

## Some Observations on Curious Aspects of Literary Translation

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**Key words:** *equivalence, language structures, stylistic aspect, literary translator, author's style, source text, communicative approach, aesthetic function*

Translation is an exiting though rather an exhausting job. It is not merely a replacement of one language to another. In this long-run process, different cultures and customs, nations, traditions, attitudes and levels of development confront each other. And here the translator as the main doer of the action should always pay a great attention to all these difficulties and be as full of knowledge as possible. At the same time confidence in his knowledge shouldn't make him more confident.

Translation itself is an ongoing process and always demands doing research, finding equivalents and correspondences. Very often the translator collides with historical background of a nation and his task is to do some research and get well acquainted with the nations whose works are being translated. The main difficulty is not about the words, but it rather concerns concepts. Another problem in translating (especially in literary texts), is that the translator deals with a swiftly progressing world and there is an immense need to learn the new concepts, expressions and phrases given to just created innovations. The translators are not simply translating words or languages, they are interpreting, translating and illustrating ideas.

A literary translator needs a deep understanding of both grammar and culture of a language. Even the most sophisticated translators sometimes face frustrations and confusion. Some common challenges of translation are as follows: language structure, phrases, various idiomatic expressions, stylistic aspect, compound words, humour. Idioms are used to explain something in a figurative meaning. The meanings of these peculiar phrases can't be predicted by the literal definitions of the words they contain. The translator, especially the professional, always tries to avoid literal misunderstandings and suggests a possible local idiom that may work better in the target language.

In literary translation it's necessary to find a word in the mother tongue semantically close to the one in English. Such a word in the theory of translation is called a lexical or a dictionary equivalent. To use such an equivalent one should first differentiate between the types of semantic relations.

While translating literary texts the translator should concentrate on every particular detail of the text in order to bring the readers to a clear understanding and complete visualization of the suggested creation. The literary translator should be a real professional to be able to have the necessary knowledge, imagination, as well as creativity to transfer a literary work from the source language into the target one. Translating literary texts is much more difficult, for the translator deals with perceiving the period of time in the work, the atmosphere, psychological condition of the characters, national identity of the writer, his own individual style, as well as the traditions of the nation.

Nowadays a huge importance is given to the translation of literary texts, so that the

works of fiction can reach a wider audience. As it's officially stated, "Literary translation is for our purposes the translation principally of works of fiction, poetry and drama, that have an important function, and are highly regarded in the source culture" [1].

A contemporary individual becomes more developed and sophisticated and more aware of philosophy by reading antique and classical works. A great number of challenges can be seen when translating literary works as it is really hard to keep the essence, specific flavour of the text as well as the imagination of the personages at the same time. We should state that every piece the translator interprets comes from the pen of an individual and it's an individual treatment. He tries to retain the ambience of the original culture, rather than the language, as it is reflected in the text. When translating stories and novels, the translator needs to be true to the original as much as possible. The problem here is to recreate the specific atmosphere of the original text without translating it word for word (verbum pro verbo). Translation of literary texts is a far more creative art than many forms of translation. For the translation of prose and poetry, creative writing ability is just as significant as linguistic prowess.

Translation of literature is fundamentally different from other categories. That's because the main principle of literary translation is the dominance of poetic communicative function. Literary translation has one more function, i.e. aesthetic function. Noteworthy here is the fact that literary translation between two languages will be devoted to promoting a better knowledge of both cultures as a whole.

In all cases a translator is dealing with a string of words that helps us read the text in its original language. It's a glossary rather than a translation, which is always a literary activity. [2] O.Paz asserts that literature and translation are synonymous. Translation is always a literary operation since it is an artistic or scientific work as it includes a "transformation" of the original that is literary in the sense that it uses literary resources (in essence, metonymy and metaphor), translations are a literary act that we use all of our literary knowledge in [3].

It should be mentioned that literary translation is an artistic creation which the translator achieves in the target language by "using" the author. of the source language as his/her medium.

Literary translation does not involve solely one-to-one equivalence, nor is it concerned solely with the conveying of needed information. The qualities of each literary work must be approached in the belief that it may well turn out to be unique; literary translation is problematic and those problems are not unsolvable.

The translator of literary works is actually a writer who practically rewrites the book and recreates it for the reader. Nobody is able to do it without a writer's talent. Translators consider this kind of translation one of the toughest ones in their profession, for it is not like a simple interpretation. Literary translation of any language has to be done in a way so that the atmosphere of the story, the author's style will be preserved to a greater extent, when speaking about our admiration of a certain source text writer, we're actually admiring the very level of professional skills of the translator as a mediator of the message. Being able to make the text readable and interesting, to conserve the original style as well as to convey the idea of the writer is the gift of the

translator as a co-author.

It is no wonder that literary translation has a series of features, and, of course, certain difficulties. This kind of translation is not intended to do it literally, word for word. That's why literary translation is a subject of disagreement among scholars and translators; a major difficulty in literary translation is the translation of phrases and proverbs; this issue is not complicated as it might seem at first glance, but it requires a large vocabulary and much time to spend on investigation.

One of the most curious moments in literary translation is when the translated text has humorous or ironic implications. It's a must to have special skills to manage to keep that play on words that the author means. The literary translator is a good researcher, as well as a creative professional who is always ready to face challenges with confidence. It's really difficult to translate the text of a different era, a different culture, if you are not familiar with its features. And again, we come to the fact that the translator must be talented and versatile.

In the process of translating literary texts we should first of all distinguish between two main concepts: logical and artistic. These two ideas should be combined properly to have a valuable and accurate translation.

A word for word translation may reveal the logical content of the text but it will never express the artistic content of it. The translator of fiction must convey the artistic content at a time. Artistic content is always unique and individual; it is the expression of the author's and the particular nation's language and culture characteristics. Of course, it doesn't mean that the literary work is devoid of universal significance; the translator should take into consideration the fact that words in all languages always get new meanings in the course of time; besides, the translator should recreate the artistic content of the literary text in another language. It is not a secret that a literary text can be perceived differently by different people. The profundity of comprehending the content of a literary work depends mainly on the individual abilities the reader possesses. Just the same is the case with the translator. In the first stage of his work the translator is a highly qualified reader and his perception is inevitably individual. But, of course, he isn't a passive reader. He has to render his perception of the literary work in a way that it will have an artistic value for other readers. The translator should be highly gifted and the stamp of his talent should be left on the work which is interpreted.

Familiarity of translation is also an important question within the scope of theory of literary translation, quite often the problem of time gap arises in the process of translation and the literary works written many centuries ago become more and more difficult to translate preserving familiarity of that work for the contemporary generations. Literary translation studies in general are experiencing a kind of "cultural revolution". Translation is seen as a phenomenon not so much linguistic as cultural. A new interpretation of the essence and nature of the translation was called the "cultural turn" in the theory of translation. [4] In essence, the term means shifting the emphasis in the study of translation to its cultural aspects and correspond to the name of the new "culturological" direction, which, as predicted by Mary Snell-Hornby, will become crucial for the translation studies in the new century. The cultural scientific paradigm

presupposes understanding of national literature as a kind of "literary system" that's created and exists in a certain environment, formed by a social system and a cultural system. All of them are open and interact with each other.

When the cultures are related but the languages are quite different, the translator is to make many formal sifts in the translation. However, the cultural similarities in such instances usually provide a series of parallelisms of content that make the translation proportionally much less difficult than when both languages and cultures are different. As a matter of fact, differences between cultures cause many more severe complications for the translation than to differences in language structure. The conceptual approach to the translation phenomenon is viewed as a deep integration of national cultures, as well as their interactions. Literary translation should be considered in the context of literary interaction as an integral part of multi-ethnic factor. Literary translation schools reflect the evolution of transferability categories and contain modern concept of communicative equivalence of the original and the translated texts as a norm of translation accuracy. Modern communicative approach to translation is due to the facts of cross-language communication and translation dominants.

Translating a literary work is undoubtedly a serious challenge and the translator as a "bridge", mediator of two languages and cultures must always try to preserve the quality and nature, as well as the "spirit" of the origina, for he is considered to be the very advocate of the source language author.

There is an everlasting question: Can a translator add something to the original? Yes, indeed. In any translation (literary as well) every phrase or word may be changed to some extent. Every translation is an interpretative act, as well as a creative one. The translators are constantly making choices about which elements of a text to preserve and which to sacrifice.

Translation of literature is basically different from other categories, for the main principle of literary translation is the dominance of poetic communicative function, which means that in addition to rendering information to the reader, literary translation has an aesthetic function as well. The artistic image created in that peculiar text will have an impact on the readership. That's why the literary translator should observe specific features of the given text in detail. It is the poetic focus of the text that makes the translation quite different from other ones. Artistic translations play a significant role in literary translation as the translator's approach to the source information allows him to provide the best quality of the rendered text. It is to be done by a concrete algorithm. The literary translator reads the text through, tries to see its context then allocates individual terms, specific phrases, divides the text into some logical parts and then translates them separately. He should also pay much attention to the pragmatic, communicative and stylistic aspects of the text. It should be mentioned that the context of a text is to be observed and interpreted thoroughly. David Katan states that "All texts need to be read within a context and literary texts excel in exploiting extra-textual references to enhance meaning" [5]. He also states that "Translating the literary text, means first and foremost, sensitivity to the various levels or features in the text, the intended effects on the original reader, and the potential cognitive effects on the target

reader [5]. In his estimation, the literary translator will be listening and looking for evidence of non-casual language, of equivalences, and other extra-contextual associations which can point to a heightened meaning, which the original reader might reasonably be expected to infer [5]. According to Schulte Rainer, "The literary translation bridges the delicate emotional connections between cultures and languages and furthers the understanding of human beings across national borders. In the act of literary translation the soul of another culture becomes transparent, and the translator recreates the refined sensibilities of foreign countries and their people through the linguistic, musical, rhythmic and visual possibilities of new language" [6].

Literary translation always requires exceptional skills, sophistication and special attention to detail. The translator as a co-author must exhibit strengths in creative problem-solving and decision-making in the course of his/her work, making some inevitable changes, but always retaining the author's style and meaning. This is supposed to be the key importance of literary translation.

The main task of literary translation aims at ensuring maximal equivalence with the original and here it's quite important to emphasize the translator's background knowledge of culture and languages. According to the famous scholar Peter Newmark, "A literary translator generally respects good writing by taking into account the language, structures and context, whatever the nature of the text [7].

In brief, despite all the theoretical propositions and conclusions, literary-artistic-aesthetic translation seems to be the most creative, though subjective, and therefore less subject to the regulatory form of translation.

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## Որոշ դիտարկումներ գրական-գեղարվեստական թարգմանության ուշագրավ կողմերի վերաբերյալ

*Ջադիկյան Նինա*

### Ամփոփում

**Հանգուցային բառեր.** *համարժեքություն, լեզվական կառույցներ, ոճական տեսակետ, գեղարվեստական տեքստի թարգմանիչ, հեղինակի ոճ, բնագիր տեքստ, հաղորդակցային մոտեցում, գեղագիտական գործառնություն*

Հոդվածում քննվում են գրական-գեղարվեստական թարգմանության առնչվող մի շարք հարցեր: Գրական-գեղարվեստական թարգմանությունը բարդ գործընթաց է, որում իր կարևոր դերակատարությունն ունի թարգմանիչը՝ որպես միջմշակութային հաղորդակցության մեկնիչ և միջնորդ: Թարգմանության գործընթացում մեծ ուշադրություն է դարձվում համարժեքության խնդրին՝ որպես երաշխավոր բնագիր և թարգմանվող տեքստերի ներդաշնակ համագործակցության:

Գեղարվեստական թարգմանությունը համապարփակ վերլուծության ենթարկելիս խիստ անհրաժեշտ է նաև դիտարկել տեքստի թարգմանչին՝ որպես ստեղծագործ անհատ, բնագիր հեղինակի մտքի մեկնիչ և համահեղինակ:

Գրական որևէ գործ թարգմանելը, անկասկած, լուրջ մարտահրավեր է, և թարգմանիչը՝ որպես երկու լեզուների և մշակույթների կամուրջ-միջնորդ, պետք է մշտապես փորձի պահպանել բնագիր տեքստի որակը և բնույթը, ինչպես նաև ոգին, քանզի հենց ինքն է գիտակցվում բնագիր տեքստի հեղինակի շահերի պաշտպան: Գեղարվեստական ստեղծագործության թարգմանությունը էապես տարբերվում է այլ կարգի թարգմանություններից, քանզի գրական-գեղարվեստական թարգմանության հիմնական սկզբունքը բանաստեղծական-հաղորդակցական գործառնությի գերակայությունն է: Գեղարվեստական թարգմանությունը նաև գեղագիտական գործառնությունի: Հարկ է նշել, որ գեղարվեստական թարգմանությունը պետք է ընդհանուր առմամբ նպաստի երկու լեզուների և մշակույթների լավագույնս իմացությանը, ներկայացմանն ու մերձեցմանը:

Հոդվածում ներկայացված են մի շարք հանրահայտ լեզվաբան-թարգմանաբանների ուշագրավ տեսակետներ գեղարվեստական թարգմանության առանցքային խնդիրների վերաբերյալ:

## Некоторые заметки о занимательных аспектах литературно-художественного перевода

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### Резюме

**Ключевые слова:** эквивалентность, лингвистические структуры, стилистический взгляд, переводчик художественного текста, авторский стиль, оригинальный текст, коммуникационный подход, эстетическая функция

В статье рассматривается ряд занимательных вопросов, связанных с литературно-художественным переводом. Литературно-художественный перевод – сложный процесс, в котором переводчик играет важную роль не только переводчика, но и толкователя межкультурной коммуникации. Процесс перевода фокусируется на задаче эквивалентности как гарантии гармоничного сотрудничества оригинальных и переведенных текстов.

Для всеобъемлющего анализа художественного перевода необходимо также учитывать личность переводчика текста как творческого индивида, как комментатора и соавтора замысла автора оригинала.

Перевод любого литературного произведения, несомненно, является серьезным вызовом, переводчик, будучи мостом-посредником двух языков и двух культур, должен постоянно поддерживать качество и характер исходного текста, а также его дух, потому, что именно он является правозащитником автора оригинального текста.

Перевод литературного произведения существенно отличается от других видов перевода, поскольку основным принципом литературно-художественного перевода является первостепенность поэтически-коммуникативной функции. Художественный перевод имеет еще одну важную функцию – эстетическую. Следует отметить, что художественный перевод в целом должен способствовать представлению, сближению и лучшему познанию двух языков и культур.

В статье представлены замечательные взгляды ряда известных лингвистов-переводчиков по ключевым вопросам художественного перевода.