

## The Role Of Translation In Literature

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- The importance of translation is that it allows the people of this world to relish the works of writers and poets of far flung countries. This is mainly because the world is segregated into segments due to different languages, cultures and history and there usually is a limitation of man to the capacity and necessity of learning languages. Hence we can say that translation acts as a bridge amongst cultures and civilizations helping each to appreciate the varied Literary works of all genres of each other. What better way to surmise the importance of translation than recollecting the classic sonnet “On First Looking into Chapman’s Homer” by the last of the later Romantic Poets and arguably the best of his times, John Keats, wherein he states his bewilderment on his experience of the great art of Homer through the translation of the latter’s works by Mr. George Chapman ? Translation has helped the world at large to know Goethe, Kalidas, Shakespeare, Rabindranath Tagore, Tolstoy, Kafka, Gorky et al and about the cultures, literary traditions and heritage of their lands through their works.
- Historically, translation studies has long been *prescriptive* (telling translators how to translate), to the point that discussions of translation that were not prescriptive were generally not considered to be about translation at all. When historians of translation studies trace early Western thought about translation, for example, they most often set the beginning at Cicero's remarks on how he used translation from Greek to Latin to improve his oratory abilities—an early description of what Jerome ended up calling sense-for-sense translation. The descriptive history of interpreters in Egypt provided by Herodotus several centuries earlier is typically not thought of as translation studies—presumably because it does not tell translators how to translate.[1] In China, the discussion on how to translate originated with the translation of Buddhist sutras during the Han Dynasty
- Discussions of the theory and practice of translation reach back into antiquity and show remarkable continuities. The ancient Greeks distinguished between *metaphrase* (literal translation) and *paraphrase*. This distinction was adopted by English poet and translator John Dryden (1631–1700), who described translation as the judicious blending of these two modes of phrasing when selecting, in the target language, “counterparts,” or equivalents, for the expressions used in the source language: When [words] appear... literally graceful, it were an injury to the author that they should be changed. But since... what is beautiful in one [language] is often barbarous, nay sometimes nonsense, in another, it would be unreasonable to limit a

translator to the narrow compass of his author's words: its enough if he choose out some expression which does not vitiate the sense.[2]

- Dryden cautioned, however, against the license of “imitation”, i.e., of adapted translation: “When a painter copies from the life... he has no privilege to alter features and lineaments...” This general formulation of the central concept of translation — equivalence — is as adequate as any that has been proposed since Cicero and Horace, who, in 1<sup>st</sup> century- BCE Rome, famously and literally cautioned against translating “word for word” (*verbum pro verbo*).[3]
- Despite occasional theoretical diversity, the actual *practice* of translation has hardly changed since antiquity. Except for some extreme metaphrasers in the early Christian *Cicero* period and the Middle Ages, and adapters in various periods (especially pre-Classical Rome, and the 18<sup>th</sup> century), translators have generally shown prudent flexibility in seeking equivalents — “literal” where possible, paraphrastic where necessary — for the original meaning and other crucial “values” (e.g., style, verse form, concordance with musical accompaniment or, in films, with speech articulatory movements) as determined from context.[3] In general, translators have sought to preserve the context itself by reproducing the original order of sememes, and hence word order — when necessary, reinterpreting the actual grammatical structure, for example, by shifting from active to passive voice, or *vice versa*. The grammatical differences between “fixed-word-order” languages (e.g. English, French, German) and “free-word-order” languages (e.g., Greek, Latin, Polish, Russian) have been no impediment in this regard. [3] The particular syntax (sentence-structure) characteristics of a text's source language are adjusted to the syntactic requirements of the target language.
- When a target language has lacked terms that are found in a source language, translators have borrowed those terms, thereby enriching the target language. Thanks in great measure to the exchange of calques and loanwords between languages, and to their importation from other languages, there are few concepts that are “untranslatable” among the modern European languages. [3]
- The World literature is inclined towards major languages such as English, French and German. The dominant languages are known and spoken by large population of the world but what about the languages which are less known and spoken? We cannot understand their literature if the said language is not known to us. Here comes the importance of translation which helps people to understand their literatures, languages, cultures and histories. It would have been difficult for these less spoken languages to survive if translation was not there. We treat all languages equally without any discrimination by doing so.
- The work of a translator should be to produce in the hearts and minds of the readers an effect equivalent to the one produced by the author on his original readers. This type of translation takes

into account the context and apparent intent of the original. Here the translator considers the culture of the original document, understands the nuances of the original language, and takes into account the idiomatic expressions. The result is a finished product that comes alive to the reader with the actual intent of the original.

- A good translator must be able to recognize idiomatic expressions and accurately translate them into the target language. Idioms lend color and flavor to any language and a good writer knows how to use an idiomatic expression appropriately to help his reader more clearly understand his intent. The translator should consider the culture equally. Every culture is different and understanding those differences is what differentiates an average translator from an outstanding translator. When a translator understands the cultural background that has influenced the author in the writing of the original, it may help him better choose the precise wording to convey the sense of culture the author intended.
- It is also important for the translator to know the influences that have affected the author's personality, style and content. Every writer tends to be unique in style and content and this can and should only be attributed to the background and influences that shape his/ her aptitude and personality. A really troublesome area in the field of translation appears to be the occurrence of allusions, which seem to be culture-specific portions of a source language. So, all kinds of allusions need to be explicated in the translation to bring forth the richness of the source language text for the translated language audience.
- Recreating the original becomes a mammoth challenge as it is difficult to maintain a balance between what has to be understood vis-à-vis the need to represent correctly. Literary translation is both creative and technical. We are expected to be as accurate as possible but the reproduced text becomes appealing in its own right only when we are creative in the process of its translation.
- Is this general notion useful for translation or is it not perhaps too vague—after all, “close enough resemblance in relevant respects” does not seem to determine anything very concrete? The answer is that the principle of relevance heavily constrains the translation with regard to both what it is intended to convey and how it is expressed.
- Thus if we ask in what respects the intended interpretation of the translation should resemble the original, the answer is: in respects that make it adequately relevant to the audience—that is, that offer adequate contextual effects; if we ask how the translation should be expressed, the answer is: it should be expressed in such a manner that it yields the intended interpretation without putting the audience to unnecessary processing effort. Hence considerations of relevance constrain both the intended interpretation of the translation and the way it is expressed, and since consistency with the principle of relevance is always context-dependent, these constraints, too, are context-determined.

- These conditions seem to provide exactly the guidance that the translators and translation theorists have been looking for: they determine in what respects the translation should resemble the original—only in those respects that can be expected to make it adequately relevant to the receptor language audience. They determine also that the translation should be clear and natural in expression in the sense that it should not be unnecessarily difficult to understand. [4]
- It is a fact that the discussion of translation, to whatever extent we may pursue it, will carry us into the most recondite secrets of that marvelous phenomenon that we call speech. Just examining questions that our topic obviously presents will be sufficient for now. An author of a book is a writer in a positive sense of the word. This is to imply that he has used his native tongue with prodigious skill, achieving two things that seem impossible to reconcile: simply, to be intelligible and, at the same time, to modify the ordinary usage of language. This dual operation is more difficult to achieve than walking a tightrope. How can we demand it of the average translator? Moreover, beyond this first dilemma that personal style presents to the translator, we perceive new layers of difficulties. An author's personal style, for example, is produced by his slight deviation from the habitual meaning of the word. The author forces it to an extraordinary usage so that the circle of objects it designates will not coincide exactly with the circle of objects which that same word customarily means in its habitual use. The general trend of these deviations in a writer is what we call his style. But, in fact, each language compared to any other also has its own linguistic style, what von Humboldt called its 'internal form.' Therefore, it is utopian to believe that two words belonging to different languages, and which the dictionary gives us as translations of each other, refer to exactly the same objects
- Since languages are formed in different landscapes, through different experiences, their incongruity is natural. It is false, for example, to suppose that the thing the Spaniard calls a *bosque* [forest] the German calls a *Wald*, yet the dictionary tells us that *Wald* means *bosque*. The shapes of the meanings of the two fail to coincide as do those of a person in a double-exposed photograph. This being the case, our perception shifts and wavers without actually identifying with either shape or forming a third; imagine the distressing vagueness we experience when reading thousands of words affected in this manner. [5]
- As a matter of fact, a perfect theory of translation should be an overall concern of all theories and meet the functional requirements of an accepted and adequate translation theory that provides some guidelines for translating to facilitate the task and transfer cultural elements in the source language to the target language, and thus achieve the same effect on the target receivers as on the original receivers.

**REFERENCES**

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- [3] Kasparek, The Translator's Endless Toil, p. 84.
- [4] Ernst-August Gutt , Translation As Interlingual Interpretive Use, p. 376
- [5] José Ortega y Gasset , The Misery And The Splendor Of Translation - Translated by Elizabeth Gamble Miller