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# Translation - Difficulties in Interaction between Languages: A Study

**Foram A. Patel,**

(M.A., M.PHIL)

Assistant Professor in English language and Literature,  
Applied Science & Humanities Department,  
Sardar Vallabhbhai Institute of Technology, Vasad, Gujarat, India.

## ABSTRACT

*Translation is ultimately a human activity which enables human beings to exchange ideas and thoughts regardless of the different tongues used. Translation, is a modern science, moreover it is skill at the interface of philosophy, linguistics, psychology, and sociology. Literary translation in particular is relevant to all these sciences, audio-visual arts, as well as cultural and intellectual studies. It is a subjective art, when it deals with matters outside the realm of science where precisely defined concepts are more often expressed by certain generally accepted terms. The question of the possibility of translation is widely regarded as crucial to any understanding of what language is. Translation is possible in the sense that we humans have been doing it (or claiming to have done it) for thousands of years, but we have been doing so without any assurance of sustaining its original intended claimed idea of the writer. It tries to provide a significant content – after all, a “translation” has already occurred, in the writing down of the spoken word. This paper discusses such difficulties and the outcome in form effect we get for the text.*

## Keywords

*Translation difficulties, interaction between languages*

## INTRODUCTION

Translation is ultimately a human activity which enables human beings to exchange ideas and thoughts regardless of the different tongues used. Translation, is a modern science, moreover it is skill at the interface of philosophy, linguistics, psychology, and sociology. Literary translation in particular is relevant to all these sciences, audio-visual arts, as well as cultural and intellectual studies. It is a subjective art, when it deals with matters outside the realm of science where precisely defined concepts are more often expressed by certain generally accepted terms. To say more precisely, translation is a science, an art, and a skill. It is a science that necessitates complete knowledge of the structure and make-up of the two languages concerned. It is an art since it requires artistic talent to reconstruct the original text in the form of product that is presentable to the reader who is not supposed to be familiar with the original. It is also a skill because it entails the ability to smooth over any difficulty in the translation, and the ability to provide the translation of something that has no equal in the target language.

The question of the possibility of translation is widely regarded as crucial to any understanding of what language is. Translation is possible in the sense that we humans have been doing it (or claiming to have done it) for thousands of years, but we have been doing so without any assurance of sustaining its original intended claimed idea of the writer. It tries to provide a significant content – after all, a “translation” has already occurred, in the writing down of the spoken word. Either content or medium may change, independently of the other. This can be the reason why Socrates attacked writing, in the *Phaedrus*; ‘writing is both powerful and dangerous- it is magical- and the possibility that translation will transform the words beyond recognition threatens the search for truth. The question of translation has profound theological, religious, social, philosophical and psychological dimensions.

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## DISCUSSION

Translation is a challenging task; moreover it is a responsibility towards two different languages, cultures, manners, styles and notions. Because language is not simply a group of words, it is the mirror of the particular society. It demands a deep understanding of both grammar and culture. Translator needs to take the detailed inquiry and research over the words used with the particular intensions, keeping the time and scenario in mind. The translator will have to re-visit the time of the writer's mind. Translator needs to be familiar with the rules of a language as well as the habits of the people who speak it. And even for the most experienced professionals, confusion and frustration are familiar feelings.

*Some of the most common challenges of translation include the following and are discussed precisely:*

### Language Structure

Every language frames a defined structure with its own rules. Language is structural but at the same time it is also flexible, that provide the scopes of changes that is brought by verbal pattern by the language speakers. The complexity and singularity of this framework directly correlates to the difficulty of translation.

A simple sentence in English has a subject, verb, and object — in that order. For example, “she eats pizza.” But not every language shares this structure. Farsi typically follows a sequence of subject, then object, then verb. And in Arabic, subject pronouns actually become part of the verb itself. As a result, translators frequently have to add, remove, and rearrange source words to effectively communicate in the target language.

### Linguistic usage

The translation of this kind of literary style has to pay particular attention to certain linguistic usage. For example proximal deictic adverbs and demonstratives such as *now, here, there, this, these*, etc. invite the inference of a speaking subjectivity. Other features like the use of third-person pronouns and past tense suggest the presence of another voice. Another area of sensitivity in the translation of this story is semantic or discourse prosody (Baker, 2000; Stubbs, 2001). This is the aura of meaning acquired by a lexical item "through its repeated association with other items in the language (Baker, p.24) or "a feature which extends over more than one unit in a linear string" (Stubbs, p.65).

### Cultural Issues

A literary translation is a device of art used to release the text from its "dependence on prior cultural knowledge" (Herzfeld, 2003; p.110). However, it is not an easy task to transplant a text steeped in one culture into another. Particularly demanding from the translator's point of view is the use of culturally specific metaphors and allusions.

### Compound Words

Compound words are formed by combining two or more words together, but the overall meaning of the compound word may not reflect the meaning of its component words. It's usually best to think of them in terms of three separate groups.

The first group of compound words means exactly what they say. ‘Airport’, ‘crosswalk’ and ‘seashore’, are all familiar examples. The second group of compound words means only half of what they say — at least in a literal sense. While a ‘bookworm’ may enjoy burrowing into a good story, these avid readers don't suddenly become an invertebrate species in the process. The third group of compound words has meanings that have nothing to do with the meanings of the individual words involved. For instance, the English ‘deadline’ refers to the final acceptable time to receive or deliver something. It has nothing to do with death or a line.

### Idioms and expressions

Idiomatic expressions explain something by way of unique examples or figures of speech. And most importantly, the meaning of these peculiar phrases cannot be predicted by the literal definitions of the words it contains. Many linguistic professionals insist that idioms are the most difficult items to translate. In fact, idioms are routinely cited as a problem machine translation engines will never fully solve.

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## Missing Names

A language may not have an exact match for a certain action or object that exists in another language. In American English, for instance, some homeowners have what they describe as a “guest room.” It is simply a space where their invited guests can sleep for the night. This concept is common in other languages as well, but often expressed quite differently. Greeks describe it with the single word “*ksnona*” while their Italian neighbors employ a three-word phrase “*camera per gliospiti*” instead. Such similar concepts, if, exists in those two language, it does not do any injustice but in case, it doesn’t similarise or exist, then it creates difficulties and a translator will have to do with the optional, near-related words to fit the text.

## Two-Word Verbs

Sometimes a verb and a preposition will take on a separate, specific meaning when used together. Two-word verbs are common in informal English. “Look up,” “close up,” “fill out,” “shut up,” “bring up,” “break down” and “break in” are everyday examples. In many cases, though, it is neither necessary nor appropriate to translate the preposition separately.

## Multiple Meanings

The same word may mean multiple things depending on where it’s placed and how it’s used in a sentence. This phenomenon typically follows one of two patterns. There are homonyms (i.e. *Scale* the fish before weighing it on the *scale*), which look and sound alike but are defined differently. And then there are heteronyms (i.e. I drove down the *windy* road on a *windy* day), which look alike but are defined and pronounced differently.

## Sarcasm

Sarcasm is a sharp, bitter, or cutting style of expression that usually means the opposite of its literal phrasing. Sarcasm frequently loses its meaning when translated from word-to-word into another language and can often cause unfortunate misunderstandings.

Ideally, a publisher would remove sarcasm from the source text prior to translation. But in cases where that style is central to the content requirements, the publisher should explicitly underscore sarcastic passages. That way, translators will have a chance to avoid literal misunderstandings and suggest a local idiom that may work better in the target language.

## CONCLUSION

It is a great challenge dealing with a language that has a different feel and nuance embedded more in culture than in literal meaning, but I hope that this reconstruction of the translation process sheds some light on some of the linguistic and cultural issues that might be encountered in literary translation in general and from Arabic into English in particular.

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