Novel Translation Date: 12, June, 2020

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عزازيل

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الرحمة يا إلهي. و العفو يا أبانا في السماوات. ارحمني و اعفُ عني, فإني كما تعلم ضعيف. يا إلهي الرحيم, إن يديَ ترتعشان رهبة و خيفة. تعلم أنني اقتنيت هذه الرقوق قبل سنين, من نواحي البحر الميت, كي اكتب فيها أشعاري و مناجاتي لك في خلوتي, و كنت قد نويت أن أدون فيها ابتهالاتي التي تقربني إليك, و قد تكون من بعدي صلوات يتلوها الرهبان و أهل الصوامع الأتقياء في كل زمان و مكان.

I beg your mercy, O God. I beg your mercy and pardon, O father in Heaven have mercy on me and pardon me, for as you know, I'm weak. O compassionate God, my hands tremble with fear. You know that I obtained these parchments some years ago from the region surrounding the Dead Sea. In order to record my poetry and my secret conversations with you in times of solitude. I had intended to write down in these parchments the supplication by which I draw nearer to you, in the hope that after I pass away, my prayers might be recited by monks and devout hermits in every time and place.

Translation Analysis:

This text reflects many examples of translation shifts (Catford's Shifts: structural, class, unit and intra-system) which are quite common in the translation process between English and Arabic. For example there is the level shift -shift from grammar to lexis and vice-versa – that is quite common and can be seen most clearly in the past (past perfect tense):

(lexis)كنت قد نويت

(grammar: past perfect) I had intended

Also the source language [qualifier] structure may have a different target language 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 as it is shown in the following example:

(qualifier) إلهي الرحيم

(modifier) my compassionate God

Another example of shifts is the structural shift (a shift in the syntactic order of the sentence) that can be seen in active voice and passive voice:

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

(passive voice) prayers might be recited by monks

The active voice is transferred into passive voice since English language tends to use passive voice more frequently than it is in Arabic.

Class-shift, on the other hand, occurs when the translation equivalent of a source language item [e.g. Verb] is a member of a different class from the original item [e.g. Adjective]. The same thing applies for an [adjective] to be transferred into a [noun] or transferred into [preposition + noun] as it is shown below:

(adjective) إن يدي ترتعشان رهبة

(preposition + noun) My hands tremble with fear

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 source language is a unit at a different rank in the target language. Look at the following exampes:

(one word) كي

(three words –conjunction) in order to

(word) طالما

(phrase) for so long

(one word) وريقات

(phrase) Little pieces of papers

(word) مناجاتي

(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 target language except for that of [وريقات] which has a one word meaning in the target language: [leaflet] but the translator 'optionally' choses to use the phrase [little pieces of papers] and since it is a synonymy for [leaflet], this choice does 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:

(number: dual) إن يديَ ترتعشان

(number: plural) My hands

(definite article) الهي الرحيم

(indefinite article) my compassionate God

(definite) البداية و النهاية

(indefinite) Beginnings and endings

(plural) آثام

(singular) sin

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

إن يدي ترتعشان رهبة و خيفة

(omission) My hands tremble with fear

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 source text. These additions are understandably justified in order to avoid stylistic lexical repetition in the target language 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]

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..

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 source text and the translation sounds acceptable. The same holds true for the words: سموات, أبانا that are rendered into [Father, Heavens].

يا أبانا في السموات

O Father, in Heaven