Strategies of The Literary Translation in Two Different Arabic Translations of Hamlet: A Comparative Study

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ABSTRACT

This paper aims chiefly at comparing and contrasting two different translations of the same literary text Hamlet for the sake of highlighting the varied mechanisms and strategies used by translators in rendering the text into literary Arabic translations. The methodology adopted mainly focuseS on choosing (15) literary translated samples from the renditions of two skilled translators in pursue of comparing the strategies applied for translating them. The findings of the study reveal that translators succeeded in their attempt to translate the text through the careful use of literary translation tools such as reduction, addition, elaboration, transposition among others. The paper concludes with further investigation of the mechanisms that help in maintaining the aesthetic effects in literary translation.

Keywords: Hamlet, Shakespeare, translation, literary translation, translation strategies.

Introduction

Under the umbrella of Linguistics, and as part of the cross-linguistic concern for highlighting similarities and differences among languages of the world, the field of Contrastive Analysis (CA) has been recently given a major concern in applied linguistics. The relationship between contrastive linguistics (CL) and translation studies (TS) as two disciplines within the field of applied linguistics has been explored in depth by several authors, especially in the 1970s and early 1980s. From the mid-nineties on both these disciplines have experienced a great boom due to the use of computerized language corpora in linguistic analysis. Such applications aim chiefly at probing into the myriad common features and points of divergence of Languages. One of the central and maybe the most crucial applications of this applied nature is the study of Translation. According to Nida and Taber (1982:12), "Translation consists in reproducing in the receptor language the closest natural equivalence of the source language (SL) message firstly, in terms of meaning and secondly, in terms of style". In their definition, Nida and Taber highlighted the major bases of translation. The process involves two languages, the source language and the target one, and it can be oral or written. It is highly dependent on the context, and equivalence is one of its essential elements. Zagy (2000), on the other hand, believes that translation aims at transferring the meaning to the target language (TL) rather than converting the words and grammatical forms of the original language. Catford (1995:20) however, defines the translation process as "the replacement of textual material in one language, by equivalent textual material in another language. He distinguishes between total translation which is the replacement of SL grammar and lexis by equivalent TL grammar and lexis, and restricted translation that is based on the replacement of SL textual material at only one level.

As can be seen from the above discussion, translation is a challenging task. It requires both linguistic and non-linguistic skills. Accordingly, the translator must have good knowledge of the linguistic and the cultural aspects of both the source and the target language. In pursuing this end, translators encounter such challenges because of varied factors such as the type of the text legal, political, economical, religious, or literary; the form of the text (written or spoken), and the style (formal, informal)…etc.

Following this line of thought, one of the intricate texts that translators find difficulty with is the literary texts. Literary

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translation concerns itself with the translation of material originally written in literary language, and it is agreed among a number of experts to be the most demanding type of translation. It entails the transfer of a diversity of features from the source text to the target such as meaning, form, mood, tone, and effect.

Across linguistically, literary translation is agreed to be as one of the most challenging forms of translation. Consequently, translators struggle to maintain the features of the translated text such as the form and the aesthetic effect. Accordingly, it is essential for any literary translators to give a complete transcript of the ideas and sentiments in the original passage, maintaining the characteristics of the style and keeping the ease and the flow of the original text.

Literary translation is the rendition, in a new language, of texts that are originally written in literary language. It is not only meaning preservation but is also form, style, mood, voice, experience and effect maintenance. It entails a good grasp of both SL and TL in terms of use and usage so that the resultant literary piece would retain the same force and sense of the original. Style is one of the core features in literary language, and then it must be given much attention in literary translation; no successful literary translation would be if style is not adequately rendered. The use of figurative language, in turn, shapes the literary writer's style character and entails that the literary translator fully understands the figure of speech used in the ST such as metaphors and similes and looks for the most appropriate equivalent in the TT in order to offer the target reader almost the same pleasure as the native reader. This pleasure is known as the aesthetic effect; the sense of amusement experienced by readers of literary works. It is achieved through good word choice and sentence structure in addition to proper application of figurative devices.

This study seeks to investigate the nature of literary translation and to find out the strategies that are used in translating literary texts. To this end, the translations of two translators Salah Niazy's and Jabra Ibrahim Jabra are selected, compared and analyzed aiming at finding common grounds and areas of difficulties in translating literary texts.

Literature Review

Within the framework of Contrastive Analysis, translation in general and literary translation in particular has been central topics for studying and investigation since time immemorial. Accordingly, this section is incorporated to shed light on the studies that have tackled the issue of literary translation from a theoretical perspective.

To start with, in a thesis published in (1988), Boushaba investigated the problems of Literary translation namely: subjectivity in the interpretation of the original message, the question of stylistic faithfulness and flexibility, and the extreme notion of the impossibility of an adequate translation. It also approached the problem of equivalence and that of translation units which were raised by the translation process itself and were therefore relevant to the problems of literary translation. The author stated that the quality of a literary translation was assessed not in terms of its identity to the stylistic effect of the original text but in terms of its approximate correspondence to it. Such criterion was suggested as an appropriate means of assessing the adequacy of a literary translation and consequently the extreme notion of the impossibility of an adequate translation was found to be irrelevant.

In this paper 'The Call of the Curlew' (1997), Safi depicted the dilemma facing the translator as how to bring about an equilibrium whereby the original aesthetic flavor is transferred into English without hindering genuine comprehension or producing something that can be rejected as totally 'unEnglish'. The researcher added that literary translation is, in essence, an act of aesthetic communication for the language of the literary text. He stressed that it is thus mandatory that the translator of Arabic works should adopt certain strategies to effect a literarily creative English rendition.

In the same year, el-Enany, 1997 stated that nearly all Naguib Mahfouz's novels have now been translated into English. Of his 33 novels 29 were available in English translation. In that paper, the researcher aims at finding answers to the following questions: How good are the translations of Mahfouz? Do they vary in quality and why? Are the translations as good as the originals? Do they give Mahfouz his due? Do the translations convey his ideas and the aesthetics of his style faithfully? And how much of the original is lost in translation? What problems did translators meet and how did they deal with them? What are the specific issues of translating dialogue as opposed to narrative? What happens to jokes, puns and playfulness, specifically associated with the Arabic language and culture, and more specifically with spoken Egyptian? How do translators overcome (or fall victim to) their lack of intimate knowledge of

the popular culture of Egyptian Arabic? What happens to the spoken language laden with religiously based expressions when transferred to such a language as English, now secularised for centuries? Are there problems dictated by the fact that translators are predominantly English speaking Arabists, to whom some intimate domains of the language and culture are inevitably little accessible and irresoluble by reference to dictionaries?

In 2010, an Arabic-English comparative study appeared to light. It mainly explored the area of literary translation from an aesthetic perspective. The study limited its scope into three literary Arabic texts chosen from the literary authorship of Gibran Khalil Gibran's creative works. Discovering whether the aesthetic effect of literary Arabic texts was maintained when translated into English was the overall aim of the paper. The findings revealed that the procedures followed in the process of translating the texts, such as literal translation, omission, addition, reduction, expansion and avoiding repetition build the target texts' sense, form and effect. It followed then that, however difficult is the task, the aesthetic effect of the selected literary Arabic texts is almost wholly kept through the translation.

Alwafai (2004) published a paper that aimed at analyzing two Arabic translations of the novella ***The Old Man and the Sea*** (1952) by Ernest Hemingway. The purpose of the study was to investigate problems and strategies of literary translation into Arabic and to suggest guidelines for better practices in the field of Arabic literary translation. The findings showed that the best translation should consider both contextual factors and cultural factors in SL and TL. Besides, naturalness and readability of the target text were found to be crucial in literary translation. Untranslatable cultural specific items can be tackled in various ways such as paraphrasing, rewording, lexicalizing new concepts, and adapting them culturally. The researcher encouraged creativity in literary translation provided that translators have literary competence and refined taste for style.

In 2014. A thesis written by Roubati explored the culture of literary translation from Arabic to English. It was assumed that English translations of Arabic literary works were dominated by an established system of representation of Arabs and their culture. The thesis examined whether such a situation still prevailed in our age of globalization and open communication. The thesis concluded that the said system of representation continued to exist in the form of stereotypical images about Arabs and their culture in the minds of Western audiences. However, the way this system was maintained had changed with the addition of market demands, i.e. what readers want to read, what sells. Since Western readers overall still have the same stereotypical images about Arabs and their culture, these images still determine their expectations, and hence the culture in literary translation from Arabic.

Ghazala, 2014, in his published paper, intended to lay the theoretical grounds for literary translation both in theory and in practice. The paper provided definitions for basic terms and concepts of the major topics and issues pertaining to literary translation. Among the terms and concepts essential to the readers / students' background knowledge in this connection were: Literature, literary language vs. non-literary language; the literariness of literature, literary translation vs. un-literary translation, the literary translator and methods of literary translation. The paper ended with setting forth a creative literary stylistic method of translating literature. The ultimate objective of the paper was to provide a panoramic view of all means and requirements of a good literary translation today, and finally set forth a relatively new creative literary stylistics-based method of literary translation for the literary translator of today.

Methodology

The sample

The chosen text is Shakespeare's *Hamlet,* which is one of his longest plays. It is among the most powerful and influential tragedies in all of English literature and one of Shakespeare's most popular works during his lifetime. The play still ranks among his most-performed, topping the Royal Shakespeare Company's performance list since 1879. This play has been translated into almost 80 languages. The reason for this choice is the fame of the play, and the numerous translations it has yielded. As a matter of fact, translators from all over the world translated *Hamlet* into several languages. It was also translated into Arabic by several translators. Each one used different strategies in his/her translation. In essence, the selected sample of the play comprised (15) sentences that were translated, analyzed and

compared differently by Niazy and Jabra

Translators

Before embarking on the examination, it should be stated that the two selected translations are frequently used as an Arabic reference to Shakespeare's *Hamlet*. These two translations are the following:

1. Jabra's translation
2. Niazy's translation

These two translations were not selected arbitrarily but in a systematic way where most Arabic translation of Shakespeare's *Hamlet* was gathered. These two translations with known translators and publishing houses were used.

The author read the play in English and then read two versions of its translation in Arabic. The first translation was by Salah Niazy and the other one was by Jabra Ibrahim Jabra The translation of the play differs according to the way the translator understands the play's text. Niazy's and Jabra's translations were somehow different. This paper aims at shedding the light on the differences between these two translations alongside with main strategies applied in translating the literary text .

Discussion

The (15) sentences chosen for the study are listed hereunder followed by the translation of both translators. As a final step, the researcher comments on each translation highlighting the related aspects of the translation process.

"Hamlet: He took my father grossly, full of bread"(3.2.80)

قضى على أبي حين كان منغمساً في ملذّاته, لم يجدْ وقتاً للتكفير عن ذنوبه

Jabra's translation:

لقد أتى ابي غرّة وهو ملئ بخبزه

Comment: Jarbra literally translated "full of bread" into مليء بخبزه and this does not make sense. How can a person be مليئا بالخبز "full of bread"? While Niazy's translation succeeded in rendering the meaning of this expression.

"Hamlet: With al l his crimes broad blown,as flush as May"3.2.81)

Niazy's translation:

و كلّ جرائمه متفتحة مثل ريعان النباتات في شهر مايو/ ايار

Jabra's translation:

وخطاياه مفتحة الأكمام كلّها محمرّة كخدّ أيّار.

Comment: Niazy's translation resembles the original text. It makes the Arabic reader imagine the same picture the Source text intends to convey while Jabra added two words in his translation. He added محمرة and خد. This addition was not necessary and it gives an opposite meaning that was not intended by Shakespeare. By adding these two words Jabra made the word "sins" sound beautiful "having red cheeks". Furthermore there is no place for red faces in this play the first question Hamlet asked about his father's ghost was: "Was he pale?"

"Hamlet : I humbly thank you, Sir
Dost know this Water-fly?"(5.2.82)

Niazy's translation:

هاملت: أشكرك بامتنان يا سيّدي (إلى هوراشيو) اتعرف مَنْ هذا اليعسوب؟

Jabra's translation:

هاملت: إنني بكلّ تواضع أشكر لك لطفك. (جانبا لهوراشيو) أتعرف ذبابة الماء هذه؟

Comment: Niazy translated "Water fly" into يعسوب while Jabra translated it into "ذبابة الماء". There are many water

flies, which one did Shakespeare mean? Hibbard who is one of the main editors of *Hamlet* said that Shakespeare meant "Dragon fly". Thus Niazy's translation is more specific and informative than that of Jabra's.

"Hamlet : He hath much Land and fertile. let a beast be lord of beasts, and his cribshall stand at the king's mess.' Tis a chough, but, as I say, spacious in the possession of dirt."(5.2.85-87)

Niazy's translations:

هاملت: إنّه صاحب أراض واسعة وخصيبة. وما دام يمتلك ماشية كثيرة وهو ليس خيراً منها- فإنّكَ ستجد معلفه على مائدة الملك . إنّه غراب الزاغ يمتلك كما قلتُ فدانات واسعة من الأطيان".

Jabra's translation:

هاملت: هو صاحب أراض واسعة, أينما وُجد حيوان هو سيّد الحيوانات رأيت معلفه على مائدة الملك ولكنّه كما قلتُ يملك الشواسع من القذارة".

Comment: Niazy rendered the meaning Shakespeare intended and translated "chough" into غراب الزاغ. Shakespeare mentioned this bird in several plays referring to الزاغ because this bird makes loud fast sounds and this resembles a character in the play, whereas Jabra did not translate this word at all.

"Fortinbras :This quarry cries on havoc. O proud death"(5.2.343).

Niazy's translations:

هذه الأكداس من فرائس الموتى تشي بصيّادين قُتلوا بلا رحمة. آه أيها الموت المتغطرس

Jabra's translation:

إنّه الصيد يصرخ بالقتل والدمار! أيّهاالموت المصعّر الخدّ كبرا.

Comment: Jabra's translation is literal and the reader can tell that this text is translated literally while Niazy's translation enjoys the status of an original text because it renders the meaning and transfers the picture as it is.

After Fortinbras: achieves victory in Poland he sees a pile of dead bodies scattered around and says:

"What feast is towards in thine eternal cell "(5.2.344)

Niazy's translations:

أية وليمة وشيكة سُتنصب في قبرك اللعين.

Jabra's translation:

أيّ وليمة ستولم في حجرتك السرمديّة

Comment: Jabra omitted the word "towards" which Niazy translated into الوشيكة. He also translated "eternal cell" into حجرتك السرمدية whereas Niazy translated it logically into قبرك اللعين. AgainNiazy's translation renders the meaning of this sentence.

"Fortinbras :That thou so many princes at a shot many princes as a shot So bloodily hast struck ?" 5.2.345-56)

Niazy's translations:

حيثُ برمية واحدة اصبتَ بروح متعطشة للدماء هذا العدد الكبير من الأمراء.

Jabra's translation:

حتّى أصبتَ برمية واحدة هذا العدد من الأمراء وسفكتَ هذا الدم كلّه؟.

Comment: Jabra restores again, without a reason, to omission and ignores the word "bloodily" which was translated

into المتعطشة للدماء by Niazy.

“Hamlet : A love between them like the Palm might flourish”5.2.43)

Niazy's translations:

حبهما يزهو كالنخيل

Jabra’s translation:

الحب بينهما يزهر كغصن الزيتون

Comment: Shakespeare quoted this sentence from the Bible الصديق كالنخلة يزهو وكالأرز بلبنان ينمو he wanted to make fun out of the diplomatic language that often borrows some expressions from the Bible. Knowing this, Niazy translated palm as النخلة while Jabra translated it as غصن الزيتون and by doing this he omitted the sarcasm meant by Shakespeare.

“Hamlet :Let the bloat King tempt you again to bed, Pinch wanton on your Cheek,call you his mouse”(3.4.186-87)

Niazy's translations:

دعي الملك المنتفخ يغريك إلى الفراش مرة أخرى دعيه يقرص خدّك بفسق ويدعوك : يا فأرتي

Jabra’s translation :

دعي الملك المنتفخ يغريك ثانية بالفراش(كذا) ويقرص خدّيْك ماجناً ويدعوك عصفورته.

Comment: Here Hamlet addresses his mother aggressively because she married his uncle, the man who killed his father. Niazy translated "mouse" as it is while Jabra euphemized it in his translation and translated it as عصفورته making it sound like a complement while Shakespeare intended to insult Hamlet's mother when he used the word "mouse".

“Hamlet: And let him for a pair of reechy kisses”(3.4.188).

Niazy's translation:

ودعيه لقاء قبلتيْن كريهتي الأبخرة.

Jabra’s translation:

ودعيه لقاء قبلتيْن سخماويْن.

Comment: Explaining that this play has a lot of expressions that are connected to the "smelling sense" Niazy translated "reechy kisses" into قبلتين كريهتي الأبخرة, while Jabra’s translation makes the expression visual by translating it into قبلتين سخماوين.

“Hamlet:Why let the stricken deer go weep, The hart ungalled play”(3.2.256-57).

Niazy's translations:

دع الظبية الجريحة تذهب بعيداً وتبكي وليلعب الأيل السليم.

Jabra’s translation:

فدع الجريح من الظبا في دمعه ودع اللعوب من الظبا متفردا.

Comment: Jobra omits the word "ungalled" which according to Niazy means الأيل السليم.The translator should not omit any word without a good reason but one notices that omission is a repeated strategy followed by Jabra .

“Hamlet: For some must watch while some must sleep,
Thus runs the world away”(3.2.258-59)

Niazy's translations:

"لا بدّ من فئة تسهر، بينما أخرى تنام هكذا سُنّة الحياة"

Jabra’s translation:

"هل أوقف الأكوان في دورانها ذاك الذي عنها التهى او سها"

Comment: In his translation Jabra added الأكوان في دورانها and omitted "some must watch while some must sleep" and did not mention anything about سنة الحياة. Jabra’s additions and omissions do not add anything to the original text and that is why one feels that these contributions were unnecessary.

“Hamley :A slave that is not twentieth part the tithe
Of your preceden lord, avice of kings”(3.4.98-99)

Niazy's translations:

عبد لا يبلغ زوجك السابق ملك يتصرّف كمهرّج في مسرحية

Jabra’s translation:

عبد ليس بعشر سيدك السابق. أضحوكة لا ملك

Comment: Explaining that the word "a vice" refers to a character in a morality play (a buffoon) that imitates a king in a sarcastic way to criticize him,Niazy translated vice as مهرج في مسرحية. Whereas Jabra translated it into أضحوكة and there is not even one implication that the king was أضحوكة to anyone.

“Hamlet:A cutpurse of the empire and the rule,
That from a shelf the precious diadem Stole”(3.4.100-101)

Niazy's translations:

نشّال سرق إمبراطورية الدانمارك والحكم وسرق من الرفّ التاج الثمين ودسّه في جيبه.

Jabra’s translation:

لصّ من لصوص السؤدد والحكم اختلس من الرفّ تاجاً غالياً

Comment: Shakespeare refers to Denmark when he says "The Empire". In his translation, Jabra replaced الدانمارك with السؤدد whereas Niazy translated it as امبراطورية الدانمارك.

“Hamlet: A king of shreds and patches”3.4.104)

Niazy's translation:

ملك بثياب مهرج

Jabra’s translation:

ملك من مزق ورقع

Comment: Jabra translated "shreds and patches" literally whereas Niazy rendered the meaning of this expression and translated it into ثياب مهرج explaining that Shakespeare had the buffoon and his colorful outfit in his mind.

Conclusion

The translation of any text varies from one translator to another. But in literary translation the translator must make a lot of effort to translate it successfully. The author concludes with the following implications for literary translators. Firstly, translators must fully understand the text before they embarked on the process of translation. Secondly, literary texts translators should know in advance the linguistic and the cultural backgrounds of the authors as well as the texts. Thirdly, translators should be aware of the important events that occurred before the text was written.

As per the mechanisms applied by the translators, it seemed that omission as well as addition was the most salient features of their renditions. Additionally, to a great extent, both translators were able to translate the texts very well focusing on the following: firstly, maintaining equivalent translation. Secondly, maintaining the aesthetic effects of the translated texts by resorting to the phonological aspects of rhyme and rhythm. Maintaining the stylistic and the functional features of both languages through adhering to semantic equivalence as well as structural parallelism.Importantly enough, both translators did their best in clarifying or to improving the original text. Though in literature minimum changes must be done to prevent any harm that can affect the plot of the text whether it was a play a story or a novel.

Finally, it is recommended that further attempts to handle the area of literary translation from an aesthetic angle which could focus on other aspects of the aesthetic effect in literary translation. Aspects such as sentence openings and sentence length that are favored by both the original literary writer and literary translator which might shape extra dimensions within the field and outline new researches.

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استراتيجيات الترجمة الأدبية في ترجمتين مختلفتين لمسرحية هاملت إلى العربية: دراسة مقارنة

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ملخص

تقارن هذه الدراسة بين ترجمتين مختلفتين للنص الأدبي(هاملت) لشكسبير من أجل القاء الضوء والتركيز على طرق الترجمة المتبعة من قبل المترجمين، وكيفية تحويلها إلى العربية قامت الباحثة بأخذ 15 اقتباسًا أ دبيًا مترجمًا من مسرحية هاملت من قبل اثنين من المترجمين المعروفين؛ وذلك بهدف المقارنة بين طرق الترجمة التي تم استخدامها و تطبيقها في عملية الترجمة . تخلص الباحثة إلى أن المترجمين قاموا بجهد رائع في ايصال الصورة الأفضل للقارئ وعلى الرغم من ذلك فما زال هناك العديد من طرق واستراتيجيات للترجمة لو تم تطبيقها في النصوص أعلاه لكانت النتيجة أفضل.

الكلمات الدالة: هاملت ، شكسبير ،الترجمة ، الترجمة الأدبية.

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