Overview of Translation Process and Equivalence in Albanian Literary Translations

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Abstract:

Translation studies and translation criticism, because of the nature and intertwine of many applied disciplines such as linguistic and literary stylistics, linguistics, semiotics, pragmatic, aesthetic, etc. have attracted and continue to attract the attention of many researchers. In this context, note that "given that translation problems arise during the practical implementation of the requirements and principles of relevant methods, the implementation procedures, etc., should not underestimate the practical aspect, the combination of theoretical analysis of translation practice with translations "developing further cooperation and communication between researchers and translators.By referring to various theories regarding the translation process we notice two trends and attitudes. One tends to overestimate the role of linguistic structures in the process of translation, and other intuitive trend relies on intuition and subjectivity of the translator, translating addresses therefore entirely independent of linguistic structures. Despite these discrepancies, it should be noted that they join in the fact of the translation that should create to readers the effect of the translated text as close to that of the original text readers. A special attention is given to the careful treatment of this principle in contemporary literature theory and translation criticism. For this we will take into account some of the theories of these authors on the process of translation and their definitions on this process.

Keywords: *translation process, functionalist approach, cultural approach, methods of analysis, Albanian literature*

1.1. Introduction

Translation studies and translation criticism, because of the nature and intertwine of many applied disciplines such as linguistic and literary stylistics, linguistics, semiotics, pragmatic, aesthetic, etc. have attracted and continue to attract the attention of many researchers. In this context, note that "given that translation problems arise during the practical implementation of the requirements and principles of relevant methods, the implementation procedures, etc., should not underestimate the practical aspect, the combination of theoretical analysis of translation practice with translations "developing further cooperation and communication between researchers and translators.

By referring to various theories regarding the translation process we notice two trends and attitudes. One tends to overestimate the role of linguistic structures in the process of translation, and other intuitive trend relies on intuition and subjectivity of the translator, translating addresses therefore entirely independent of linguistic structures. But in order to understand better we have considered some of the most important theories of both approaches. From the linguistic point of view we will see equivalence and functional theories of translation, which academics favor in their assessments of translations, and cultural approaches which literary translators favor in their translation process. By the end of the article we will counter the methods of analysis used by the Albanian academics in literary Translation Criticism.

1.2. Linguistic approach

Many authors have presented criteria that are consistent for assessing translations within the linguistic framework and two models dominate: the equivalence and the functional approaches. They have tried to

improve practical models by building them on distinct translation theories namely the equivalence and functional theories.

1.2.1 Equivalence Approaches

Proponents of this approach share the view that translation is an attempt to reproduce the ST as closely as possible by means of different types of equivalence.

Reiss introduces one of the first systematic approaches to translation quality assessment. To her translating is a balancing process achieved by constructing a TT under the constant restraint of a ST text. The measure here is "equivalence" maintained on the level of text and text units. Thus, the translation is good if it achieves certain equivalence. This means that the linguistic together with the situational context and stylistic level on the one hand and the intention of the author, the TT and TT units have the same values as those of the ST.

Such procedure involves these stages:

- the analysis of the ST
- comparison between the ST and the TT

Regarding the literary category where the evaluation is made according to text types, the analysis should be made on the ST first in order to determine the hierarchy of elements which have to be kept invariant in the translated text. Then an analysis of the TT is made to judge the match or mismatch in this particular point, meaning to check the invariance of information content in an informative text, the success of achieving the intended purpose in a text.

For the linguistic category, measures introduced by linguists include the following:

- Equivalence of semantic instructions
- Adequacy of lexical instructions
- Correctness of grammatical instructions
- Analogy of stylistic instructions.

Again the text type is the determiner for deciding the priority given to each of the points above in that, for example, in an informative text the semantic instructions are to be given priority while in a technical text lexical instructions have to be given more importance and so on. According to Reiss there is the involvement of certain pragmatic categories suggested for the stage of comparison:

- The situation
- Reference to real world objects
- Time
- Space
- Target audience
- The sender
- Effective implications

According to House translating is a linguistic procedure that aims at replacing a text in the source language by a semantically and pragmatically equivalent text in the target language. The measure in House's is functional equivalence on the text level. Thus, the analysis of the text is seen as the norm to which the quality of the TT can be measured on the one hand and the parameter by which the function of the text is decided on the other.

Analyzing the ST by means of situational linguistic characteristics representing two dimensions: language and user. These in turn include the following subcategories:

- geographical origin,
- social class,
- time,
- medium,

- participation,
- social role,
- relationship,
- social attitude

Comparing between the ST and the TT by means of textual profile using ST as the norm and the function for matching and mismatching the ST.

Function is defined in this model as the application or use of the text has in a particular context of situation represented by the linguistic properties of the text. The translated texts are then divided according to the strategy used in the process of translating. The primary level function, in which the TT must reproduce the function of the ST, is achieved by means of covert translation. Here, the translator reproduces the ST function by using an empirically established cultural filter to adopt the TT to the communicative preferences of the target audience. On the other hand, secondary level function is achieved by following the overt translation in which the translator tries to reproduce the function of the ST text by staying close to the ST.

1.3. Functional Approach

Functionalists view translation as an act of communication that is done for a specific purpose. Although this idea is held by most functionalists, yet some others go even further in viewing the TT as an independent text. According to this view Vermeer (in Nord, 1997:12) considers translating as producing a text in a target setting for a target purpose and target addressees in target circumstances. For the functionalists, the state of the ST is much lower than that in the equivalence based theory since the formers regard ST as "an offer of information" that is turned in part or in whole into an offer of information for the target audience the function of the translation takes priority over the other factors.

Functionalists follow the same line in that function is viewed as a prospective concept that is determined for each translation by the translation brief and the translator with regards to the use of the TT in the target culture situation. (Lauscher, 2000:156) It is worth mentioning here that Nida (1964) was one of the first pioneers, who drew attention to this point since, although he does not set a model, he deals with the fact that the reader response has its impact on translation and that the purpose of the author and the translation also play a role in dynamic translation.

Wilss (1982:226) on the other hand mentions what might be considered as new steps towards functionalism. He first criticizes the old treatment of translation criticism held till the mid 20th century for demanding ST oriented translation and judging translations accordingly. He affirms that the linguistic approach if it is based on text-related and text-type related critical framework, may be valid since it helps the critic to systemize and evaluate the linguistic and situational factors in the process. But he also adds that for the assessment to be further developed, the translator's role must be taken into account seriously. He admits that this could not be achieved without subjectivity but this should not impede the assessment procedure since, to Wilss, objectivity is necessary but it is pointless to make the assessment procedures more scientific than is sensible; to him translation, after all, is a science, an art and a skill at the same time.

1.4. Cultural Approach

It has been long taken for granted that translation deals only with language. Cultural perspective, however, has been in the last two decade brought into attention in Albanian Translation Studies. This can be seen in most of the following definitions, even thought starting from middle 20th century.

The first definition is presented by Catford (1965: 20). He states that translation is the replacement of textual material in one language by equivalent textual material in another language. In this definition, the most important thing is equivalent textual material. Yet, it is still vague in terms of the type of equivalence. Culture is not taken into account.

Very much similar to this definition is that by Savory (1968) who maintains that translation is made possible by an equivalent of thought that lies behind its different verbal expressions.

Next, Nida and Taber (1969) explain the process of translating as consisting of reproducing in the receptor language the closest natural equivalent of the source language message, first in terms of meaning and secondly in terms of style.

Brislin (1976: 1) defines translation as the general term referring to the transfer of thoughts and ideas from one language to another, whether the languages are in written or oral form; whether the languages have established orthographies or do not have such standardization or whether one or both languages is based on signs, as with sign languages of the deaf."

Actually Nida and Taber themselves do not mention this matter very explicitly. Following their explanation on "closest natural equivalent", however, we can infer that cultural consideration is considered. They maintain that the equivalent sought after in every effort of translating is the one that is so close that the message can be well transferred. The concept of closest natural equivalent is rooted in Nida's concept of dynamic equivalent.

The inclusion of cultural perspective in the definition of translation unfortunately does not continue. The later ones keep on not touching this matter.

"Translation involves the rendering of a ST to the TT so as to ensure that:
- the surface meaning of the two will be approximately similar and
- the structure of the ST will be preserved as closely as possible, but not so closely that the TT structure will be seriously distorted (McGuire, 1980: 2).

In the following definition, Newmark does not state anything about culture.

"Translation is 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" (Newmark, 1981: 7).

Finally, Wills defines translation more or less similarly as follows:

"Translation is a transfer process which aims at the transformation of a written text into an optimally equivalent text, and which requires the syntactic, the semantic and the pragmatic understanding and analytical processing" (Wills in Noss, 1982: 3).

It is known that definitions above only one take cultural aspects into account, the one by Nida and Taber. This definition is actually a specific one, rooted from the practice of the Bible translation. By nature, it is understood that the translation should be done to every language. As the content addresses all walks of life and culture plays an important role in human life, culture, therefore, should be considered.

The other definitions, however, are meant to explain the experts' view on translation theory to be applied in the translation of all types of material, including scientific or technical texts which are not deeply embedded in any culture. Thus, it can be momentarily hypothesized that cultural consideration must be taken if the material to translate is related to culture. For material that is not very much embedded into a specific culture, cultural consideration may not be necessary.

According to Snell-Hornby (1988: 39), however, this exclusion of cultural aspect from the discussion of translation theory is due to the view of the traditional approach in linguistics which draws a sharp dividing-line between language and "extra linguistic reality" (culture, situation, etc.).

1.5. Culture in relation to language

Culture in this discussion should be seen in a broad sense, as in anthropological studies. Culture is not only understood as the advanced intellectual development of mankind as reflected in the arts, but it refers to all socially conditioned aspects of human life (Snell-Hornby, 1988: Hymes, 1964). In practical wordings, Goodenough (1964: 36) puts:

"As I see it, a society's culture consists of whatever it is one has to know or believe in order to operate in a manner acceptable to its members, and do so in any role that they accept for any one of themselves. Culture, being what people have to learn as distinct from their biological heritage, must consist of the end product of learning: knowledge, in a most general, if relative, sense of the term.

By definition, we should note that culture is not material phenomenon; it does not consist of things, people, behavior, or emotions. It is rather an organization of these things. It is the forms of things that people have in mind, their models of perceiving and dealing with their circumstances. To one who knows their culture, these things and events are also signs signifying the cultural forms or models of which they are material representation."

It can be summarized that this definition suggests three things:

- culture seen as a totality of knowledge and model for perceiving things,
- immediate connection between culture and behavior and events
- culture's dependence on norms.

It should be noted also that some other definitions claim that both knowledge and material things are parts of culture.

According to Snell-Hornby (1988: 40), the connection between language and culture was first formally formulated by Wilhelm Von Humboldt. For this German philosopher, language was something dynamic: it was an activity rather than a static inventory of items as the product of activity. At the same time language is an expression of culture and individuality of the speakers, who perceive the world through language. Related to Goodenough's idea on culture as the totality of knowledge, this present idea may see language as the knowledge representation in the mind.

In 1973, Humboldt's view was echoed by Edward Sapir and Benjamin Lee Whorf in their Sapir-Whorf hypothesis. This principle states that thought does not "precede" language, but on the contrary thought is conditioned by it.

Halliday (in Halliday and Hasan (1985: 5) states that there was the theory of context before the theory of text. In other words, context precedes text. Context here means context of situation and culture (Halliday and Hasan, 1985: 7). This context is necessary for adequate understanding of the text, which becomes the first requirement for translating. Thus, translating without understanding text is non-sense, and understanding text without understanding its culture is impossible.

Humboldt's idea, Sapir-Whorf hypothesis, and Halliday's idea have far-reaching implications for translation. In its extreme, the notion that language conditions thought and that language and thought is bound up with the individual culture of the given community would mean that translation is impossible. We cannot translate one's thought which is affected by and stated in language specific for a certain community to another different language because the system of thought in the two languages must be different. Each language is unique. If it influences the thought and, therefore, the culture, it would mean that ultimate translation is impossible.

Another point of view, however, asserts the opposite. This also goes back to Humboldt's idea bout inner and outer forms of language. Later it is developed into the concepts of deep structure and surface structure by Chomsky. Inner form and deep structure is what generally known as idea and all ideas are universal.

1.6. Methods of Analysis

Based on today's comparative methodology in translation and Translation Studies, by previous studies, it is said that counts more the validity of using more than one method of analysis through which you can give conclusions on quality and assessment of a translation. (Ristani, V. 83; 1996) According to these methods, this is achieved based on frequency, massive distribution and use of stylistic elements in a given text or group of text, in relation to a certain text. It is duly noted that statistical methods can serve to show frequency of a certain stile and its components and what massive use it has. Such aspect will be supported by extracts of Graham Greene's novel "The Comedians", translated in Albanian.

Functional Method

This method is suggested to be used by accomplishing a selection and assembly of style elements in two aspects, particularly in the full analysis process. Initially it is done by concentrating in one particular element or group and secondly it tries to include a whole text.

Psychological and Literary Method

According to previous studies (Ristani, V. 83; 1996), this has been known as: explication de texte or close reading, which through combination of historical, cultural, aesthetic data with language relate to aesthetical feedbacks and other stimulus.

Statistical Method

The foundation of such method is the study of frequency, massive distribution and use of stylistic elements in a text or group of texts by comparison to a certain related text. It can serve to show how many times a certain style element it is used.

Key wording Method

What seems to get the use of all the before mentioned methods is key wording method. This because survey and statistical results, can be interpreted psychologically, functionally and also from text component. It can give hints why a certain it is used in a certain key situation and context. (Ristani, V. 83; 1996)

In "The Comedians" novel, if considered the above mentioned analysis in translation process and in trying for equivalence solution, there are samples of transposition and adaptations like:

> *"with a note of reproof" given as "si me gortim",*
> *"with his hands folded", given as " me duart kryq",*
> *"but had he" given to the context situation as "por ai për të vetin ta gëzonte vallë?",*
> *"He looked at me with grave attention" as "Më vështroi me vëmendje rëndë-rëndë".*
> *Other examples can be seen to Joseph's characteristically speech acts of a Haitian speaking in English;*
> *"He go away." given as "Ka ik."*
> *"He stay all the same" as "Prapëseprapë rri"*
> *"He very sick man" as " Po ai shumë sëmurë"*
> *He say "I be old man" as "Unë plak njeri", – tha,*

Conclusion

In this paper, we have seen two basic approaches to literary translations in Albania that are used today. It is essential to note that such topic is not fully exhaustive related to Translation Studies, as many problems arise daily in many different texts and contexts.

Specifically we have examined the equivalence vs cultural approach of a literary translation, on theoretical basis. In practice many translators use their convenient personal methods, which can be rounded into these two choices.

Related to literary translations in Albania, most of the translators favour cultural approaches as they want their work to be read by many people as possible. But the other side of the coin is the problem of massive and speedy translations, which have deteriorated into many unnecessary borrowings and many times lost in function of the ST into TT. Here relies the problem in translation, where should we rely more on?

This is an open issue to many scholars and translator, and more importantly to readers and publishing houses in Albania.

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