



**TECHNIUM**  
**SOCIAL SCIENCES JOURNAL**

**Vol. 30, 2022**

**A new decade  
for social changes**

[www.techniumscience.com](http://www.techniumscience.com)

ISSN 2668-7798



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## Translation of Literature as a Tool to Enrich Target Language Literature

**Amna Faisal Raheem**

BS Scholar English, National University of Modern Languages, Hyderabad, Pakistan

[faisalamna4u@gmail.com](mailto:faisalamna4u@gmail.com)

**Sabreena Shah**

Lecturer English Literature and Linguistics, National University of Modern Languages, Hyderabad, Pakistan

[sabreena.shah@numl.edu.pk](mailto:sabreena.shah@numl.edu.pk), [sabreenatheshah@gmail.com](mailto:sabreenatheshah@gmail.com)

**Nayab Asif Memon**

BS Scholar English, National University of Modern Languages, Hyderabad, Pakistan

[nayabmemon98@gmail.com](mailto:nayabmemon98@gmail.com)

**Abstract.** Translation of literature is the translation of literary art forms such as poetry, novels, dramas, short stories, films etc. The mainstream critiques of translation looked down upon the translation of literature. Translation of literature is often considered as artificial. However, on the bright side, translation of literature can be seen as a positive phenomenon. It is not just a mechanical task; rather it is a process of new creation. Translation of literature is a work of art. A skilled translator is a gem, who can add many new aspects to the translated literature. This article analyses the translation of Arabic poem and the translation of the story of Ali Baba and forty thieves to explain that the translation of literature is a tool to enrich target language literature.

**Keywords.** Translation, Translator, Literature, Enrichment, Target Language, Fiction.

### 1. Introduction

Translation of literature refers to the translation of literary genres such as poetry, novels, dramas, short stories, films etc. In the contemporary world, literature is crossing the border and reaching the wider audience through translation. However, translation of literature is often considered as artificial. Many mainstream critiques and translation theorists put literary translation inferior to the original text by highlighting the negative side of translation of literature. They see translation from the perspective of linguistics theories given by Sapir, Whorf Firth, Chomsky, Halliday and others. These translators claim that in the process of translation, a literary work losses the literary and aesthetic quality; hence it loses the essence.

Moreover, there are some errors by the translator such as subjective interpretation of the work. Hence, the position of translation is often considered as secondary in target language.

As contrast to this, translation can be seen as a tool to enrich target language literature. This new dimension can be seen by looking at translation from the perspective of literary sciences such as rhetoric, stylistics, literary criticism and comparative literature. A skilled translator can add many positive aspects into the translated work. A translated work can enrich the target language literature by bringing development into it. Translating itself is a process of new creation. This article will provide mixed analysis of translation of Arabic poem into English and the translation of the story of Ali Baba and forty thieves by applying Even Zohar's model to answer two main questions:

- Can translation of literature enrich the literature of target language?
- Can translated literature compete with the target language literature?

## **2. Literature Review**

Freeman (2009) delineates what is 'Translation' by referring to number of theories with respect to translating language and literature which are as follows: Steiner (1998, p. 287) defines translation as the transfer of meaning from one language from another. Sontag (2001, p. 340) says that translation means taking something where it was previously not—in essence: across the gap. Jakobson (1959) differentiates three types or orders of translation: firstly, reproduce statement in source language; secondly reproduce it in target language; thirdly in non-verbal sign system. France (2000a) says that translation theories are mostly normative in nature and focus on highlighting what should come in the umbrella of translation and what should not. Toury (1995) in his descriptive translation theory tries to see how translation has been seen previous and what are the kinds of translation as per the multiple contexts. It focuses on the norms which have important role in selecting a text for translation and how to translate it. Hermans (2000, p 14) explains that translated text is referred as other as compared to the source text. But translation is the image of the original text slanted, coloured, preformed, overdetermined, but never innocent. Translation in actual 'invents' its original'.

Graff (2018) discussed the relationship between translation and creative writing based on a interview about translation and creative writing of Margaret Rogers (2005), professor emerita at the University of Surrey in the United Kingdom. Literary translation is considered as a creative writing whereas specialized translation does not possess any specific labels. She further adds that translation is a "type of writing", and "translators are writers". Manuela Perteghella wrote a book which contains a chapter called "Translation as Creative Writing" (2013). She argued that creative writing is the translation of thoughts and inner voice into words whereas in interlingual translation; translators do not only deal with their own language, but also the language of the text to be translated. Hence, they are supposed to pay attention to other voices.

Risku et al. (2016, p. 64). interviewed a translator. That interview focused on her writing and translating processes. They then compared the processes of these two disciplines and concluded that although there were many similarities, but there are differences for text production; for instance, organization and content planning were more important for writing than for translating.

Abukhudairi (n.d), discusses the three issues that are frequently included in the recent works on literary translation and presents an alternative point of view. The first one is translation and literature. He said that many literary and translation critiques differentiate in original literary work and translated literary work. According to them, original literary work is an art

and creation whereas translated work lacks originality and creativity. Therefore, its position is lower. Whereas others maintain that translation is an art itself. And it cannot be considered less than the original text. The second issue is of loss and gain. This article delineates that although there are many aspects which are lost in translation but there are many aspects that translation adds to the original works such as imprint, modulation, adaptation, debrowillardise, etc. Pope's translation of the Iliad by Homer is the best example of how a translator adds artistic aspects to the translation. Thirdly it discusses translation as literary creation. Translation critics commonly arrange literary genres as per the difficulty level of their translation. Recent researches work on bringing forth many negative ideas regarding literary translation such as; ellipsis, overtly erroneous errors, limits of translatability, untranslatability, and other linguistic terms which refer to the short-comings of both translation as well as translators, translation process, text-categories, translation criticism, translation methods etc. As compared to this, translation is similar to the work of writers and poets. Translation of literature is a recreation and independent work of art.

At the end, the article introduces the term "literariness". Literariness refers to the phonetic, lexical, syntactical and semantic items present in the literature which makes it different from ordinary writing. Literariness of translation refers to the aesthetic and creative aspects of the language used in translation, its style and its structure. Literariness also includes the literary form used in translation text which is either equivalent or close to the literary form of the original literary text.

I choose this topic to research on as there is very less work previous on this topic hence there is a research gap.

### **3. Methodology**

Mixed method has been used to conduct this research. It is a mixture of qualitative and quantitative research. For qualitative research I have analysed a translation of an Arabic poem in English. The data is collected and analysed from primary and secondary sources. The primary sources include the original Arabic version of Jamil's poem and the translation done by Nicholson in English, Even Zohar's theory of Polysystem, whereas the secondary source includes articles.

For conducting quantitative research, I have conducted a survey. The survey questionnaire consists of eight questions. The questions are related to the competence of the translated story of Ali Baba and forty thieves to the Pakistani children's tales. It includes multiple choice questions. Systematic sampling is done for the research. I have used the method of probability sample in which I have given the chance to fill the survey questionnaire to the Pakistani readers of Urdu literature due to the nature of the research.

### **4. Framework**

Even Zohar's Polysystem theory of translation is chosen as a framework to guide this study. Zhang, X. (2014) delineates the Even Zohar's points. Polysystem is a system consists of literary and non-literary systems. This system is based on the conception of dynamic change and heterogeneousness. The first concept dynamic change says that translation occupies both primary and secondary position as per the context of target language and target culture. Translation occupies primary position in three cases:

- When literature is young or in developmental process
- When literature is weak

- When literature is facing crises

Under these conditions translation alters the receptor culture perceptions of the translated work.

However, translation occupies secondary position when literary traditions of target language are strong; for instance, French. In such cases translation tries to please the target culture and cannot be considered same as original. The translation tries to adapt the predominant target culture norms instead of setting trends.

The second concept is heterogeneousness. Only classical works are regarded as literature whereas the work with narrow readership such as translated work is marginalized. Zohar opposes this convention and considers all literary genres. He gave the example that A.E Andersen's fairy tales are essential part of Danish literature. Similarly, the fairy tales translated in Chinese language have wide readership across China.

It is an over-arching framework that could help to answer the research questions putted forward in this article.

## 5. Discussion

The discussion is divided into two parts. First the discussion is focused on the translation of Jamil's (1984) poem by Nicholson (1921) then the discussion is about the position of Ali Baba and forty thieves. Arabic poem and its translation are given below:

ألا ليت ريعان الشباب جديد  
فنبقى كما كنا نكون وأنتم  
وهل ألقين فرداً بثينة مرة  
منها علقت الهوى فيها وليداً فلم يزل  
وأفانيت عمري في انتظاري وعدّها  
فلا أنا مردود بما جئت طالباً  
ودهرراً تولى يا بثين يعود  
قريب وإذ ما تبذلين زهيد  
تجود لنا من ودّها ونجود  
إلى اليوم ينمى حُبّها ويزيد  
وأبليت فيها الدهر وهو جديد  
ولا حُبّها فيما يبید يبید

The translated version of this poem by Nicholson is:

*Oh, that youth's flower a new might lift its head  
And return to us, Buthaina, the time that fled!  
And oh, might we bide again as we used to be  
When thy folk dwelt nigh and grudged what thou gavest me!*

*Shall I ever meet Buthaina alone again,  
Each of us full of love, as a cloud of rain?  
Fast in her net was I when a lad, and till  
This day my love is growing and waxing still.  
I have spent my lifetime waiting for her to speak,  
And the bloom of youth is faded from off my cheek;  
But I will not suffer that she my suit deny,  
My love remains undying, the' all things die*

The comparison of Arabic poem and its translation shows that translation is not a mere rendering of poem from Arabic to English, rather it is a new creation. Its enrichment can be seen through the analysis of the genre and structure.

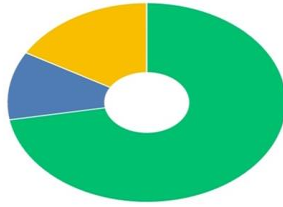
This poem is an ode. Ode refers to a short lyric poem that praises an individual, an idea, or an event. The translation of this ode expresses intense emotions in a spontaneous manner. The translated version managed to maintain the unique way in which the poet praises his lover and the idea of romantic love pleasing to the senses. It contains the typical traits present in genre of courtly love poetry. The genre of courtly love featured a lady, usually married but always in some way inaccessible hence devotion, service, and self-sacrifice is offered by the noble man for her. The translated version of poetry is so spontaneous in its manner to express the devotion of poet towards his lady. His love for her is unrequited, as in the case of typical knight in courtly love poetry. Lovesickness is another element of courtly love poetry which is present in the poem. The passion of love affects the poet and he talks to his lover in imagination. Hence it shows that the English translation of Jamil's poem by Nicholson has originality as well as fluency.

The structure of translated poetry is also worth praising. It is lyrical. Like a traditional ode; it is divided in three stanzas. Although it is translated from Arabic to English and both are distinct languages; it manages to fit in to the structure of English love poetry. The creativity of translator is such that the artistic and poetic style of translation stands out throughout the whole poem especially in second, six, tenth and twelve line. The rhyme, rhythm and the other literary devices are used in a spontaneous manner as in original ode written in English language.

Hence it can be said that the translated version of poem is a well refined recreation. Although both English and Arabic have strong literary traditions and no one is weaker comparatively; but still the translation of this poetry is magnificent and stands out. It is a work of art that can be evaluated as an individual entity on the bases of its creativity, originality and artistic features. It even goes beyond Even Zohar's concept. Although both English and Arabic are strong literary traditions, the work still managed to fit into the English literature. Although it does not occupy the primary position, it cannot be given secondary position as well. It still can be counted as a work that comes at the top ladder of translated poetry due to translator's ability to maintain English genre and structure of ode.

The survey conducted to check the competence of Ali baba and forty thieves with the target language (Urdu) literature is discussed below:

1. Which story did you encounter more in childhood?

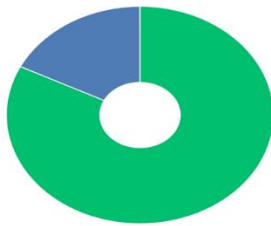


Answered: 18 Skipped: 0

Translated Ali baba and forty thieves	72.22%	13
Pakistani children tales	11.11%	2
Others	16.67%	3

When the target sample of Urdu readers were asked that what have you encountered more in childhood; the results show that more than seventy percent people encountered the translated version of Ali baba in childhood; and only 11.11 percent people encountered the Pakistani children's tales. As compared to it sixteen people respond in the favour of stories other than that.

2. Did you read or listen the translated story of Ali baba and forty thieves?



Answered: 17 Skipped: 1

Yes	82.35%	14
No	17.65%	3

When the sample of Urdu literature readers are asked whether they have read or listen to the translated story of Ali Baba and forty thieves or not; more than eighty percent people said yes whereas only 17.65 percent people said no.

Moreover, when they were asked to rate the story of Ali Baba from the scale of 1-10, the average showed that overall rate is 9.11. All the people rated the story above 3. Only 16 percent respondents rated it 4 whereas thirty three percent respondents rated it between 5-7. Fifty five percent respondents rated it between 8-10.

4. Do you like the translated story of Ali baba and forty thieves?



Answered: 18 Skipped: 0

Yes	83.33%	15
No	16.67%	3

When the sample of Urdu literature readers are asked whether they liked the story of Ali Baba and Forty thieves or not, more than eight percent people responded yes; whereas only 16.67 percent people responded no.

5. How did you find the translated story of Ali baba and forty thieves?

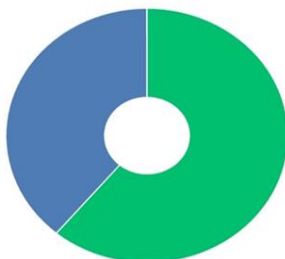


Answered: 18 Skipped: 0

Interesting	83.33%	15
Exotic	16.67%	3

When the sample of Urdu literature readers are asked about how do they find the story of Ali Baba and forty thieves; more than 83 percent people responded that they find it interesting, whereas only more than 16 percent people find it exotic.

6. The translated version of Ali baba and forty thieves is good

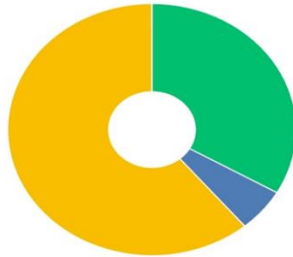


Answered: 18 Skipped: 0

Agree	61.11%	11
Disagree	38.89%	7

When they were asked that whether the translated version of Ali Baba and forty thieves is good; more than sixty percent people agreed to it more thirty eight percent people disagreed.

7. What is your favorite childhood story?

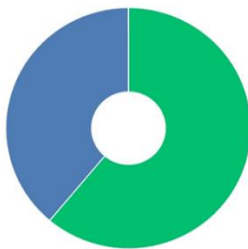


Answered: 18 Skipped: 0

The translated story of Ali baba and forty thieves	33.33%	6
Pakistani children tales	5.56%	1
Others	61.11%	11

When the sample of Urdu literature readers are asked about their favorite childhood stories, more than 33 percent people picked translated story of Ali Baba and forty thieves; whereas only more than five percent people picked Pakistani children tales. However, more than sixty percent people responded others as their favorite stories. The reason for this large number of responses in favor of others is the result of hybridity of people, and the effect of globalization and wide exposure to internet, which provide them with endless options of reading literature. However, as far as the case of competence between the translated version of Ali baba and forty thives and Pakistani children stories is concerned; translated Ali baba is still more favorite than the original Pakistani children tales.

8. What do you prefer?



Answered: 18 Skipped: 0

The translated story of Ali baba and forty thieves	61.11%	11
Pakistani children tales	38.89%	7

When the readers of Urdu literature are asked about their preference from the translated Ali Baba and forty thieves; more that sixty percent people responded in favor of the translated version of Ali baba and forty thieves; whereas 38.89 present people responded in favor of Pakistani children tales.

The data presented above shows that the translated version of Alibaba is highly competent. It gives a tough time to the Pakistani children tales. The comparative difference in ratio of both is huge. Hence it can be said that translation of Ali baba is a huge success. It occupies a position the Urdu literature. Even it can be said that the line between the position of original Urdu children literature and the translated version is blur. Its position can not be

belittled. It highlights the Even Zohar's concept of heterogeneousness. All genres are the part of Urdu literature; even the minor literature genres such as translated works and children stories. Children tales are often considered as a work of less importance and are excluded from the mainstream literature. However, in the context of Urdu literature, the story of Ali baba and forty thieves is a children's literature as well as translated work. Nevertheless, it is an essential part of Urdu literature.

## **6. Results**

The above mentioned analysis of the translation done by Nicholson of Jamil's poem shows that a good translation contribute to the genre of the target language as well as to the structure of the particular genre of target language. It is not less than the original poem. It can not be, at any rate, underestimated and belittled. Translation is not a purely mechanical task. It is a creative work of art. The above mentioned analysis done on the bases of comparative literature, rhetoric powers is the proof that translation and literary work are both same. Both of them can only be differentiated on the bases that original work contains the ideas of the writer whereas translation is a creation based on literary work produced by another writer which the writer translates. The translated work is a contribution to the target language literature. Therefore it enriches the literature of the target language.

The competence of translated literature to the literature of target language can be seen through the analysis of the position of the story of Ali baba and forty thieves in Pakistani literature. The story of Ali baba and fourth thieves is one of the most celebrated stories of all times in Pakistani literature and culture. As a children's tale, it is tell and retell to the children in oral tradition as well as has a wide readership in written tradition. It has many translated versions in Urdu; some are close to the original text whereas some are diluted versions. Despite of all these differences, its readership and oral storytelling tradition is highly anticipated as well as appreciated. From the discussion presented above; it can be concluded that the translated version of Ali baba and forty thieves is the reader's priority. It gives a very tough competition to the Pakistani children tales. Ali baba is encounter, liked and preferred more by the Pakistani children who are the children readers of Pakistan as compared to Pakistani children tales.

## **Conclusion**

By looking at the analysis presented above, it can be concluded that translation of literature is a tool to enrich target language literature. The translated work is a contribution to the genre and structure of target language. Moreover, it competes with the target language literature in a way that sometimes it is more celebrated in the target language as compared to the original literature of target language.

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