

# **Obstacles To Literary Translation: Challenges and Choices**

**Pycaam Abbasi\***

**Hossein Vahid Dastjerdi\***

## **Abstract:**

The translator of a literary text has to observe the semantic sense of the words, the weight, the cultural setting, and other technical features of the original text to yield an acceptable translation in the TL. The accomplishment however is not that easy, for the translator meets some major impediments in performing the task. A translator who is familiar with different critical approaches, a translator needs to, first, interpret the text and then see how the message can be conveyed in the TL, from which the reader is likely to elicit the same interpretation. Being open to interpretation on different levels, a literary text challenges the translator who has to explore the true meaning and reshape it in another system. The translator of a literary text should also interpret the text according to the cultural setting it was written in. The dominant ideology of the time does not leave literature unaffected and much of the semantic weight of the text might have been shaped accordingly. The style and structure of a literary text are different from those of the ordinary language because the intentions lying behind them are different and each style is correspondent with the purpose of the writer. Finding proper equivalences is of great importance. Due to the sundry implications and connotations words

---

\* Lecturer at the University of Isfahan, Faculty of Foreign Languages

\* Assistant Professor at the University of Isfahan, Faculty of Foreign languages

have, translators of literary texts need to find equivalences that are the most precise and capable of conveying the implied meanings. Sincere attempt is needed to transfer culture-bound idioms and proverbs from SL to TL. Literary texts are abundant with idioms and proverbs that are meaningful in the context of the culture they are part of. With all such things in mind, a satisfactory literary translation should crave creativity and knowledge on the side of the translator if the unity and pleasure of literary texts is to be kept and conveyed.

**Key Words:** Literary translation, Language, Cultural setting, Style, Equivalence, Idiom, Creativity.

### **1. Introduction:**

To translate a literary text with the view to convey its message undistorted has always been a matter of concern to translators. What literary translators are after is yielding a translation in which the techniques, beauty, meaning, and the form of the original text have been observed; what makes the task a real challenge. It is agreed upon that word-for-word translation is of no use especially when it comes to literary texts and meaning-for-meaning translation—which is undoubtedly preferred—is likely to yield a not-beautiful translation. The semantic sense of the words, the weight, time, tone, and the setting in which the text was written are important and add to the complexity of the task. Not ruining the meaning while observing the beauty, balance, and elegance of the text is the real challenge for literary translators.

With regard to the specific definition of Literature applied to writings that communicate life and experience, a literary text finds

many features and tends to change a lot from the ordinary language. The ordinary language with the purpose of communicating every day facts differs from novels, poems, plays, and other literary genres, which present, in symbolic form, the desires, wishes, and aspirations of human beings, in close relation with their lives. In order to express something different, a different language with idiosyncratic characteristics is needed and that is the literary language.

From period to period, every society undergoes many changes and the dominant ideology, different from the previous, changes as well which does not leave the language unaffected. The change shows itself, strikingly, in the canon of literature, which gives birth to the emergence of sundry critical looks at language and literature. This results in the variant interactions between the three sides of the triangle of author, reader, and text. Accordingly, the translator's degree of loyalty may vary from one to another yet there exist shared problems with regard to each. This study is an attempt to shed light on some major problems and obstacles translators confront in translating literary texts, regardless of whether the author, the text, or the reader is focused. The literary text, though many have claimed otherwise, is not untranslatable provided that the translator is armed with a good knowledge of literary schools to grasp the meaning of the text as well as creativity to render literary masterpieces. "The evidence of past masterly achievements [in this respect] indicates that a skilled translator with a poetic taste can achieve [the] ... end with the necessary literary features and devices of the source text kept intact" (Vahid 2004, 3).

## **2. Obstacles to Literary Translation**

## **2.1. A General View of Literary Translation and Significance of the Literary Text**

Appropos of literary translation many theories have been proposed and some have been preferred to others. However, no single theory seems to be paying-off enough to displace others. Therefore, many translators espouse the idea that an eclectic approach works much better than sticking to one specific theory. Clifford E. Landers is one of those who in his influential book *Literary Translation, A Practical Guide* (2001), mentions the difficulties of literary translation with a look at the issues involved in such a craft. The major reason the eclectic approach is preferred is that texts have influence on each other and a translator dealing with a literary text, prior to anything, should be aware of the influence of writers and texts upon each other. Julia Kristeva has a notion of "intertextuality" and sees a nexus between all texts. She believes that no text can remain unaffected by other texts the idea of which reminds us of what Harold Bloom, a critic and historian of literature, coined: "The Anxiety of Influence," i.e., to emphasize the influence of writers on each other. He believes that later authors are influenced by the form and style of an earlier writer. The influence is "inescapable" and involves "a drastic distortion of the work of a predecessor" (Abrams 239-40). The same is viewed to be the case with different texts regarded as being translations of translations. Although there are different texts such as technical, legal, or medical, the main emphasis is laid on literary texts and their influences on each other.

The other point with regard to the systematic way of translating a text is that in each period of time the degree of loyalty with regard to interpretation and translation of literary texts varies regarding the

three points of author, reader, and the text. A literary translator has to be familiar with the critical approaches as well as their underlying structures, and a bulk of other issues significant in both interpretation and translation. A literary translator, who tries to remain loyal to the author, in order to be loyal to his own translation at the same time, finds entering the mind of the author impossible to see what the real intention of the written text was. It is interesting to notice that literary texts cannot be planned to be written. No exact design or outline of the work can exist in the mind of its author, and when a work gets to paper then the claim of its existence can be made.

If readership is paid attention to and reader-response theories become the center of attention, then he knows that there might be more than one interpretation of the text: to go further, as many interpretations as there are readers, and this is due to the qualities of a literary text being open to many interpretations on different levels—thanks to the use of such elements as symbol and irony considered superior to other figures of speech and capable of reflecting the many-sidedness of life. What remains is the text and the translator who has to explore the intricacies of the text and reconstruct it in a way so as to be not different from the original and be interpreted appropriately and be “in large part found again and repainted by the translator” (Vahid 2004, 1). Each of the three points mentioned is defended by some approaches in literary criticism for yielding the meaning closest to the not-really-known term ‘truth.’

Unable to enter the mind of the author and have access to the intentions of the author for writing the text, all the translator can deal with is the text itself to be explored. The true meaning should be elicited and then translated in TL. To first interpret the text in SL, the

time of the author, the dominant ideology of the time, and words with implications proper to the time they were written should be taken into consideration. Nevertheless there have always been disputes over whether to take the text as a single identity standing for itself, or to interpret it according to the influences of the time.

Though the biographies of authors and the socio-cultural setting cannot be ignored, the text itself as a single identity should be of high importance to the translator. This reminds us of the New Critics who were also in favor of the text as being “self-sufficient,” “independent,” and “objective” (Abrams 1988, 247). Here much emphasis is placed on the close reading of the text to work out the figures of speech with their multiple meanings which are at the service of each other yielding in the final unified picture of the work: The idea of all parts of a poem being interrelated and supporting the central idea. From Eliot and Richards the emphasis on the text as an object, and not the poet, is borrowed. Therefore, the translator should get to the underlying structure and see how elements are bound together, and then by finding the proper equivalences and substitutions render the text in SL.

With a Marxist view of literature as being the product of the dominant ideology and “ideological determinants specific to that era” (Abrams 1988, 242) it is obvious that sign systems cannot be taken on as understood by every one, for language is dynamic and apt to change quite rapidly. Language is dynamic, so is literature, and from time to time and ideology to ideology old signs are substituted by new ones. By new signs what is meant is signs capable of reflecting the reality as it is known to be so in a specific time and place. Therefore, interpretation becomes important requiring the translator to be able to

interpret figures and elements in both SL and TL. The translator should deal with the text as an autonomous entity yet be heedful of the possible influences of the dominant ideologies of the time. Being familiar with the syntax and grammar of the two languages, a translator should also have the knowledge of the semantic sense of the words and meanings of the words with regard to the time they were used. The translator should work out the precise meanings. S/he will then be able to detect the relationships and approach the intended meaning of the text which demands not only the understanding of the linguistics of the text but also semiotics of it which studies “sign systems or structures, sign processes, and sign functions” (Hawks 1977, 47).

Translation consists of “studying the lexicon, grammatical structure, communication situation, and cultural context of the SL text, analyzing it in order to determine its meaning” (Larson 1984, 3). The requirements or “poetics” as Lefevere calls it of the time are important (1992, 99). Translating poetics tend to vary over the years and that is due to the change language undergoes. The period and culture of the time have direct influence on the language, and any literary work is, no doubt, the production of its era. It is so significant that Bassnett (1992) states “all these elements can be missed if the reading does not take into full account the overall structuring of the work and its relation to the time and place of its production” (79). The reason for the failure of a great many literary translations is ignorance of the time and culture of the community it was written in. Multifarious reading is required of the translator to master the use of language in the source text and the various influences of the culture on it, and to find the best possible way to render it in the TL. Therefore it is suggested that the



translator pay attention to every minute detail in the work and get help from the aforementioned points in order to enrich the interpretation and ensure understanding the theme of the text to be translated, and not read too much into the text.

## **2. 2. Stylistic Problems of Literary Translation**

Perspicacity of the language plays a pivotal role in the study of literature, for before anything literature is language, and language is the network of signs and systems important in its formation. Literary translation is a translational species in itself dealing with language but it “differs in many important respects from the kind of translation practiced in a language class” (Jackson 2003). Every language is a system of signs different from that of another. With a formalistic view of literature as “a specialized mode of language” (Abrams 273) and its difference with the ordinary language, literary translation finds great importance. The way words are arranged, their relations with each other, and the meaning they convey become totally different from those of the ordinary language. Every piece of literature is there to make us pause for a couple of minutes and ponder over an experience. To do so the author distorts the ordinary language, defamiliarizes old and familiar concepts, and gets help from figures of speech to ensure freshness of perception—“freshness of sensation” in Coleridge’s terms— and economy of language if it is poetry.

In literary translation one system is to be transferred to another; a system with many factors involved and signs that differ from signs and structures of another language. The same as language, literature is a system; a secondary system representing how related language and literature are, affecting each others’ existence. Languages are different



codes and values of grammar leading to difference in meaning. With regard to literary texts or texts that deal, in a way or another, with experience or a subject the writer has written about, they become open to interpretation on different levels. It is the question of how the writer treats the topic distinguishing it from other texts regarded as non-literary. What differentiates between texts has, for sure, to do something with linguistic features, the way words and phrases are organized, and a whole bunch of other features all of which underline the notion of style.

Not identifying the discourse genre by the translator would mean missing a great mark. Identification of the genre helps the translator remember the conventions and rules associated with that particular genre which may result in a better grasp of the text. As far as there exist various subjects and means of expression, there are different discourse types. In literature the matter of ‘what and how’ has always been of great concern: the message of the author—content— and the way it is communicated—form. Literary translators deal with pieces of literature—novels, dramas, and poems—which are related systems representing each “a system within the larger system of human culture” (Scholes 10). Accordingly, one of the most crucial problems literary translators confront is the matter of style that differs from writing to writing and genre to genre. As far as there are different codes, rules, conventions and structures, there are different styles and ways of expression, thus literary translators cannot turn to any stylistic analysis they wish. Language as a code “possesses features— phonological ... syntactic, lexical, and semantic—” and code features are selected to “act as ... vehicles for the communication of meaning” (Bell 8). Writers of literary texts use different styles for different

purposes. That is why the selection of words is important and directly related to the attitude and tone towards the subject matter and audience. Not only choice of word, but also the syntax, rhythm, and figurative language are significant. This is what keeps the translator always wandering between the two surface and deep levels of semantic structure: what the translator has to transfer from SL to TL, with what tone, and in what mood the message is conveyed with the least change in the final effect.

The study of literary style is heavily dependent upon the knowledge of language. The selection of a particular style is understood and appreciated if the translator—a translator is a reader—is “aware of the other possible linguistic forms the authors could have used” (Falk 422). Different purposes require different means and styles the result of which is a variety of effects one is likely to see in different literary discourses. Larson (1984) states that style is “a patterning of choices of grammatical structures and lexicon in order to create a certain effect to carry out the intent of the author” (423) which denotes how careful should a translator be in determining the stylistic features of a work.

A very important point related to the style is the level of formality and the grandeur of a piece of writing carried through the selected words and their arrangement. The following example taken from *An Anthology of Wise Sayings* (Vahid, 1999) reveals the appropriate selection and arrangement of words that bear the same weight as the original:

گریه را به مستی بهانه کردم

شکوه ها ز دست زمانه کردم

آستین چو از چشم برگرفتم

سیل خون به دامان روانه کردم ... (عارف قزوینی)

Drunkenness I set a pretence to weep  
Oceans of blood of lashless eyes, so deep,  
And a million complaints of time to heap,  
When I commence of agony to mourn. (13-15)

As it can be seen, the form has, to a great extent, been preserved and the gloomy mood which is the preponderant feeling of the poem can be felt and elicited from the selected words. The opposite occurs where the comic mood of the following classic example taken from the same book is not observed. In fact, the English form tends to be modern rather than classic, and proper equivalents have not been employed to convey the comic, emotional mood as perceived in Farsi, for comic topics are also culture-bound and differ from culture to culture:

...

یکی را می شناسم اندر این شهر  
که شکر در دهان اوست چون زهر  
بود میلیونر اما از ره آرز  
شده از لاغری چون گردن غاز  
غم بیهوده او را پیر کرده  
ز عمر و زندگانی سیر کرده  
سرای او بود مانند بستان  
ولی باشد به چشمش همچو زندان  
نشیند گوشه ایوان خانه  
نی قلیان گذارد زیر چانه ( اکبر جمشیدی)

I happen to know a fellow citizen,  
In whose mouth sugar tastes of poison.  
He's a millionaire but from avarice,  
A goose's neck is heavier than his!  
In prime of youth, he seems old from sorrow,  
And his forehead carries many a furrow.  
He has a house, blossoming in all season,  
But in his eyes, this is like a prison.  
In its balcony he sits, lonely I mean,  
With a hookah-tube under his chin. (15)

Turning now to semantic structure—in close ties with style— we intend to refer to shared concepts— those units and features that are universal and shared by all languages. Relating semantic and grammatical structures, Larson (1984) categorizes meaning

components and concepts into four groups of “things, events, attributes, and relations” (29) and goes on to give examples for each and discusses them. Larson sees nouns as illustrating things, verbs illustrating events, modifiers illustrating attributes, and prepositions illustrating relations. According to him a good translator should be aware of the various implications of words, their synonyms with different associations, and suggestions the understanding of which is necessary to making the semantic-grammatical relations and the nearest patterns, to patterns in SL, in the TL. These properties together with the way words are arranged in a sentence—unique to each language—make the sentence-for-sentence translation a bit difficult leaving the translator pondering over how to express the “semantic structure of the narrative with the natural sentence length of the receptor language” (Larson 1984, 369) which is a necessity because dealing with literary works and discussing style, “not only the actual form of expressive but also these possibilities that could have been used” should be taken into full account (Falk 1978, 420).

### **2. 3. The Issue of Finding Exact Equivalence**

As it was mentioned, the arrangement of words to make sentences and structures with regard to their implications is very important. To the writer of a literary text, the importance is much more, for the unity among all elements of a literary work and the pleasure of finding the relation and unity in a literary text lies upon the selection of words and the way they are put next to each other. Therefore, the translator of a literary text finds it very difficult to find appropriate equivalences so that the same effect is created in the TL. Perhaps this is the reason a great number of literary translators have referred to the impossibility

of full equivalence literary translation welcoming approximate equivalents. After finding equivalents that best fit the text in TL the translator may need to further furnish the reader with explanations being hopeful to create the desired effect. Accordingly, Dagut's remarks are worth a full quotation here:

Since a metaphor in the SL is, by definition, a new piece of performance, a semantic novelty, it can clearly have no existing

'equivalence' in the TL: What is unique can have no counterpart.

Here the translator's bilingual competence ... is of help to him only in the negative sense of telling him that any 'equivalence' in this case cannot be 'found' but will have to be 'created.' (1976, 21-33)

Literary translation is something more than the process of substituting words, phrases or structures, and sometimes it may be indispensable to change basic elements, add or omit just to get closer to the function the very words or figures play. In literary translation structures are significant, for "each structure will lay stress on certain linguistic features" which shows the significance of creating parallels in the TL for structures used in the SL. The translator should focus on how words and phrases are related and in what order they are put. The translator should, in Cluysenaar's words, be familiar with "the dominant structure of every individual work to be translated" (1976, 49). Proper substitution and rendering the correct style requires much effort and creativity if the production of the same result is intended.

Equivalence as a key concept is a major issue in translation. Equivalence is used to match words and sentences to each other. Meanings of words and sentences should be discovered in the context of the SL and appropriate equivalence should be decided upon with regard to the context of TL. All the difficulty emerges from the disagreement that crops up between members of the speech community about the use of words. As Bell believes that is because “semantic boundaries between words turn out not to be clear and sharp” (99) and also the uncertainty of translators about the features and qualities associated with the word in the SL, for translation is but “the replacement of a representative of a text in one language by a representation of an equivalent text in a second language” (6). To provide an example *ram* can be a good one having implied in itself *sheep*, *male*, and *adult*. These implications need to be deciphered, detected, and substituted by a suitable equivalence. That is why a word-for-word translation and search for a one-word equivalent may not always prove successful, for “languages combine meanings differently” so there may be “many words which will not have an exact one-word equivalent” or word for word correspondence in the TL (Larson 55). Therefore, proper lexical equivalence as the one strategy preferred most is representative of the translator’s purported fidelity to the original text, for literary translation is the expression, in TL, of what has been expressed in SL “presenting semantic and stylistics equivalences” (Bell 5). The translator is bound to find equivalences proper from the aspects of lexicon, semantics, and style. If the translator is sure about the existence of such equivalence in the TL, it can be used, otherwise the translator is to provide the reader with more than one equivalent and perhaps further explanation to first,



convey the real message, with, second, the intended force, and third, with the intended associations. All in all, the translator, armed with a good knowledge of words and equivalents, can come up with suitable equivalents being hopeful not to distort the semantic structure of the work.

#### **2. 4. Denotative and Connotative Implications of Words**

There are many qualities in literary texts that cannot be easily transferred from SL to TL the idea of which brings us to the next problem closely related to equivalence: the two literary terms of denotation and connotation, making critics such as Jakobson go too far and believe in non-translatability of artistic, technical, and literary texts. Because of different implications, connotations and weights words have, Belloc considers it indispensable for the literary translator to know what the weight of a word or expression is and to find fit replacement of words in the TL. The translator is then given the license to add words or bring any modifications necessary to reach terms with the closest, if not the most precise, weight.

Being familiar with the dictionary meaning of words and their implications, a translator should know that sometimes the connotative implications of a word might contradict each other and great care is needed to find and replace the right one. The other point which is worth mentioning here is that connotation is subjective and not as objective as denotation. It is personal and apt to vary from person to person, society to society, and even time to time especially when it comes to highly emotional words. No one ignores the different implications words have in different cultures. As an instance the word “برگشتن” in the Persian culture can have the following meanings:

گشتن / عقب نشینی / باز نشستگی / توبه کردن / ناپدید شدن.

To Turn/ Withdraw/ Retire/ Repent/ Disappear.

Accordingly, when a translator is to translate the following two lines from Farsi to English, s/he must be familiar with the specific meaning of the word in Farsi and its proper equivalents in English:

هر چیز که مایه تن آسانی توست  
برگشت چو بخت دشمن جانی توست

Whatever provides you with comfort and ease,  
When luck fades away, your enemy it is. (Vahid 12)

It is noticeable that the meaning of “برگشتن” here is not “coming back” but “change, non-existence, or fading away” and, therefore the following translation is not acceptable:

Whatever is the cause of your tranquility,  
When luck comes back it is your soul enemy.

Implications of words are included in “dynamics” of a work and a good translation, as Kopp (1998) states, discovers the “dynamics” of poetry, if not necessarily its “mechanics.” The implications, weight, and tone should closely be observed and that is because of their influence in the linguistic manner of expressing the writer’s message.

The dynamic qualities of languages and the changes they undergo prove problematic with regard to both denotation and connotation

reminding us of the importance of the notions shared by the members of a speech community. If a translator is not aware of the connotations of a word like *home*—warmth, fire, love, family, peace, rest, protection, security, ease, shelter, country, hometown, childhood memories, parents—and is not sure about the one intended by the writer, then s/he will be likely to have trouble getting through what the writer desires to communicate. For a writer of a literary text the feeling of security provided by *home* is much more important than referring to its structure, foundation and fabrication. According to Larson it is “the combining of a number of meanings into a single word” (56) which makes it difficult to come up with a proper substitute—to find a word as a substitution for *home* with all the connotations implied in it. Though difficult, a translator needs to go through a text so many times to see what implication of a word is intended and in what possible way it can be rendered or created in the TL.

## 2. 5. Culture-boundness of Literary Figures—Idioms

Literature abundant with idioms and proverbs is culture-bound. Idioms and proverbs— strings of words the meaning of which are totally different from the meaning of individual words, puns, and many other elements used, and with which literary texts are conceived—are culture-bound with different functions and implications they have to offer. Though many idioms and proverbs may be found in different languages with nearly the same meaning, many idioms may be ironic, ambiguous, or pejorative in one while in another no such implications are inferred. In Farsi one knows a place like the palm of his hand, while in English they know it like the back

of their hands. To have two faces is understood both in English and Farsi, however to translate *What will Mrs. Grundy say?* is no easy job for a translator who does not know the story of Mrs. Grundy as a character of Thomas Morton’s play symbolizing the conventions of the society being followed by others. The literary translator should know as many idioms and proverbs as he can, and, not the least important, be able to identify an idiom or proverb thanks to the already-familiarity with the form and structure of them.

Literary translation is a complicated process; the translator needs to make adjustments in form which is not less significant than the meaning. In the so-called idiomatic translations, meaning and form in SL should be transformed to TL with the slightest change in the natural forms of grammar and lexicon used in the work. Literary translation is the challenge of finding ways in which the desired meaning can be expressed and this requires a full understanding of the two SL and TL as well as literary texts and the employed elements and figures of speech. A paying-off translator of idioms which appear in literary texts then is one who furnishes the reader of TL with the enjoyment of the reader of SL which is the original text, and whose work is likely to be taken as an original text. This demands thorough understanding of the figures and their grammatical structures. In comparisons, the points of similarity must be made clear and the implied information drawn out. These features make the figures unique in the language. An idiom is a dead metaphor and “since idioms will be translated directly, without any attempt to keep the metaphorical content of the idiom,” (Larson 1984, 249) no translator can be certain about the true meaning being conveyed.

Every work of art that has made itself permanent in the canon of a country's literature is unique winning the attribute by the figures employed. The use of figures is so important that they can influence the style and tone of the work. Figures of comparison—simile and metaphor—consist images or a preponderant image running through the lines determining the tonality of the text. They may also create a special effect or a picture of something important to the final picture of a work. The image, picture, or memory may be a weird one in the TL such as *snow* unknown to those who live in the South Pacific. Therefore, a comparison in which *snow* is used proves problematic when being translated into the language of the inhabitants of the place. The images are not identical in different languages and even one image may have pejorative associations while positive ones in another. An example is provided to suggest the sundry implications that *rock* may have in different cultures:

1. Not moving
2. Always to be in a place
3. One who cannot talk

That is why it is important to see first, how frequently figures of speech are used in the SL, and second, whether they should be translated figuratively—in terms of another figure— or nonfiguratively—the concept should be conveyed only and the translator is there to decide and bear in mind every detail and observe the harmony of elements. Since literary language differs a lot from that of every day usage, vocabulary items, structures, and other features differ as well and the sensitivity increases apropos of the

sequences in phonology, grammatical patterns, and linguistic units, for literary translation is the change in form, from one system to another. No one ignores the effect of words in our lives. A translator must be well versed in altering of form with the slightest change in meaning and emotional qualities because translation is the art of altering. The form can be taken as a most important part making the phenomenon of the text, and the translator is to describe the phenomenon to readers of another language. From a scientific point of view the translator is a creator who “create[s] some kind of ‘objective’ description of the phenomenon” (Bell 1993, 4) in the TL.

### **3. Conclusion:**

Each literary text enjoys its own structural and semantic unity giving birth to a whole, unified, and organized picture which is completed when the reader interprets the text making the relationships between different parts. The translator of a literary text has to observe the semantic sense of the words, the weight, the setting, and other technical features of the original text to interpret the text correctly and then render the meaning and effect in the TL, and yield an acceptable, satisfactory and faithful translation. By getting to the center of the topic and observing how the elements interact, the translator can solve the tensions and come up with a good understanding of the final meaning of the text just to get ready to transfer it to another system keeping the unique features semantically unchanged yet proper to the system of TL. It is only after finding the suitable structures and literary codes that the translator can be hopeful to find proper equivalences and style in the TL which of course differ according to the intentions of the writers of literary texts. The accomplishment

however is not that easy, for the translator meets some major impediments in the way of performing the task:

Firstly, a translator needs to be familiar with different critical approaches to first correctly interpret the literary text—open to interpretation on different levels— and then see how the message can be conveyed in the TL from which the reader is likely to elicit the same interpretation. Because a literary text can be open to interpretation on more than one level, the translator may need to go through a text many times and do more comprehension testing especially with the parts that are likely to offer more than one meaning. The translator needs to reassure himself/herself for consistency and the reliability of the explored relations between the components. The successful translator, after reading the text in TL and exploring the meaning and effect should translate it in a way so that the same feeling and understanding of the text will be achieved by the reader of the TL. In this respect the second issue crops up and that is the translator's acquaintance with the cultural setting the text was written in and should know that the dominant ideology of the time does not leave literature unaffected and many pieces of literature have been created under the influence of the dominant ideology of the time.

The third issue is style of a literary text that is different from the style of the ordinary language because the intentions lying behind each piece of writing is different. Accordingly writers use different styles and means of expression to achieve a different effects. This requires the translator to be familiar with different styles and the purpose of using each.

Fourthly, finding proper equivalences for the purpose of the unity and pleasure hidden in literary texts is of great importance to the



translator. Every Language is a different system inclusive of words with implications that might not be shared in another language. Besides trying to find the best equivalents, further explanation may be needed to create the original effect.

Fifthly, because of denotative and connotative implications of words, under the influence of time of writing, a translator needs to carefully observe the associated meanings so as to find proper substitutions capable of conveying all a single word conveys in the SL.

Sixthly, Literature is abundant with culture-bound idioms and proverbs, and figures of speech which require sincere attempt in being transferred into a different language and culture. Being familiar with the figures of speech and capable of playing with them to create fun and enjoyment, authors rely on the knowledge of the reader and leave some parts implicit and unstated which gets more complicated when words with many implications are used. Thus, the onus of interpreting the correct meaning falls to the skillful translator who may need to go through a text so many times to come up with the total meaning and image of a metaphor as an instance. The crucial point is that figures are closely related to the images created and sometimes determine the tonality of a work.

Because there is no complete correspondence between languages as systems, there are words that have different implications in different cultures and languages. Meaning is the primary concern and criterion, but form has its own place as well. It is only by observing both content and form that the translator can be sure about, to a great extent, having conveyed the mood and the tone of the original text to his audience. Words selected and form may be directly related to the

tone or attitude of the author that has adopted a way from among the many ways of communication depending on who the audience is and in what cultural setting the text is produced. A translator, prior to being a writer, is a reader and by grasping the level of formality of the text as an important feature can see what impact it has on the relationship between the author and himself, the language of the original text, and the language of the translation. An appropriate translation demands the true message of the original text and the way the writer wishes to convey it to the reader and this requires the translator's full awareness of the writer's intention and purpose of writing the text. Besides the cultural setting and time, selection of the words, the tone, whether the writer is after exciting the reader or persuading him into accepting something contrary to a long-held belief and a bulk of other points emphasize the multiple functions of texts and the translator's job in differentiating between "the primary function from those which are secondary" (Bell 1993, 8). Not only function, but also phrases and even words differ in their being more or less emphatic and emotional in different languages. The translator must "first determine the function of the SL system and then ... find a TL system that will adequately render the function" (Bassnett 1992, 119). Many translators have proved successful in reproducing the author's intention but part of it and not all and this spoils the translator's purpose of producing a text with the intentions lying behind it, for a work of art is regarded as a unified whole with the intention of every element and detail at the service of another and the final picture. A well-versed translator armed with creativity, who is knowledgeable in both SL and TL, can claim to succeed in achieving a satisfactory translation of a literary text.

**References:**

- Abrams, M. H. (1988). *A Glossary of Literary Terms*, 6<sup>th</sup> ed. Orlando: Rinehart and Winston, Inc.
- Bassnett, S. (1992). *Translation Studies*, London: Routledge.
- Bell, T. R. (1993). *Translation and Translating; Theory and Practice*, New York: Longman Inc.
- Belloc, H. (1931). *On Translation*, Oxford: The Clarendon Press.
- Cluysennar, A. (1976). *Introduction To Literary Stylistics*, London: Batsford.
- Dagut, M. B. (1976). *Can Metaphor be translated?* Babel, No. 22 (1), Pp. 21-33.
- Falk, S. J. (1978). *Linguistics and Language; A Survey of basic Concepts and Implications*, New York: John Wiley and Sons.
- Hartmann, P. R. K. and Stork, F. C. (1972). *Dictionary of Language and Linguistics*. Applied Science. Amsterdam.
- Hawks, T. (1977). *Structuralism and Semiotics*. London: Methuen.
- Jackson, R. (2003). *From Translation to Imitation*. Retrieved March 12, 2003 from the worldwide web:  
<http://www.utc.edu/~engldept/pm/ontransl.htm>.
- Kopp, M. (1998). *Poetry in Translation*. Retrieved march 12, 2003 from the worldwide web:  
<http://www.geocities.com/paris/bistro/2207/apoetrytr.htm>
- Kristeva, J. (1970). *Le Texte du Roman*, the Hague and Paris: Mouton.
- Landers Clifford E. (2001). *Literary Translation: A Practical Guide*, New Jersey University Press: Multilingual Matters.

Larson, Mildred. L. (1984). *Meaning-based Translation, A Guide to Cross-language Equivalence*, New York: University Press of America, Inc.

Lefevere, A. (1992). *Translation, Rewriting and the Manipulation of Literary Fame*, New York: Routledge.

Scholes, R. (1974). *Structuralism in Literature*, New Haven: Yale University Press.

Vahid Dastjerdi, H. (1999). *An Anthology of Wise Sayings*. Isfahan: Basaaer Press.

Vahid Dastjerdi, H. (2004). Translation of Poetry: Sa'di's "Oneness of Mankind" Revisited, <http://www accurapid.com/journal/30liter.htm>

