

Stylistics of translation theory: recreating meanings and form

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All translation is a rewriting or recreating an original text. For that reason, all rewritings reflect a certain discourse and style. The translator, just like the original text, does not exist in a vacuum. He is conditioned to function in a given society and culture in such a way that what he rewrites reflects the norms, preferences and literary tendencies of the target society. Rewritings can introduce new concepts, new genres and even new vocabulary. One can easily say that translation, historically, has been a positive activity in the enrichment of a society's culture and world view.

Translation theory, although it gained momentum recently, is not a new field. It is as old as the creation of man, as old as the tower of Babel. It is a field of discussion in philosophy and constitutes an important aspect of fields like post-modernism and deconstruction since the theory of translation is very much concerned with text, language and meaning. Translation theory is central to anyone interpreting literature especially in our age where there is a proliferation of literary theories.

In recent years, translation theory has exploded with new developments. George Steiner was the major theoretician in the history of translation until Jakobson put forward the theoretical distinction between formal (consistent with the form of the original) and free (using innovative forms to create the original's intent) translations. Modern translation theory like current literary theory starts with structuralism based on Sasseur and reflects the proliferation of the age. There have been many developments in the field of modern translation theory. The focus in translation investigation is shifting from the abstract to the specific, from the deep underlying hypothetical forms to the surface of the texts with all their gaps, errors, ambiguities, multiple referents and *foreign* disorder. These forms are being analyzed not by standards of equivalent/inequivalent, right/wrong, good/bad, and correct/

incorrect but by means of a text and reader oriented approach consisting in multiple systems operating on the surface of the text. As is true in literary theory in general, a revaluation of our standards is well underway and within the field of translation theory substantialist notions are already beginning to dissipate.¹

Text level aspect of translation is now gaining importance in the theory of translation.² Texts are no longer regarded as a serial continuation of sentences. Text studies as a discipline opens new vistas for the literary study of texts. So in this approach both the translation process and the translation product gain importance.

Abandoning the sentence-level approach of earlier theorists, various theorists such as Levy, Tory have proposed a more complex model of the translation process. Bassnett and Lefevere adopt a cultural approach, Ivan-Zohar proposed the polysystem theory and Mary Snell-Hornby considered an integrated approach for the theory and practice of translation. In all these views, there are many similarities and differences. However all the theorists and practitioners of translation agree on the fact that translation process is a multi-level process since both the original text and the translated texts are made up of multi levels. Some of these levels may not be equivalent or identical, or even similar. What is important is to create the original text in the target language with multilevels, with recreated artistic, normative and structural effects. While we are translating sentences, in our minds we plan to produce a kind of text which is made up of a new language structure standing for a different culture and identity. So each sentence in our translation is determined by the original text and by the translated text which we are carrying along as we translate. In other words approaching the text on sentence level and as the text itself go hand in hand in the act of translation.

As it is stated earlier in this paper, analysis of the text with all its surface qualities and for the purpose of semantic interpretation has gained importance in *modern* approaches to translation. Within this context, the fields of linguistics and literary criticism seem to be closely related with the translation theory. Both fields eventually attempt to describe the language and meaning structures of the text as a whole and sentence by sentence. While doing so, stylistics come to the fore as the method of analysis.

Stylistics is an exercise in describing what use is made of language. In general, literary stylistics has, implicitly or explicitly, the goal of explaining the relation between language and artistic function.³ Stylistics, in the recent years have become a tool for exploring the functioning of language and meaning in a text and thus have been employed both by the linguist and literary critics. In this respect, stylistics also concerns translation theory since both have common roots in hermeneutics.⁴

The translation process, oriented towards the creation of the product of the translating activity i.e. the text of the translation, is a very complicated

system consisting of two subsystems. The first subsystem is text interpreter where the translator aims at revealing the organization of the text on the level of sense and the second subsystem aims at revealing the level of language. Both these subsystems can be studied by means of a stylistic approach which will enable the translator to understand the text with its linguistic and artistic components.

We normally study style because we want to explain and understand the relation between language and artistic function within a given culture and conditions. The translator has to be able to explain and understand this relation in order to rewrite the original text in his own language, culture and environment.

Stylistics is an integral part of translation theory since it consists in a model for the stages of the analysis of the text we are about to translate. Then, it may as well be said that the translator deals with the text in two ways: as a literary critic and as a linguist. Both these ways come together by means of a stylistic study.

The translator is primarily a reader in the first step of translation and his/her first relation with the original text is on reader/text basis. Thus, language and what it points at in meaning should both be taken into consideration. For the translator, the text is not just a linguistic product, it is a unit with a communicational and cultural function forming a part of a large socio-cultural environment. A stylistic analysis of the text with its language and meaning enables the translator to rewrite the text in the target language. It may be said that the quality of rewriting or recreation depends on the quality and nature of reading the text. Through a stylistic analysis the translator finds out what kind of an aesthetic experience or perception of truth is created by means of the language use. One of the goals of stylistics is to bind the text approaches of a literary critic and linguist and to expand and widen the linguist's literary inspiration and the critic's linguistic observation harmoniously.⁵

In order to see by example the relation of stylistics to translation theory, a study of translations of some literary texts can be carried out. In this study, the aim will be to find out the adequacy of the translations by means of exploring some stylistic features of both the original texts and translated texts. Texts and their surface structures will be the starting point.

First text is Federico García Lorca's poem *Cada Canción* and its Turkish and English translations:

CADA CANCIÓN

Cada canción
es un remanso
del amor.

HER ŞARKIC

Fransızcası'yla karşılaştırarak
İspanyolca'dan çeviren: Sait Maden

Bir sevda
havuzudur
her şarki.

Cada lucero un remanso del tiempo. Un nudo del tiempo.	Bir zaman havuzudur her yıldız. Bir zaman düğümü.	
Y cada suspiro un remanso del grito	Ve bir çığlık havuzu her içceğiş.	
TOUTE CHANSON	HER TÜRKÜ	EACH SONG
	İngilizce'den çeviren: Cevat Çapan	
Toute chanson est une eau dormante de l'amour.	Her türku sessizliğidir aşkin.	Each song is love's stillness.
Tout astre brillant une eau dormante du temps. Un noeud du temps.	Her yıldız sessizliği zamanın. Zamanın bir düğümü.	Each star is time's stillness. A knot of time.
Et tout soupir une eau dormante du cri.	Ve her ah sessizliği çığlığıñ.	Each sigh Is the stillness of a shriek.

When we examine the form of *Cada Canción* we see that the poem is made up of 3 stanzas. The first and last stanzas consist in three lines and the second stanza has five lines. In the first and last stanzas there is one sentence and in the second stanza there are two sentences. Except for the first and third lines of the first stanza, the rest of the last words in the lines in the poem end with the (0) sound. All over the poem this sound creates the image of a song being sung. The poem when read aloud also sounds like a song. In each stanza, symbols are used to define the words *cancion*, *lucero* and *suspiro* and each word is defined by the same symbol creating different images for each word. The atmosphere of a *sad and romantic song* effect of the poem is created especially by the sounds and the symbols.

When we examine the first Turkish translation of *Cada Canción*, we see that the form is preserved in the Turkish translation. However, the (0) sounds and the (0) endings are not created. For this reason, the overall effect of the poem is lost. Word by word the translation is correct, however major stylistic effect is lost.

On the other hand when we examine the French and English translations we see the same loss. The sound effect is lost even in these Latin originated languages. As a result, either due to the disregard of this stylistic quality of the poem or to the impossibility of creating the same or similar sounds, we can say that the *song like* quality of the poem is not recreated in three languages.

However, there is another translation of *Cada Canción* in Turkish. The second one is translated from English and when the Turkish and English translations are compared, we see that Turkish translation is more loyal to the stylistic qualities of the English translation.

In the English translation, images are used instead of symbols. In both Turkish and English translations in the first stanzas it is said that each song is love's stillness with almost parallel syntax and morphological structure. The second stanza says that each star is time's stillness. Although the syntax is parallel in the Turkish translation, the verb is missing. In the original poem, the verb is also missing in the second and third stanzas. This is actually an important stylistic quality in the original poem. It creates the smooth flow of the words and heightens the song effect.

In the second Turkish translation from English we see that images and syntax except for the verbs go parallel.

As a result, the disregard of some major and basic stylistic features or the impossibility of recreating them in the target languages make all the translations fail in their overall effect.

Another example is a Turkish poem by Oktay Rifat and its English translation by Ruth Christie.

SARMAŞ DOLAŞ

Isit beni hürriyet inancim
Isit beni bu gecelik
Şilte yufka-yorgan delik
Dişarsi soğuk olabildiğine
Dişarda rüzgar olabildiğine
Dişarda zülm
Dişarda işkence
Dişarsi ölüm olabildiğine
Sokul bana hürriyet inancim
Isit beni bu gecelik
Ellerine yer hazır avucumda
Dizlerini oyluklarima daya
Bir kilif giki içimde dışında
Hürriyet inancim
Hürriyet inancim
Bu gecelik

THE EMBRACE

Warm me this night
O my trust in freedom
Wrap me warm
Against my mattress thin
and blanket torn;
Out there is unimaginable cold and wind,
Outside-opperssion
Torture
Out there-death
O my trust in freedom
Enter deep
Warm me through this night
On my palm a place is ready
For your hands,
On my thighs a place
To lean you knees.

Enclose me,
Sheath me,
Wrap me warm,
O my trust in freedom
Wrap me warm this night.

In the poem, there is a speaker who has got only his faith in freedom to warm him and get him through the cold night against oppression, torture and death. Although never mentioned either by name or by pronoun in the poem, there is the image of a woman standing for freedom.

The original poem is made up of 16 lines. There is no regular rhyme scheme. There are frequent repetitions and *i*, *a*, and *u* sounds are used frequently. The sounds and the adjectives and verbs describing warmth, night and embrace make the poem sound like an intimate love poem. However, the beloved as is stated in the first line and frequently elsewhere in the poem is freedom. The verb *isit* which is used in the second person singular at the beginning of the first two lines creates the effect of whisper and tenderness. The first and the last lines of the poem make a full sentence consisting the main image and idea of the poem.

When we examine the English translation of *Sarmas Dolası* we see that the equivalence of some grammatical structures are created in two lines in English such as *Isit beni bu gecelik as enter deep/warm me through this night and ellerime yer hazir avucunda* as on my palm a place is ready/For your hands. These changes in form are probably done in order to recreate the short, whispering effect of the Turkish lines.

In the original poem in lines 3 and 13 symbols are used with the images of poverty and the presence of the belief in freedom. However, this stylistic quality of the poem is lost in the English translation because instead of symbols and their images, the adjectives which the poem tries to connote and create are used directly. The translator uses the adjective *thin* instead of the image and the verb *sheath* which is the literal function of the symbol *kilif* in Turkish.

Another stylistic quality in the original poem is the complementary first and last lines. This quality is unfortunately not recreated in the English translation and thus, the object of the poem, *freedom* is not present in the first and last lines.

The place of stylistics in the theory of translation will doubtlessly contribute positively to the practice of translation in many cases as it has been tried to be shown in this paper and will also be useful in the criteria for the adequacy of translations.

NOTES

1. Gentzler, Edwin (1993): *Contemporary Translation Theories*. London and New York: Routledge, p. 4.
2. Horguelin, Paul A. (ed.) (1978): *Translating, A Profession*. Ottawa: Canadian Translators and Interpreters Council, p. 29-30.
3. Leech & Short (1981): *Style in Fiction*. London and New York: Longman, p. 13.
4. Brandes, Margarita (1993): «Comprehension, style, translation, and their interaction». *Translation as Social Action*. Ed. Palma Zlateva. London and New York: Routledge, p.77.
5. Enkvist, Nils Erik (1964): «On defining style. An essay on applied linguistics». *Linguistics and Style*. Ed. John Spencer. Bucks: Oxford Univ. Press, p. 3-10.

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