” (ibid)

2. Literature Review

The translation theorist J. Craford (1965, p.7) as regards translation argues that, “Since translation has to do with language, the analysis and description of translation processes must make considerable use of categories set up for the description of language. It must, in other words, draw upon a theory of language- a general linguistic theory.”

Eugene Nida’s (1964, p.68) approach to translation can be summarized as follows:

- a) to reduce the source text to its structurally simplest and most semantically evident kernels;
- b) to transfer the meaning from source language to receptor language on a structurally simple level; and
- c) to generate the stylistically and semantically equivalent expression in the receptor language.

De Beaugrande (1978, p.35) says that, “text linguists set up text types each of which requires a different method of translating. They also highlight the importance of 'cohesive ties', 'structure', 'texture', 'intertextuality', etc. which can be considered useful and necessary, especially in the initial stages of reading and analysis.”

Accordingly, Chau (1984, p.136) states that “translating is an intercultural operation which poses many serious problems to the translator. These problems are the product of the many cultural differences between the two languages concerned. They stem from differences in the ecological, social, political, ideological, and religious aspects of the lives of both cultures.”

According to Nida (1969), his theory of translating consists of the three procedures of analysis: deep structure, transfer, and restructuring. As regards the stage of deep structure, the second language text must be read and studied carefully, and meaning must be extracted. In the stage of transfer, the translator continually fluctuates between the stage of analysis and that of restructuring. Restructuring the message involves adjustments at different levels: grammatical and semantic.

Moreover, he classifies theories of translating into three main categories: Philological, Linguistic, and Sociolinguistic. Philological theories of translating deal with the problem of the equivalence of literary texts by comparing and contrasting the second language and the target language. Linguistic theories of translation are based on a comparison of linguistic structures of source and receptor texts rather than on a comparison of literary genres and stylistic features. Sociolinguistic theory of translating refers to the context of communication.

In conclusion, one can surely say that the language is a carrier of one's culture, religion, belief, custom. Translation as a process is not simple because it doesn't only deal with the language, but it also stresses culture in the text. When translating in a different language one needs to have a different feel and nuance embedded more in culture than in literal meaning, but we hope that this translation by Betim Muço will shed some light on some of the linguistic and cultural issues of Albanians that might be encountered in literary translation in general and from English into Albanian in particular.

3. Aims and Objectives

The aim of the present study is to reveal some details of the linguistic features evident in translated novels by the author which will succinctly stipulate the characteristics of translations they display. Another objective is to assess the cultural implications for these translations except the information gap of the quality of the translated novels such as: possible lexical problems in translation, idiomatic expressions being translated literally, collocations restricting certain usages, disregarding polysemy, and contextually conditioned meaning.

4. Methodology

A variety of different methods will be used in relation to linguistic and cultural translation issues. It is necessary to use these methodologies bearing in mind the inevitability of translation loss when the text is, in some parts, culture bound. As it can be concluded from the analysis that an important aspect is to determine how much missing background information should be provided by the translator using these methods.

5. Data Collection and Analysis Methods

Data will be collected through a critical reading of the translated novels and sampling of identified gaps found in the translated texts will be provided and explained. The collected data will be subjected in order to judge the likeness of meaning and imagery between the English version and the Albanian translation. The data is analyzed using qualitative method of data analysis. It is used to analyze the styles used and the linguistic features that are evident as results.

6. Data Analysis

The data of this research will be analyzed through qualitative and quantitative analysis. The procedures of analyzing the data will be as follow:

1. The analysis of transferred texts from SL into TL
2. The analysis of the procedures of translated texts, such as: deep structure, transfer, and restructuring.

Detailed information about how the texts will be analyzed about each of the three novels will be showed after all procedures are finished and the way we will try to interpret the data.

7. Conclusion

Our study will demonstrate the translated versions of these novels into Albanian which the translator has given by his efforts to adapt the English version that we think will apply to the linguistic, cultural and literary features of the writer's mother tongue. It will be also shown that the author's linguistic experiment of translation is a validly significant response to the lingering problem of language in Albanian literature. Our study will attempt a linguistic analysis of the translations of these novels, too. This study is essential given the dearth of linguistic studies made by Albanian translators in their translation studies in order to bring to the fore an understanding of the sociolinguistic and cultural atmosphere of English novels. On the course of this research, will be discovered lots of literary texts from the sociolinguistic, literary point of view and the cultural phenomenon involved. Studies on other parts of this phenomenon such as lexicogrammatical and syntactic feature analysis on these translated novels will be made in order to establish the extent of its prevalence.

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