STYLISTICS PROBLEMS IN TRANSLATION

Egamberdiyev Jasur *- teacher of Andijan State Institute of Foreign Languages.*
Asirdinova Zulayho *the 301- guide followship and translation theory student of Andijan State Institute of Foreign Languages.*

Abstract: This paper deals with stylistic problems of translation and offers modest solutions to each. Among the semantic problems discussed are homonymy; polysemy; and little knowledge of semantic change and its types including semantic generalization, specification, melioration and pejoration. The stylistic problems offered include: clarity, ellipsis, redundancy and extraposition. As regards the cultural problems discussed, they cover the problems underlying the translation of idioms, proverbs and culture-bound words.

Key words: stylistic problems of translation, clarity, ellipsis redundancy, extraposition, stylistic features of translation.

Stylistic problems of translation may be approached from several angles: styles of language, their peculiarities, their goals and their interrelation; stylistic meaning of words; stylistic devices, their nature and structure, their expressive function; foregrounding of linguistic means for stylistic purposes and its attention-compelling function. The translation of texts belonging to different functional styles of the language presents a vast comprehensive problem. A style of language is dependent upon the sphere of communication and the aim of communication which determine the peculiar choice of language means. These means are interrelated and form a system is characteristic of each style. Texts belonging to different styles of language possess distinctive stylistic features and thus are easily recognizable although they may to some extent vary from language to language. These features can be classified as leading or subordinate, obligatory or optional. The leading or dominant features form a common core in the S and T languages. They are reflected in the composition of each text, in its syntactic structure, in the choice of linguistic means and stylistic devices. The same means naturally occur in different styles but their use and functions are differences.

Since translation is a process of constant search for the transfer of a message from the Source Language (SL) into the Target Language (TL), it is often beset by many problems and difficulties that may be a result of the differences in both languages or differences in the cultures represented by them. Among the linguistic problems touched upon in this paper are some of the semantic and stylistic problems that face any translator of any text. There is also an attempt to shed light on some cultural problems that may be more likely to be encountered and more dangerous. First, the problem is

decided upon, many examples from different texts in general and the Holy Bible and the Glorious Qur'ân in particular are given, and the solution is finally suggested. The Glorious Qur'ân examples necessitate offering different translations of their meanings. The translations utilized are those attempted by Muhammad Marmaduke Pickthall, 'Abdullâh Yûsuf 'Alî, Arthur John Arberry and Muhammad Mahmûd.

Style plays an important role in translation and may cause many problems. While much attention is paid to the content of the Source Text (ST), style is often neglected, though important, especially in literary and religious texts. Style refers to the form in which a text is molded. It is the way a speaker or writer expresses himself/herself. Abrams suggests that the characteristic style of a writer may be analyzed in terms of its diction, or choice of words; its sentence structure and syntax; the density and types of its figurative language; the patterns of its rhythm, component sounds; … and its rhetorical aims and devices. (1981: 191) Style, furthermore, varies according to receptors. An editorial about bird flu, for example, is supposed to be generally written in a simple informative style so that it can cater to the tastes and culture levels of all potential readers. If it is written in a technical style, there is a very little chance that it will be read, let alone understood, except by specialists. However, a guide of instructions about bird flu symptoms addressed to specialists in medicine is expected to be written in a technical style. Due to the paramount importance of style in translation, Nida and Taber define translation as a process consisting in "reproducing in the receptor language [TL] the closest natural equivalent of the source-language message, first in meaning and secondly in style" (1969: 12). This definition clearly shows the importance of style in translation, especially in literary and religious texts that aim at conveying a message and, at the same time, producing an effect on their receptors through the use of a special style. In this case, style is not a linguistic ornament. Rather, it is "an essential part of the very act of translating… without which the translation ceases to be a translation in the full sense of the word" (Zaky 2006)

Religious texts in general offer more elaborate stylistic problems in translation. This is owing to the fact that they are addressed to different receptors, thus requiring various styles matching each group (Chatzitheodorou 2006). The Glorious Qur'ân in particular depends on many styles in conveying its message: historical narrative, didactic, argumentative, literary, persuasive, etc. (Mir 2006). These various styles make translating the Glorious Qur'ân a hard task to carry out. However, a translator of a sacred text in general and the Glorious Qur'ân in particular should not pay attention to style at the cost of meaning. Clarity is one of the stylistic priorities in any sound translation. To achieve clarity, any translation should avoid ambiguity, unless intended by the ST author (e.g. political texts), as much as possible, in all its aspects: lexical, syntactic, semantic and stylistic. Indeed, clarity is a guarantee of intelligibility, which is the ultimate goal behind translation.

Ellipsis poses a special stylistic problem in translation. Ellipsis, according to As-Sâmirâ'î (2006), refers to the omission of some parts of a sentence which can be understood either from the surrounding text or the situation itself. It is sometimes used to avoid repetition. The aim behind using ellipsis may be to urge receptors to participate in understanding the text rather than having a negative stance by merely receiving it passively. Ellipsis poses a problem in translation since the translator is faced with an incomplete text and, therefore, should know the missing parts, restructure the ST and, then, begin to translate it. The missing parts, especially on translating a sacred text, may be interpreted in various ways, thus complicating the translator's task more and more. Arabic in particular depends much on ellipsis. Therefore, in translating from Arabic into English, a great care should be taken to make the implicit in Arabic explicit in English (Massoud 1988: 23).

Redundancy is the opposite of ellipsis. It is a rhetorical device depending on repeating the same meaning by using different words acting as synonyms. It may also be represented by using superfluous words that do not add anything new to the meaning already conveyed before (As-Sâmirâ'î 2006). In English, for instance, expressions like PIN number and new beginning are considered redundant. This is due to the fact that N in the expression PIN number refers to the word number. So, there is no need to repeat it. New beginning is also redundant since any beginning is always new. In Arabic, furthermore, an expression like سد⬜لرئي رارت⬜ماو⬜ب ب ا ب ⬜ ⬜ الأس ن⬜ ⬜ ع ًا⬜⬜حٮ bahthan 'an al-'asbâbi wal-mubarirâti ar-ra'îsati is a redundant one since باب⬜⬜سأ 'asbâb has the same meaning of تارب⬜م mubarirât. Since redundancy in these examples does not have a rhetorical purpose, it is considered a rhetorical defect. Extraposition is another stylistic problem in translation. It refers to The process or result of moving an element from its normal position to a position at or near the end of the sentence, e.g. That the boy came in late upset the teacher, compared with It upset the teacher that the boy came in late. (Crystal 1991: 131) Arabic is a greatly extrapositive language, employing many forms of extraposition with rhetorical purposes.

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