Literary Translation

الترجمة الادبية

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4th stage/ Morning and Evening classes

Lecture 9:

Such cases of shift from lexis to grammar are quite frequent in translation between

has as its TL equivalent ]تدور الآن [ these languages. Here the SL lexical item

the grammatical tense [are + -ing].

Category shifts, on the other hand, as mentioned earlier can occur at all ranks (structural, class, unit, or intra-system) such as the following examples:

إلهي الرحيم (qualifier)

(modifier) my compassionate God

The SL [qualifier] structure may have a different TL structure, that is, a [modifier] as a translation equivalent. Since a [qualifier] is a word or phrase that qualifies, limits, or modifies the meaning of another word or phrase and a [modifier] is a word or group of words that describes a noun phrase or restricts its meaning in some way (Crystal, 2003: 297-382), it is an optional shift to use one of them instead of the other. Hence, there is no harm in this choice. Another example of structural shifts is the active voice and passive voice. The translator chose to transfer the active voice structure into a passive voice structure:

و قد تكون من بعدي صلوات يتلوها الرهبان (active voice)

(passive voice) prayers might be recited by monks

The active voice here is optionally transferred into passive voice since English language tends to use passive voice more frequently than it is in Arabic. The writer didn't use active voice to stress some important information so the translator did not affect the style in changing it into a passive voice. The same thing is for an [adjective] to be transferred into a [noun] or transferred into [preposition + noun] as it is shown below, which is a change of class:

البدايات متداخلة (Adjective)

(Verb) Beginnings overlap

إن يدي ترتعشان رهبة (adjective)

(preposition + noun) My hands tremble with fear

Class-shift, then, occurs when the translation equivalent of an SL item [e.g. Verb] is a member of a different class from the original item [e.g. Adjective]. It is clear from the above examples that structure-shifts usually entail class-shifts for example, in the examples given above, the Arabic nominal structure is transferred into English as a [Subject + Verb] structure or an [Adjective] structure is transferred into a [Preposition + Noun] structure.

As for Unit-shift, the changes are in rank, i.e., departures from formal correspondence in which the translation equivalent of a unit at one rank in the SL is a unit at a different rank in the TL. Changes of rank (unit-shifts) are by no means the only changes of this type which occur in translation:

كي (one word)

(three words –conjunction) in order to

طالما (word)

for so long (phrase)

وريقات (one word)

(phrase) Little pieces of papers

مناجاتي (word)

(phrase) my secret conversations

The type of unit-shifts that is detected in the above examples is a shift from [one word] to a [phrase/ or more than one word]. In all these examples the shifts are 'obligatory' since all the source words' meanings have more than one word in the TL ] which has a one word meaning in the وريقات[ except for that of

TT: [leaflet] but the translator 'optionally' chose instead to use the phrase [little pieces of papers] and since it is a synonymy for [leaflet], this choice did not affect the style.

As for intra-system shifts, the shift occur internally, within a system; i.e., for those cases where SL and TL possess systems which approximately correspond formally as to their grammatical constitution [articles and number]. For example, Arabic and English possess different formally corresponding systems of number and articles:

إن يديَ ترتعشان (number: dual)

My hands (number: plural)

الهي الرحيم (definite article)

(indefinite article) my compassionate God

البداية و النهاية (definite)

(indefinite) Beginnings and endings

آثام (plural)

(singular) sin

It has been found that the English translations preserved the meaning and sustained the quality of the ST message. It is with changes of these types, which is referred to as 'category-shifts', are assumed to achieve some degree of formal correspondence between SL and TL; indeed this is the main justification for the recognition of formal correspondence in this theory. Category-shifts are departures from formal correspondence in translation. (Catford, 2000: 143).

4.2.2 Analysis of Baker's Model

Another pair of translation shift procedures is Baker's omission vs. addition. Both are a frequent phenomenon in translation that occur with (connectives). Omission is occurred depending on whether the information in the SL can or cannot be retrieved from the TT context as shown in the following examples:

إن يدي ترتعشان رهبة و خيفة

(omission) My hands tremble with fear

The translator preferred to omit the two words above with one word. This choice is optional and it shows that the translator here kept the original style preserved since both words in Arabic mean a "source of fear". While in the next examples, the translator chose to make some additions of lexical markers of connective ties to explain the original by providing more information that are not present in the ST. These additions are understandably justified in order to avoid stylistic lexical repetition in the TL to make the translation readable smoothly and uninterrupted:

الرحمة يا إلهي

I beg your mercy, O God

[I beg your mercy] instead of saying: [O mercy, O God]

فالبداية و النهاية, إنما تكونان في الخط المستقيم

After all, beginnings and endings are only found on straight lines

باطني

my inner being

ابتهالاتي التي تقربني أليك

the supplication by which I draw nearer to you

و قد تكون من بعدي صلوات..

In the hope that after I pass away, my prayers might be..

Translating Arabic coordinate connecters into English may favor subordinate structures ([after all], [being] and [in the hope that]). Such preferring would make the sentences more cohesive and stylistically more elegant. Also the use of the particle [would that I] for [يا ليتني] in an interrogative rather than mere modulation is another lexical marker of addition:

يا ليتني لم أولد اصلا, أو ليتني مت في طفولتي من دون آثام

Would that I have never been born. Or would that I had died in infancy, without sin,

Obviously, the degree of accuracy requires the translator to add these connectives and the English readership is expected to appreciate them.

The last shift analyzed is the semantic shift. This shift in style has been rated first in the translation of these paragraphs in which the translator opted for giving priority to the style of the SL and chooses a style as close as possible to that found in the ST:

يا الهي, أتسمعني؟

O my God, do Thou hear me?

أنا عبدك المخلص

I am Thy faithful

A higher formality is adopted by lexical selection of [Thou, Thy] instead of [You, Your]. This substitution leads to render the same level of importance of the prayer found in the ST and the translation sounds acceptable. The same holds true for the

] that are rendered into [Father, Heavens]:سموات, أباناthe words [

يا أبانا في السموات

O Father, in Heaven

] سكينة[ In the third paragraph, the translator rendered the word

into [church] while in the fourth paragraph she renders it into its original meaning [peace]:

شموع السكينة

Church candles

نعمت فيه بالسكينة

blessed with inner peace

Both renderings reflect the translator's optional smart choice since the translator’s choice has to be built upon specific goals and dimensions; type of text, focus point and interest and the possibility of similar syntactic system between the ST and the TT (Nida, 1964: 165).