



Translation: A Linguistic Study of the Texts

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Abstract

In a mysterious tale, a king and his queen want the best of the best perfume from a seller from Arabia. The seller produces an array of perfumes before the king and the queen. They select a bottle and ask the seller to transfer the perfume from his bottle of glass into the golden container of the king. However, the king asks the seller to transfer the whole perfume (liquid and the scent) otherwise he will not be paid fully. The seller tries at his best but unable to transfer the whole scent as expected by the king. The seller transfers the liquid but the scent remains in the bottle as a residue. Analogically, the process of translation tends to be similar. The organization of the text by the author is so unique to his/her creativity that it every time leaves more or less scope in the process of translation that differs from the source text. The author of the source text makes use of the linguistic system with its social, cultural and political bearings that embellish the text with their specificities. The paper tries to explore how the translator understands the linguistic making of the text and tries to produce a similar linguistic making in the target text that possibly is termed as faithful translation.

Key Words: Translation, Source text, Target Text, Linguistics, Meaning

Introduction

Text is a unified unit of several components. It has its levels in terms of language in which it is written. It is also embellished by the literariness of the language of the text writer. The components and the respective levels are entwined together to have a unified sense in literary expression. Besides, the writer consciously or sub-consciously put these levels foregrounded or backgrounded to achieve the intended effect. In a translated version of the source text (here I mean the original text) the translator does not restrict to transportation of meaning of one text to the other. Rather, fathoms the components that make up the text as a unified unit of literary expression. Furthermore, the translator also tries to decipher the scheme of foregrounding and/or backgrounding that the author installs to achieve the effect intended. The translator does/shall not try to make meaning out of the text, but shall search for a possible meaning that most probably go near to what the author tries to say through his/her text. It is, moreover, an exercise of search for meaning rather than making of meaning. Toury (1980) points out that an "exhaustive contrastive description of the languages involved is a precondition for any systematic study of translations" (29). Thus, the translator needs an understanding of the linguistic systems of the languages involved in translation. Such understanding is reasonably important for ensuring sensible and objective description of translation. Arguably, most linguistics interested in translation studies view the relation between translation and linguistics is unidirectional, moving from linguistics to translation studies.

Linguistics and Translation

A text is linguistic in its primary essence. It unifies the linguistic levels any language is made up of. It is not created in isolation. Language levels do have their intertwining play in the overall effect of the text that the author intends to achieve for his/her readers. Language works at the levels of phonology, morphology, syntax, semantics and pragmatics. Each of these levels may receive a