Literary Translation

الترجمة الادبية

University of Mustansiriyah

College of Arts

Translation Department

Asst. Lecturer: Farah Abbas Abo Al-Timen

4th stage/ Evening classes

Lecture 4: Prose Translation

**Equivalence and Formal Correspondence**

It has been said that there can be no absolute correspondence between languages (Nida, 1964). Since correspondence is "any TL category which may be said to occupy, as nearly as possible, the same place in the economy of the TL as the given SL category occupies in the SL" (Catford 1965). As already mentioned, literary translation is far from literal or word-for-word rendering. The translator's duty is not only to transfer the SL author's ideas but also to take into consideration the style and his structural devices (i.e., figures of speech).

Let us consider the translation-equivalence-conceptnow. The idea strikes between "literal" and "free", "faithful" and "beautiful", "exact" and "natural" translation, depending on whether the preference was to be in favor of the "author" or the "reader", the SL or TL of the text (Newmark, 1988). However, the "dynamic *equivalent* translation" is very important and the translators (particularly Literary-translators) should have a lucid idea about this phenomenon. Eugene A. Nida (1964) argues that the dynamic equivalence in translation is far more than mere correct communication of information. Nida says that the definition of a dynamic *equivalent* translation is to describe it as “the *closest natural* equivalent to the source-language message”. This definition includes three essential terms, namely

1. *Equivalent*, which refers to the source-language message,

2. *Natural,* which refers to the receptor language, and

3. *Closest*, which “binds the two orientations together on the basis of the highest degree of speculation”.

*Natural* indicates three areas of the communication process: a natural description should fit the total receptor language and culture, the context of the specific message, and the receptor-language audience. Therefore, the translation should bear no clear trace of a foreign origin:

*Green leaves and brown leaves fall from the same tree.*

الاوراق الخضراء و البنية تقعان من نفس الشجرة : Literal

إن مع العسر يسرا Literary:

فأن تصاريف الزمان عجيبة .. يوما ترى يسرا و يوما ترى عسرا

In this example equivalence can render to the reader more understanding to the meaning of the sentence than being rendered literally. Since equivalence dose not convey grammar only; but also the semantic meaning hidden within grammar. Equivalence substitutes words with senses relatively matches the SL ones yet preserving the same atmosphere found in the original. This technique is frequently adopted when the content is related to a SL cultural or lexical reference and has no equivalent in the other language. When the translator comes across such a problem of not finding a corresponding TL equivalent, the best method to be followed is to resort to a non-corresponding equivalent function in the TL culture:

*He is as wise as an owl*

حكيم كالبومة

It is noticed from this example that there is a gap between the two languages regarding the cultural aspect of the proverb. In English the word '*owl*' stands for wisdom indicating a positive connotation while in Arabic culture it indicates a negative connotation referring to a 'bad omen'. In this case the translator seeks to substitute the word 'owl' with a symbol of wisdom that has the same impact in Arabic culture:

*حكيم كلقمان*

Such rendering not only provides a complete transmission of the idea of the proverb, but also it functions the same effect on the TL receivers as it does on the SL ones.

References

Catford, J. (1965 ). *A Linguistic. Theory of Translation* . Oxford University Pressز Oxford University Press, .

Newmark, P. (1988). *A Textbook of Translation*. New York & London: Prentice Hall.

Nida, E. (1964). *Towards a Science of Translating. With Special Reference to Principles and Procedures Involved in Bible Translating*. Leiden: E. J. Brill.