

Theories of Translation and A Grammar Theory of Translation

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SUMMARY

In my study, my thesis is the relationship between grammar and translation. To do this, I chose relative clauses and studied how to translate them.

To help illustrate my points, I took some examples from "The Great Gatsby" as translated by Can Yücel who is a poet and translator. Daily speech, regional sayings, idioms and slang words that he used were the basic peculiarities of his poems. He attained success in becoming a language expert by means of using satire and word play in his poems. The poems which he published in "Her Boydan" were translations of poems which he had collected. Besides, he translated plays written by Shakespeare, Weiss, Brecht.

He translated "The Great Gatsby". As pointed out before, I chose some adjectival clauses from this book. I classified them and I observed that some of the adjectival clauses had been subdivided. Certainly Can Yücel is an expert in his field, but I contend that in most cases these sub-divisions are unnecessary. In fact they may sometimes even cause disorientation, so I have essayed retranslations.

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ÖZET

Bu çalışmamda çeviri ve çeviri teknikleri üzerinde durdum. Özellikle ilgi cümleciklerinin Türkçe'ye nasıl çevrildiğini örnekledim. Örnekleri pekiştirmek için Can Yücel'in çevirmiş olduğu "Muhteşem Gatsby"den örnekler aldım. İncelemede bazı ilgi cümleciklerinin bölünerek çevrildiğini gördüm. Can Yücel'in çevirdiği şekilde olabileceği gibi, cümleleri bölmeden de çevirebildiğimizi örneklerle gösterdim.

WHAT IS TRANSLATION?

Translation is to understand what is actually being communicated; that is, in broad terms, human communication equals translation. It can be classified "inside or between languages. Roman Jakobson in "On Linguistic Aspects of Translation" expresses the ways of interpreting a verbal sign. This sign may be translated into other sign of the same language (intra-lingual translation), or into another language (inter-lingual translation). The second type of translation, namely, inter-lingual is what concerns us here"¹.

Language also varies according to social function or beliefs, so we use different styles and registers to say the same thing depending on the role we are assuming in a particular discourse. Translation can be defined as a fifth skill which one can acquire only if one knows both languages very well. "The ability to synchronize the source language and the target language requires as a precondition a comprehensive syntactic, lexical, morphological, and stylistic knowledge of both L₁ and L₂; translation is a means to both explore and develop such knowledge."² In most cases, for these reasons, knowing two languages is not enough for translation; so those who are interested in translation try to establish some rules to help translators. Certainly, some of them claim that translators should be free to translate the context. These discussions bring some theories about.

WHAT ARE THESE THEORIES - INDEPENDENCE AND FAITHFULNESS?

In spite of all studies in the field of translation, these two fundamental theories are always brought up when translation methods are discussed. I would like to give some examples to explain the above mentioned theories.

1 Jakobson, R, 1966; "On linguistic Aspects of Translation" in Ulyrich Margherita; "Types of Translation", English Teaching Forum, volume XXIV, Washington, D.C. 1986, p. 15.

2 Ibid, p. 15.

WHAT IS FAITHFULNESS?

It can be said that faithfulness is a technique whereby the translator translates the text word for word. This technique may be safe but sometimes it may not give the meaning in the context or what we want to say. Because apparently equivalent words in two languages may also vary stylistically; one word may be used in formal situations whereas its interlingual synonym may be acceptable only in a formal context. It is essential that every language have different concepts, so this theory may not work for every situation. Even in our daily speech we have difficulty in translating some sayings. Although we may be clear about the syntax and surface meaning, we cannot really understand the true underlying meaning. "That type of words will lead to interesting and fruitful discussion on the semantic feature of English words which may seem similar in meaning. Beam, flash, gleam, glisten, glow, sparkle, shimmer, shine, for example all share the semantic feature "sending out or reflecting light." but a distinction may be made between continuous light and intermittent light, cold light and warm light, dull light and intense light."³ The other reason for not getting the right meaning is that the word may have different meaning according to the text or dialogue.

The following examples may explain these difficulties very clearly.

He's very blue - O çok üzgün.

Here blue has an idiomatic meaning, so in attempting to find a Turkish equivalent for blue, we must know its idiomatic meaning in the text.

I had a cold - cold has an idiomatic meaning (Soğuk aldım.)

I'm going home - (Eve gidiyorum/Yurda dönüyorum.)

Both of them may be correct according to the dialogue or context. The Turkish "Afiyet olsun" has no equivalent in English. Therefore, exact translation is impossible since "good appetite" used alone is meaningless, and there is no English phrase that fulfils the same function.

As we have observed, faithfulness may be used at the start of a translation, but it may not be adequate for deeper level of a translation. Structure is another aspect involved in translating which can cause problems. A further problem in assigning basic word order is where the language has different basic word orders in different constructions.

Here are some examples of structure error when we think of it according to Turkish structure.

3 Ibid, p. 16.

Adam-in kadın-a ver-diğ-i patates

Man genitive woman dative give his potato

(The potato that the gave to the woman)

"English is a SVO language, and a general principle can be established. Turkish is a SVO language, Hasan öküz-ü aldı (SOV). Hasan ox accusative bought. Hasan bought the ox (SOV)"⁴.

As for proverbs and idioms, in most cases they replace the other proverbs and idioms to be translated according to culture and religion. Here are some examples: "The apples on the side of the river are the sweets". Komşunun tavuğu komşuya kaz görünür. "Everything comes to him who waits". Bekleyen derviş muradına ermiş.

In spite of this, some of the proverbs and idioms are translated into Turkish without making any change. "Money begets money" Para parayı çeker. "Out of sight out of mind" Gözden ırak gönülden ırak⁵. When we take all these factors into consideration, we can see that translation is a difficult job. It does not have sound theories because of the reasons given above. It is a demanding skill requiring specialized training and guidance. "It requires the ability to develop source – language analyzing techniques and source language – target language transfer strategies"⁶.

"However, competence in a language does not in itself indicate significant ability in translating to and from that language"⁶.

On the other had, "Peter Newmark in "Approaches to translation" contends that there are no sound theories for translation; however, he claims that there must be practical theories which can help the translator."⁷ In most cases these theories do not hold up to criticism. In our country or in other countries, most of the translators do not follow these theories. The reasons for this may be, that the translation theories themselves are not sound, and most translators do not adhere to them.

INDEPENDENCE

What is being independent? Each translator has a certain style and also follows the most common practices in his field at a particular time. He has a right to leave the context and be free. He uses the this freedom to make the context vivid. As a rule, we expect the translator to make some changes because

4 Comrie, Bernard; "Word Order" Language universals and Linguistic Typology, Worchester, 1989, p. 87.

5 Erden, Aysu; "Çeviri Yöntemi Üzerine Gözlemler", Metis Çeviri, Sayı: 5, Güz 1988, s. 41.

6 Ulyrich, Marqherita; *Ibid*, p. 15.

7 Suat Karantay, "Çeviri Eleştirisi", Metis Çeviri, Sayı 1, Güz 1987, s. 51 (secondary source)

the identity and distinction problem with the original text cannot be solved totally. So we can say that the translator creates this context again by using different materials; for this reason, the thing that does not change is the relation to the context.

RELATIVE CLAUSES

In this section my aim is to indicate relative clauses and the ways of translation. Relative clauses consist of restrictive and non-restrictive clauses. "Despite the similar syntactic constructions for restrictive and non-restrictive relative clauses, they are radically different in semantic or pragmatic terms. The restrictive relative clause uses presupposed information to identify the referent of a noun phrase, while the non-restrictive relative is a way of presenting new information on the basis of the assumption that the referent can already be defined and identified"⁸.

"The man that I saw yesterday left this morning" (restrictive relative clause). "The man left this morning" does not give sufficient information, so the additional information "I saw yesterday" is added to indicate which man is being talked about.

"Fred, who had arrived yesterday, left this morning" (non-restrictive relative clause) In this sentence the speaker can identify which man is being talked about.

How do we translate them into Turkish?

The girls who serve in the shop are the owner's daughters.

verb + en/an + noun

Dükkanında hizmet eden kızlar dükkan sahibinin kızlarıdır.

There is a man who wants to see you.

Sizi görmek isteyen biri var.

This is the picture which/that caused such a sensation.

Sansasyona sebepl olan resim.

The man who has been operated upon.

verb + ilan/ilen + noun

Ameliyat edilen adam.

In English, relative clauses will not be only finite clauses already discussed, but also of non-finite construction.

8 Comrie, Bernard; "Relative Clauses", Language Universals and Linguistic Typology,
Worcester, 1989, p. 139.

This is a photograph which was taken by my father (finite)

This is the photograph taken by my father (non-finite)

Babam tarafından çekilen resim.

The report which was signed.

The report signed.

İmzalanmış rapor.

The report which will be signed.

verb + cek/cak + noun

The report to be signed.

İmzalanacak rapor.

The story which is being told.

verb + ılmakta/ilmekte + noun

The story being told

Anlatılmakta olan hikaye

The first person who has survived the accident is a boy of fifteen.

The first person to have survived the accident was a boy of fifteen.

verb + miş/muş + noun

Kazadan kurtulmuş olan tek kişi 15 yaşında bir erkek çocuğu idi.

Possessive form: Noun + whose + noun2 + verb + complement

Noun + ğı, ğu

en

ı, i, u, ü

+ Verb +

an

+ Noun

sı, si, sa, su

ilen

ilan

The girl whose bag was stolen

Çantası çalınan kız.

RELATIVE SENTENCES IN "THE GREAT GATSBY"

I would like to focus now on my idea that there should be some theories to translate relative clauses. In this section the examples were chosen to show that a grammar theory of translation is possible.

In this section the examples were chosen from "The Great Gatsby" (As translated by Can Yücel)

- Only Gatsby, the man who gives his name to his book, was exempt from my reaction (page 8).

Bir tek Gatsby, bu kitabın başına adı yazılı adam bu tepkinin dışında kalmıştı (page 10)

- Tom Buchanan, who had been hovering restlessly about the room, stopped and rested his hand on my shoulder (page 15).

Odanın içinde tedirgin dönen Tom Buchanan yanımda durdu, elini omuzuma koydu (page 18).

- He is the man who fixed the world's series back in 1919? (p. 71).

Çifte bahislerini dalevereye getiren adam işte bu. (s. 80).

- His head leaned back so far that it rested against the face a defunct mantel piece clock, and from this position his distraught eyes stared down at Daisy, who was sitting, frightened but graceful, on the edge of a stiff chair (p. 84).

Geriye öyle kaykılmıştı ki, başı raftaki hurda saatin camına dayanıyor, oradan öyle, dik bir sandalyenin kenarında oturan ürkek ürkek yine de zarifçe oturan Daisy'yi afal gözlerle üstten süzüyordu (s. 93).

- Mrs. Wilson had changed the costume some time before, and was now attired in an elaborate afternoon dress of cream colored chiffon, which gave out a continual rustle as she swept about the room (p. 33).

Mrs. Wilson daha önce değişmişti üstünü sırtında, dolaştıkça odayı hışırtıya boğan krem renkli, şifondan özentili bir ikindi elbisesi vardı.

- We backed up to an grey old man who bore an absurd resemblance to John D. Rockefeller. (p. 29).

John D. Rockefeller'a delice benziyen ak saçlı ihtiyarın yanına geri geri gittik.

- The nature of Mr. Tostoff's composition eluded me, because, just as it began, my eyes fell on Gatsby, standing alone on the marble steps and looking from one group to another with approving eyes. (p. 51).

Mr. Tostof'un bestesinin farkına varamadım, tam başlayacağı sırada, mermer merdivenin üst başında yalnız başına durmuş hoşnut gözlerle misafir öbeklerini yukarıdan tarıyan Gatsby takıldı gözlerim (p. 56).

- I believe that on the first night I went to Gatsby's house I was one of the guests who had actually been invited. (p. 43).

Sanırım, Gatsby'nin evine ilk gittiğim akşam, partiye resmen davet edilen bir kaç kişiden biriydim.

- We all locked in silence Mrs. Wilson who removed a strand of hair from over her eyes and looked back at us with a brilliant smile. (p. 33)

Hepimiz bir şey demeden Mrs. Wilson'a baktık. Gözüne düşen saçlarını geriye attı, bizlere pırl pırl bir gülümsemeyle baktı. (Can Yücel) (s. 38).

Hepimiz bir şey demeden gözüne düşen saçlarını geriye atan Mrs. Wilson'a baktık, o da bizlere pırl pırl bir gülümsemeyle baktı (I retranslated)

- I looked back at my cousin, who began to ask me questions in her low, thrilling voice (p. 14).

Yeğenime döndüm yeniden. O yürek kaldırıcı alçak sesiyle bana sorular sormaya başladı (Can Yücel) (s. 11).

O yürek kaldırıcı alçak sesiyle bana sorular sormaya başlayan yeğenime döndüm yeniden. (I retranslated).

- She had changed her dress to a brown figured muslin, which stretched tight over her rather wide hips as Tom helped her to the platform in New York (p. 29).

Kadın üstünü değiştirmiş, Tom New York'ta platforma inmesine yardım ettiğinde, genişçe kalçalarını iyice sıkılıyan kahverengi örnekli muslin bir entari giymiştir (s. 34).

Tom, New York'ta platforma inmesine yardım ettiğinde, adın üstünü değiştirmiş genişçe kalçalarını iyice sıkılayan kahverengi müslin bir entari giymişti (I retranslated).

This translation of mine is, I contend, a better and more succinct one. However others might hold that the subdivisions in Can Yücel's translation have a stylistic attraction.

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