

Problems and strategies of translating Gogol's Шинель (Shinel) from Russian and English versions into Kurdish

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Abstract

Over the past centuries, defining translation has been a debatable topic among scholars. Translation is defined as the method of transference and replacement of the meaning of source language (SL) into the target language (TL), however, an authenticated translation is thought to be more than transference, and more interrelated to the reproduction of closest equivalence of the SL text into TL text. Hence, due to distinctive types of translation, the main objective of the present paper is to avoid any diffusion during the translation of “*Shinel*”. The researcher attempts to translate the book based on three rules that Munday (2001:26) believes any translation should undergo, which all is to transcribe ‘the complete idea’ of the original work, ‘the style and manner’ of the source text, and the ‘ease of the original composition’. Nevertheless, having different audiences, this paper argues that the source text needs to be translated in different ways.

Keywords: *translation, literal translation, semantic translation, communicative translation, paraphrase, Шинель*

Introduction

Translation has been playing an instrumental role to combine the old times to the modern times. During the Medieval Period, it enriched the art and culture of the west Europe. In England due to learning/studying Latin and Greek as the second languages in schools, the literature of Greek and Rome had great impacts on the English language and culture. Even in contemporary literature, the translation of classic works has its own significance, and so as to stand out more impressive they are proudly translated by prestigious poets and authors (Wurya, 2005:15). Even though great authors such as Shelly, Pope, Chapman, and Butler had translated Homer's Iliad, lately literature committees and translation experts have praised the efforts of Richard Lattimore for his encouragement to translating the Iliad once again (Janko, 1990:328). In other words, despite the cultural flow on translation, the translation tasks in west Europe were more involved in classic works and religious texts. These two still are more significantly considered rather than other works (Wurya, 2005:16).

For translating *Shinel*, the researcher has firstly used the English versions, then after learning the Russian language, the revised Kurdish translated version is compared to the Russian. Due to the difference and distinction of each regarding to language and culture, some problems have been faced through the process which are going to be demonstrated at the levels of grammar, lexis, style, and phonology.

Types of Translation

According to experts, there are several translation methods such as literal translation, semantic translation, communicative translation, and paraphrase (Ghazala, 2006; Munday, 2008; Anderman and Rogers, 2003), where each has its own usage.

Literal translation is the rendering of linguistic structure of SL to TL. This process is more useful for experts studying linguistics (Ali, 2004). For instance, the meaning of '*the grey Petersburg sky is completely overcast*' is not much important for a linguist than its syntactic structure. Another technique which is much commonly used (Ali, 2004) is semantic translation. This type, as tends to be more informative than effective, concentrates particularly on author than to be 'reader-centred' (Newmark, 1991: 11). Therefore the religious texts, such as Koran, are translated in this way. Whereas, in communicative translation, the translator feels free how the original text is translated as long as s/he is faithful with the SL and the meaning is stable. The translator, in order to make the TL effective, can omit or add phrases in the process and sometime is allowed to correct the mistakes of the origin (Newmark, 1991). Some contexts, such as stories for children and texts for specific group, are translated in this way when the message is more important than the meaning.

Another technique where the translator needs to give explanation and the TL text is expanded is called paraphrase (Munday, 2009: 214). Certain texts as old and poetic texts need to be rendered in that way (Molina and Albir, 2002: 508). For example, again in *Shinel*, 'пряжку в петлицу' (word-by-word meaning is buckle in his buttonhole) is translated in English target version as 'a buckle in his buttonhole' or 'a horse in a mill' which both are wrong as the phrase needs explanation.

Analysis

In this essay, I compare the English translations with Kurdish, but in certain situations, while the original Russian text desirable, I used it also. Then the barriers could be overcome through different techniques that has been introduced by translation scholars.

The first problem the researcher encountered to translate was the title of the book *Шинель /Shinel'*. In English versions, it is translated into *The overcoat*, or *The Cloak*, which both in the light of explanations are wrong. Due to lexical restrictions, the word has to be transliterated. *Shinel* is not an ordinary overcoat but a kind of military overcoat that Russians wear to protect themselves against the regular winter cold weather exists in Russia. The whole

story is about this *Shinel*, so in my translation, the word is transliterated and in the introduction of the book a brief explanation is written about.

The second barrier that confronted was the word *baptised* in:

- “..made all due arrangements for having the child baptised.”

Almost all Kurdish people are Muslims, due to cultural and religious differences; the sentence is translated through communicative translation, where the translator can add information or explanation to transfer the meaning. Hence, in a clause, a different technique of translation is used which is called amplification; which is defining the process of *baptism*.

Another obstacle that a translator faces is when proper, geographical, or unfamiliar names are found in the SL text, and they play a significant role in the story. Here, the translator can explain them in a footnote (Newmark, 1998: 22). In this case, I have used footnoting for *Hozdadat* and *Falconet monument*.

However, the most problematic issue in translation is to transfer the culture of the original or find equivalence in the TL culture (Ghazala, 2006: 195). In *Shinel* as the cultures of Russian, English and Kurdish are dissimilar from each other several examples confronted. In the following examples, the original text with my translation and explanation for each is given:

- ‘..he ought at least to stand them all a supper.’

‘..debwaya belayani kemewe de’wetyanbikat.’

(he ought to at least invite them (for lunch))

In Kurdish culture, if someone has bought a new outstanding thing, he is intentionally supposed to invite some close friends, but not for *dinner* nor *supper*. Culturally, since *lunch* is the major meal in Kurdish, so the invitation is meant to be *lunch*, or the invitation needs to be domesticated to something that relates to evening situations, as the story of *Shinel* concerns more about the night time where in a dark place the main actor faces lethal attack. Another similar difference with a word can be found in this instance:

- ‘..the devil knows what price he would be ready to lay on.’

‘..her Xuda dezanët dawai çend dekat.’

(just God knows how much he asks)

The problem appears here is the translating *devil* into *God*. The religious, which is Islamic, understanding is implied almost in all aspects of life. For Kurdish, just *God* is able to know all good and evil deeds of the people. In Kurdish culture *devil* is a bad, tricky creature, but is unable to foresee or predict what bad happens next in the sense of Knowing. So transferring the SL text into TL literally or semantically translated gives a blasphemy sense.

- ‘..they opened the calendar..’

In Russian culture possibly in that time, which was in 19th century, so as to name the new born, the baby was named after a famed or prominent person. Whereas, Kurdish find or create a new word to name their children. Therefore, in the Kurdish version, I paraphrased the sentence by adding some extra information and explicated as the following:

‘..wek neritêki ew kate, bo ewi nawi kesêki nawdar la mindalekanyan binên, rojîmêrekeyan kirdewe..’

(habitually, so as to name their children after a famed person, they opened the calendar)

- ‘The porters [...] took no more notice of him than if a simple fly had flown across the vestibule.’

Here, there seems a metaphoric expression is uttering, and if a metaphor is “interpreted literally it would be grammatically deviant, semantically anomalous, conceptually absurd, or simply false” (Gibbs, 1992: 578). While this sentence in Kurdish sounds meaningless, through the method of concentration, its stylistic expression has been transferred into:

‘..wek bîlêy kîze bayekîşî nehatîbêt..’

(as even no wind blows in)

As translating and finding equivalences to metaphors from source language and culture to the target "may be hampered by linguistic and cultural differences" (Schaffner, 2004). Thus sometimes the style of the clause needs to be replaced by a clause without meaning alteration. Munday believes translation is the transferring SL sense to TL sense (2008: 20), hence, for the sense that 'when a door is opened and someone comes in, the wind from outside creeps into'. So the Kurdish sense in this situation is that 'the door even is closed and 'the porters took no notice as the wind from outside even didn't blow (and creeping into)''.

- 'Here is an interesting, nice little case,'

Ghazala accepts that one of the most difficult styles in translation process is to identify the irony style in the original and find a replacement in the TL (2006: 265). This sentence is an irony, more specific sarcastic expression, which translating into Kurdish language needs, as usual, adding other word(s) or phrase(s) to give the exact original meaning and taste. So the Kurdish version is:

'Legel dawai leburdînêki zorewe, 'aletêki xoş kewte rêtan'

(with all our apologies, here's an interesting, nice little case)

Semantically translating the sentence above, without adding any clause in Kurdish version, the language cannot denote any sarcastic sense.

Relating to culture, another sentence that required more challenge was:

- но выслужил он пряжку [...] в петлицу да нажил геморрой в поясицу

English version: '...but all he gained in the service [...] was a buckle in his buttonhole and a pain in his back'

Another English: 'But he worked [...] the wits, put it, like a horse in a mill.'

The both English interpretations for the original are assumably wrong, because there is a cultural background about the original Russian phrase *пряжку* (a buckle). In the 19th century, the time this story is written, government used to award a *buckle* to those had had 10 years of service in an office. While the first English sentence means that 'He serves hunched that tangles his shirt button in his belt buckle', and the second English means that 'he works unthinkingly and submissively in a repetitious role'. Here, the original sentence signifies as it is translated into Kurdish:

'.. belam leşwên ew xîzmete (zorei) ke kirdîbwi تنها xalatêkbw kembayah, çîge le jani pişt, hiç şitêkitri bo nehêştîbowe.'

(but in return to his (long) service, it was just a conventional award which left him back pain, nothing more)

Another problem that I firstly translated from English, and figured it out in the Russian is related to the grammatical restrictions. The singular and plural of second person in English is 'you', while in Russian the second person singular is *ты* /ty/ and second person plural is *вы* /vy/. Also, Kurdish has the same Russian syntactic category for pronoun 'you', which for the second person singular is *to* and for the second person plural is *ewe*. While *you* in 'Why do you insult me?' is plural, but the next sentence that comes after in the context 'I am your brother' the possessive *you* in the Russian original is singular.

Due to the lexical restrictions in the TL, some certain fixed phrases such as collocations, idioms, or proverbs when I could not find Kurdish equivalence, I have made use of different methods for each as followings:

- It threw him into a regular perspiration.

Lenêw aw u areqi hênabw.

(it put him into water and sweat)

- The grey Petersburg sky is completely overcast

Reng mîrduiy asmani Piterburg kaldebowe

(the death colour sky of Petersburg washed-out)

And sometimes, even it is difficult to recognize idioms; it is also problematic to find the exact equivalence in TL (Baker, 2011: 69) as:

- Simple-hearted

Dîl-saf

(clean-heart)

Another fixed phrase that in both Russian and Kurdish looks similar where in English is different is:

- арбузные и дынные корки

(.....) melon rinds

Pelke şifti u gîndore

(watermelon and melon rinds)

One of other problem categories that appeared through the process is at the level of grammar, namely passivation and pluralisation. In Kurdish literature, it seems weird if a reader sees first person singular/plural in the text; therefore, I handled them and picked up some here:

- ‘I must observe that Akaky Akakyevitch’s overcoat..’

‘Debêt eweş bigutrêt ke şinêlekei Akaky Akakyevitê..’

(it must be observed that Akaky Akakyevitch’s Shinel..’

- ‘I cannot tell how it happened..’

‘Esteme bedeqiqewe bigwtrêt ke..’

(is seemed difficult to precisely say that)

Consistent with pluralisation, when things are talked in general, the noun (phrase) is always used in plural; conversely, in Kurdish syntax in order to talk about general idea/information, the ideas/information supposedly need to be singular agent.

‘..filled the kitchen with smoke that you could not even see the black beetles.’

‘..dukeleki le nandineke helhênabw, sisrik têida bızirdabw.’

(filled the kitchen, if cockroach was here, could be unseen)

In the Russian text, the plural agent is used which is *тараканов* /tarakanov/. But, in accordance with its meaning, predominantly *таракан* is a cockroach than to be a black beetle; henceforward the meaning in the Kurdish version stayed the same. Nonetheless, if in Kurdish the same agent pluralised as it is in both Russian and English, the meaning in Kurdish would totally lose its sense:

‘..dukeleki le nandineke helhênabw, sisrikekan têida bızirdabwn.’

(filled the kitchen, if cockroaches were here, could be unseen)

The sentence is meant that ‘there are always cockroaches around (and all people witness about it), but now and at the moment because of the smoke, no one can see them.’

Another lexical problem is when the TL lacks the SL cultural unfamiliar items and the transliteration of them is still obscure for the target audience, I borrowed them but made a footnote for such words like ‘whist’ and ‘galoshes’. Even though, sometimes a translator is allowed to neutralize culture-specific content, I used *kopek*, which is the Russian currency, as it is original, behind the reason of familiarising the target reader to some cultural backgrounds about the source of the original text.

The last problem that the sentence syntactically itself gives a vague meaning, and was difficult to be understood, I tried to get rid of any translation mistakes, therefore, the sentence is translated in the literal method.

‘..but [he] ate it all up together with the flies.’

‘..belam gîştî şitekani legel meş u megezda firkîrd.’

(but [he] ate all of them with fly and gnat)

The obscurity is that the sentence gives two meanings; one can mean 'he ate it all up while flies were inside the [soup], or it can denote that 'he ate it all up while flies were flying around the [room] [as the place was dirty].

Conclusion

This paper has attempted to present that Gogol's 'Shinel' is an appropriate example of translation studies. The different types of translation, namely literal translation, semantic translation, communicative translation, and paraphrase, are practical in examining the story. The aim of this study was to shed light on what type of translation translators need to apply during translating literary texts. Through analysing 'Shinel', this paper has shown that different problems at different levels, such as, of grammar, lexis, style, and phonology occur when only one type of translation is made use of. Therefore, the research demonstrates that to have an authentic version of TL, a mixed strategy has to be applied for each single sentence. It can be concluded that the mixed approach for translating literary texts would provide a more comprehensive version of target language.

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نیکۆلای گوگۆل، شینیل، وەرگێرانی رۆژگار یوسف عمر

هه‌ندی له‌گرفت و رینگاکانی وه‌رگێرانی چیرۆکی 'شینیل' له‌نوسینی گوگۆل له‌ زمانه‌کانی روسی و ئینگلیزیه‌وه
بۆ زمانی کوردی

پوخته

له‌ سه‌ده‌کانی رابردوودا، پیناسه‌کردنی وه‌رگێرانی بووه‌ته‌ بابه‌تیکی گه‌رم له‌لایه‌ن شاره‌زایانی وه‌رگێرانه‌وه. وه‌رگێرانی پیناسه‌ ده‌کریت وه‌ک گواستنه‌وه و شوپندانانی واتای زمانی یه‌که‌م بۆ زمانی دووهم، به‌لام وه‌رگێرانیکی راسته‌قینه‌ زیاتر له‌ گواستنه‌وه‌ی واتا ده‌زانریت و په‌یوه‌سه‌ته‌ زیاتر به‌ به‌رهمه‌پینانه‌وه‌ی نزیکتیرین واتا له‌ زمانی یه‌که‌مه‌وه بۆ زمانی دووهم. بۆیه، به‌هۆی جووره‌ جیاوازه‌کانی وه‌رگێرانه‌وه، مه‌به‌ستی سه‌ره‌کی ئه‌م توێژینه‌وه‌یه‌ بریتیه‌ له‌ دوورکه‌وتنه‌وه‌ له‌ هه‌ر ناروونیه‌ک له‌ کاتی وه‌رگێرانی 'شینیل'. توێژه‌ر هه‌وڵی وه‌رگێرانی چیرۆکه‌که‌ ده‌دات له‌سه‌ر بنه‌مای ئه‌و سێ یاسایانه‌ی که‌ 'موندای' (٢٦:٢٠٠١) پێیوايه‌ ده‌بیت هه‌ر وه‌رگێرانیکی پشتی پێبه‌ستیت، که‌ گشتیان ده‌بیت 'بیرۆکه‌ی گشت'ی زمانی ره‌سه‌ن، شیواز و ره‌وت'ی زمانی زمانی یه‌که‌م، و 'ساده‌ی داپشتی زمانی یه‌که‌م' تۆماربکری. له‌گه‌ڵ ئه‌وه‌شدا، به‌هه‌بوونی خوێنه‌ری جیاواز، ئه‌م توێژینه‌وه‌یه‌ نیشانداده‌ت که‌ زمانی یه‌که‌م پێویسته‌ به‌ رینگای جیاواز وه‌رگێردریت.

ووشه‌ سه‌ره‌کیه‌کان: وه‌رگێرانی، وه‌رگێرانی وشه‌-بۆ-وشه‌، وه‌رگێرانی مانایی، وه‌رگێرانی واتایی، لیکدانه‌وه،

Шинель

بعض مشاكل وستراتيجيات الترجمة من غوغل (شینیل) من الإصدارات الروسية والأنگلیزية الي الكوردية

نبذة مختصرة

على مر القرون الماضية، كان تعريف الترجمة موضوعاً للنقاش بين العلماء. وتعرف الترجمة كوسيلة للنقل واستبدال معنى لغة المصدر (م) الى اللغة المطلوبة (ل م)، مع ذلك، يعتقد الترجمة موثوقة على ان تكون أكثر من نقل، وأكثر صلةً الى الأستنساخ من اللغة المصدر الى اللغة المطلوبة وبالتالي، نظراً لأنواع المميزات للترجمة. الهدف الرئيسي لهذه الورقة هو لتجنب أي نشر خلال ترجمة (شینیل)، يحاول الباحث في ترجمة الكتاب الأعتماذ ثلاث قواعد موندای (٢٦:٢٠٠١) يجب ان تخضع لها كل ترجمة، والتي هي عبارة عن وصف شامل عن العمل الأصلي، "الأسلوب والطريقة" من النص المصدر، و"سهولة التركيب الأصلي"، مع ذلك، "وجود جماهير مختلفة"، وتقول هذه الصحيفة أن مصدر النص يحتاج إلى ان يترجم بطرق مختلفة.

كلمات البحث: الترجمة، الترجمة الحرفية، الترجمة الدلالية، الترجمة التواصلية، إعادة صياغة التعبير،