7/ AN ANALYTIC STUDY OF TWO ENGLISH TRANSLATIONS OF *"LE LOUP ET LE CHIEN" O*F LA FONTAINE

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Abstract

The product of translation is influenced by many factors: the translator's personality, his style, his extra linguistic competence etc. Since no two persons are the same, no two translations of a text can be the same. Consequently, the translation done by two people from different literary epochs will differ. In addition to this fact, the translation of poems and fables prove more difficult because of the complexity in their aesthetic and literary nature. To alleviate this difficulty, some strategies are propounded. The thrust of this work is to analyse two versions of the English translation of **Le loup et le chien** *by La Fontaine in order to identify their strength and weakness and also, to better appreciate the art of translation. It also tries to identify the translation strategy employed by the translators.*

Key words*: fables, faithfulness in translation, poems, strategies of poetry translation*

Résumé

Le produit de la traduction est influencé par de nombreux facteurs : la personnalité du traducteur, son style, ses compétences linguistiques supplémentaires, etc. Étant donné qu'il n'y a pas deux personnes identiques, il n'y a pas deux traductions d'un texte identiques. Par conséquent, la traduction faite par deux personnes d'époques littéraires différentes sera différente. Outre ce fait, la traduction des poèmes et des fables s'avère plus difficile en raison de la complexité de leur nature esthétique et littéraire. Pour pallier cette difficulté, certaines stratégies sont proposées. L'idée maîtresse de ce travail est d'analyser deux versions de la traduction anglaise de **Le loup et le chien** *de La Fontaine afin d'identifier leurs forces et leurs faiblesses et aussi, de mieux apprécier l'art de la traduction. Il tente également d'identifier la stratégie de traduction employée par les traducteurs.*

Mots-clés *: fables, fidélité en traduction. les poèmes, stratégies de la traduction de la poétique*

1.0 Introduction

A fable is a literary genre: a succinct fictional story, in <u>prose</u> or <u>verse</u>, that features <u>animals</u>,<u>legendary creatures</u>, <u>plants</u>, inanimate objects, or forces of nature that are <u>anthropomorphized</u> (given human qualities, such as the ability to speak <u>human language</u>) and that illustrates or leads to a particular <u>moral</u>lesson (a "moral"), which may at the end be added explicitly as a pithy [maxim](#) or [saying](#)(www.theschoolrun.com). The Encyclopedia.com defines fable as a brief allegorical narrative, in verse or prose, illustrating a moral thesis or satirizing human beings. The characters of a fable are usually animals who talk and act like people while retaining their animal traits.

From these definitions, we can deduce that a fable is a story, a poem that personifies plant, animals, and inanimate objects with the view to provide a didactic message. Invariably, it possesses the qualities of all the three genres of a literary text: prose, drama and poem.

According to Miremadii (1995) La Fontaine the author of "Le *loup et chien"* is the heir of ancient fabulists: Aesop, Bidpai and Phaedrus. He employs a form that is familiar to his readers. Most of his fables are in verse form which varies. The eight syllable- lines are his basic structure, but the twelve syllables Alexandrian forms are often used when he wants to express exceptional drama and seriousness. The fables of La Fontaine are described thus":

> His fables are all beautiful poems, but few of them are beautiful
>
> fables. His animal speakers do not sufficiently preserve their animal
>
> characters. It is quite otherwise with La Fontaine. His beasts are made
>
> most nicely to observe all the proprieties not only of the scene in
>
> which they are called to speak, but of the great drama into which they

are from time to time introduced. His work constitutes an harmonious whole. To those who read it in the original, it is one of the few which never cloy the appetite. As in the poetry of Burns, you are apt to think the last verse you read of him the best.

(http://livros01.livrosgratis.com.br/gu007241.pdf)

A closer look at the fables of *La Fontaine* shows that they possess the major characteristics of poetry: rhymes, rhythm, verse, metaphors, imageries, styles, tones, similes etc. (http://livros01.livrosgratis.com.br/gu007241.pdf)

Hence, the difficulties inherent in the translation of poetry are the same in the translation of a fable.

1.1 **The translation of poetry/fable**

Translation is the creative act of transferring and transposing messages from a written text from one language (source language) to another language (target language). These messages to be transferred come through various channels:

A. The semantic channel
B. The pragmatic and connotative channel
C. The form and style channel.

Jacobson cited by Kolahi (2012, p,451) defines translation as "whole message transference from source text to target text". A translator who takes into consideration the above-mentioned channels of information will arrive at Jacobson whole message. It is important to note that context; culture, epoch, and the figurative language of the text play a major role in understanding a text especially a literary text that contains a lot of devices which hide information in the text.

Talking about literary translation particularly the translation of fables/poetry, Kolahi (opt cit) opines that, "There is a great tension between the form and content and the act of literary translation is indeed a challenging act in which the poetry translator's main concern is whether to prefer the form over the content or vice versa".

To this effect, the translation of poetry has generated debates and controversy amongst scholars. Jakobson cited in Venuti, (2000, p.118) is of the opinion that "by definition poetry is untranslatable". While scholars like Dryden argue that all meaning, and concepts are translatable and what is said in one language can be said in another language Miremadi (1995. P.85). To lessen the difficulty in poetry/fable translation, scholars proposed some strategies.

The purpose of this study is to analyze two English versions of *le loup et le chien* of La Fontaine, identify the strategy employed by the various translators, and the level of faithfulness to the source language text.

1.2   The Translators

The first translated version of our corpus was translated by Elizur Wright and the second by Walter Thornbury.

Elizur Wright was born in Connecticut, USA. He was an intelligent student. In his time, he was the best student in mathematics and Greek. He did not wait for graduation before he stated teaching in 1829, he moved to Hudson, Ohio to accept an appointment as professor of mathematics and natural philosophy. In 1833, he was unanimously chosen secretary of the first anti-slavery convention. Then he became the editor of the newspaper Anti-slavery Reporter. 1n 1846 he established a newspaper, The *Chronotype*. Between 1853 and 1858 besides editing newspapers, he gave his attention to invention and mechanics, constructing a spike-making machine, a water faucet etc. he was also an insurance broker. In 1873 Wright

published a book titled *The politics and mysteries of life insurance*. He also became a consulting actuary for various life insurance companies in the Commonwealth. (https://history-computer.com/People/WrightBio).

Walter Thornbury was born in London. His parents wanted him to be a priest, but he resolved to become an artist and spent all his time at the academy of James Mathews Leigh. Later, he became a journalist and a man of letters. He achieves some reputation as a versifier, a biographer and author of popular historical and topographical sketches. To the monthly magazines, he was a frequent contributor. World cat identities Worldcat.org

2. 0 Methodology

The analysis of the translated version of our corpus is based on Kuic point of view which states that an adequate translation of poetry should be built on three kinds of faithfulness: faithfulness to the meaning(content) of the original(SL),to the music (form) of the original and to the spirit of the translator's mother tongue (the TL). Kuic (1970, p.185). For this work, the original text by la Fontaine is labeled (ST). Elizur Wright version is translation A (TA) while Walter Thornbury is a translation referred to as Translation B (TB).

3.0 Fables and poetry

In the course of this work, we are going to look at three strategies of poem translation- a) Holmes approaches 2) Lefevere's strategy and 3) aesthetic translation.

3.1 Holmes approaches to poem translation.

Holmes (1970, p.:94-9) proposes four approaches to translate poetry:
1. Mimetic approach- in this approach, the translated version which he calls "metapoem" retains the form of the original text. Simply put, it is the approach of

mimicking or imitating the form of the original text. The work of the translator is to strive to retain the form. Hence the message to be transferred is the rhythm and the flow of the text which forms the style of the text.

2   Analogical form

This approach looks beyond the original text and tries to identify the role played by the form in the source language text. The translator then seeks a form that plays the same role or fills a parallel function within the poetic tradition of the target language.

3   Content derivative which refers to the organic form.

In this strategy, the translator takes into consideration firstly the semantic materials in the poem and allow the target text to take its own shape as the work develops. This strategy provides two inseparable aspects in the target text" the form and the content.

4. Extraneous or deviant form

This strategy can be called liberal translation. It transfers the meaning of the text with greater flexibility than the mimetic. The translated text is not drawn from the form or the content of the original text. This strategy is rarely used in practice.

2.2 Lefevere strategy of poem translation

Lefevere views poetry as a unified context in which the form, content and aesthetic issues are closely intermingled, but all the issues have their own special value. Kolabi (2012, p.460)

He proposed the following strategies:

1. Phonemic Translation: reproducing the source language sound in the target language.

2. Literal Translation: word for word translation.

3. Metrical Translation: reproducing the source language meter.

4. Verse to Prose Translation: Distorting the sense, communicative values and syntax of source text.

5. Rhymed Translation: transferring the rhyme of the original poem into target language.

6. Blank/free verse translation: finding just the proper equivalents in the target language with a proper semantic result.

7. Interpretation: version and imitation. Version occurs when the absence of source language text is retained, and the form is changed. Imitation occurs when the translator produces the poem of his own. Copied from kolabi (2012 opt cit). In this strategy, the method of translation adopted by the translator is influence by the purpose of translating the poem/fable.

2.3 Accommodation and Compensation strategy

 This is another strategy for translating poetry propounded by Aewei 2005. This strategy requires what is called in mathematics the procedures of plus and minus. Hence what is subtracted in one area is creatively accommodated in another to maintain and preserve the aesthetic values of the poem. Example, A pun present in the first stanza of a poem could be creatively accommodated in the next stanza. In other words, a literary device (such as metaphors, alliteration, dictions, assonance, meter, rhymes etc.) which could not be recreated in a verse due to difference in linguistic features could be recreated in other verse. This strategy is motivated by the acceptance or belief that aesthetic can be reproduced in another language and culture if accommodation is made. Aiwei (2005, p.2).

 The strategies mentioned above try to suggest ways of reproducing either the form or content or both   in the target language. And since form and content represent

integral parts which make up a poem, they should be preserved in the target language. Aiwei (op. cit) goes further to opine that this can be accomplish but with a level of loss. Xiaoshu (2003, p.3) agrees with Aiwei by postulating that the original style of the source poem can be reproduce but it is a difficult task to accomplish.

The following points are brought to light 1) Poetry/fables can be effectively translated 2) It is a difficult task, 3. It is accompanied with a level of loss.

3.0 : Corpus

Source text	First English Version	Second English Version

LE LOUP ET LE CHIEN
Un Loup n'avait que les os et la peau,
Tant les chiens faisaient bonne garde.
Ce Loup rencontre un Dogue aussi puissant que beau,
Gras, poli, qui s'était fourvoyé par mégarde.
L'attaquer, le mettre en quartiers,
Sire Loup l'eût fait volontiers ;
Mais il fallait livrer bataille,
Et le Mâtin était de taille
À se défendre hardiment.
Le Loup donc l'aborde humblement,
Entre en propos, et lui fait compliment
Sur son embonpoint, qu'il admire.
« Il ne tiendra qu'à vous beau sire,
D'être aussi gras que moi, lui repartit le Chien.
Quittez les bois, vous ferez bien :
Vos pareils y sont misérables,
Cancres, hères, et pauvres diables,
	THE WOLF AND THE DOG.
	  A prowling wolf, whose shaggy skin
	  (So strict the watch of dogs had been)
	    Hid little but his bones,
	  Once met a mastiff dog astray.
	  A prouder, fatter, sleeker Tray,
	    No human mortal owns.
	  Sir Wolf in famish'd plight,
	    Would fain have made a ration
	    Upon his fat relation;
	  But then he first must fight;
	    And well the dog seem'd able
	    To save from wolfish table
	  His carcass snug and tight.
	    So, then, in civil conversation
	    The wolf express'd his admiration
	  Of Tray's fine case. Said Tray, politely,
	  'Yourself, good sir, may be as slightly;
	    Quit but the woods, advised by me.
		THE WOLF AND THE DOG
		A Wolf, who was but skin and bone,
		So watchful had the sheep-dogs grown,
		Once met a Mastiff fat and sleek,
		Stern only to the poor and weak.
		Sir Wolf would fain, no doubt, have munched
		This pampered cur, and on him lunched;
		But then the meal involved a fight,
		And he was craven, save at night;
		For such a dog could guard his throat
		As well as any dog of note.
		So the Wolf, humbly flattering him,
		Praised the soft plumpness of each limb.
		"You're wrong, you're wrong, my noble sir,
		To roam in woods indeed you err,"
		The dog replies, "you do indeed;
		If you but wish, with me

Dont la condition est de mourir de faim.
Car quoi ? Rien d'assuré : point de franche lippée ;
Tout à la pointe de l'épée.
Suivez-moi : vous aurez un bien meilleur destin. »
Le Loup reprit : « Que me faudra-t-il faire ?
– Presque rien, dit le Chien, donner la chasse aux gens
Portants bâtons, et mendiants ;
Flatter ceux du logis, à son Maître complaire :
Moyennant quoi votre salaire
Sera force reliefs de toutes les façons :
Os de poulets, os de pigeons,
Sans parler de mainte caresse. »
Le Loup déjà se forge une félicité
Qui le fait pleurer de tendresse.
Chemin faisant, il vit le col du Chien pelé.
« Qu'est-ce là ? lui dit-il. – Rien. – Quoi ? Rien ? – Peu de chose.
– Mais encore ? – Le collier dont je suis attaché
De ce que vous voyez est peut-être la cause.
– Attaché ? dit le Loup : vous ne courez donc pas
Où vous voulez ? - Pas toujours ; mais qu'importe ?
– Il importe si bien, que de tous vos repas
Je ne veux en aucune sorte,
Et ne voudrais pas même à ce prix un trésor. »
Cela dit, maître Loup s'enfuit, et court encor

For all your fellows here, I see,
  Are shabby wretches, lean and gaunt,
Belike to die of haggard want.
  With such a pack, of course it follows,
  One fights for every bit he swallows.
    Come, then, with me, and share
  On equal terms our princely fare.'
      'But what with you
      Has one to do?'
  Inquires the wolf. 'Light work indeed,'
  Replies the dog; 'you only need
    To bark a little now and then,
    To chase off duns and beggar men,
    To fawn on friends that come or go forth,
    Your master please, and so forth;
      For which you have to eat
      All sorts of well-cook'd meat--
    Cold pullets, pigeons, savoury messes--
    Besides unnumber'd fond caresses.'
    The wolf, by force of appetite,
    Accepts the terms outright,
    Tears glistening in his eyes.
    But faring on, he spies
    A gall'd spot on the mastiff's neck.

you'll feed.
Your comrades are a shabby pack,
Gaunt, bony, lean in side and back,
Pining for hunger, scurvy, hollow,
Fighting for every scrap they swallow.
Come, share my lot, and take your ease."
"What must I do to earn it, please?"
"Do?—why, do nothing! Beggar-men
Bark at and chase; fawn now and then
At friends; your master always flatter.
Do this, and by this little matter
Earn every sort of dainty dish—
Fowl-bones or pigeons'—what you wish—
Aye, better things; and with these messes,
Fondlings, and ceaseless kind caresses."
The Wolf, delighted, as he hears
Is deeply moved—almost to tears;
When all at once he sees a speck,
A gall upon the Mastiff's neck.
"What's that?"—"Oh, nothing!" "Nothing?"—"No!"
"A slight rub from the chain, you know."
"The chain!" replies the Wolf, aghast;
"You are not free?—they tie you fast?"
"Sometimes. But, law! what

	'What's that?' he cries. 'O, nothing but a speck.' 'A speck?' 'Ay, ay; 'tis not enough to pain me; Perhaps the collar's mark by which they chain me.' 'Chain! chain you! What! run you not, then, Just where you please, and when?' 'Not always, sir; but what of that?' 'Enough for me, to spoil your fat! It ought to be a precious price Which could to servile chains entice; For me, I'll shun them while I've wit.' So ran Sir Wolf, and runneth yet. Translator Elizur Wright	matters it?"— "Matters so much, the rarest bit Seems worthless, bought at such a price." The Wolf, so saying, in a trice, Ran off, and with the best goodwill, And very likely's running still. Translator: Walter Thornbury

3.3.1 **The form/music analysis**

A closer look at the source text and the two translated versions show that they all adopted the free verse style which do not have uniform numbers of syllables in their verses. There is no pattern, no formula just like the source text. This calls to mind the mimetic approach to translation proposed by (Holmes op cit),

The translators tried to create rhymes in their works but the rhyming system in text TB is more consistent. The verses are rhymed two by two AA, BB, CC, DD etc this style is consistent till the end of the fable. ST and TA rhymed where possible. This means that translator B made a conscious effort to render his translation more poetic. Here we observe a mixture of Rhymed Translation proposed by Lefevere and the

strategy of accommodation and compensation by Aiwei. This implies that, the music of the TS is maintained in both translations.

It is also important to note that though .they translated from French to English, but with different variety of English. TA is written in a sort of Elizabethan/Shakespearean English or old English. This was done on purpose to ensure faithfulness to the language and epoch of the source text. Wright noticed the presence of some old French words like (Mâtin, Cancres, hères), while TB is written in more modern English. Consequently TA place his version to an epoch while Thornbury gave new live to the fable by using the modern English. This is a sort of Holmes (op. cit) Content derivative which refers to the organic form.

3.3.2 Content analysis

a)ST . Un loup n'avait que les os et la peau

TA   A prowling wolf whose shaggy skin…hit little but bones

TB   A wolf was but skin and bones

The TA text did a literal translation of the original text ST   while TB gave a detailed description of the wolf's skin (shaggy) hence, the information in this verse was transferred accordingly. We observed that instead of loss of information there was information gain.

b) ST L'attaquer, le mettre en quartier

        Sir loup l'eut fait volontiers

        Mais fallait livrer bataille

TA   Sir Wolf in famish'd plight

        Would fain have made ration

        Upon his fat relation

But then he must fight

TB   Sir Wolf would fain, no doubt have munched;

This pampered cur, and on him lunched;

But then the meal would involve fight

In these verses, relationships were identified but between different people. Translation A, identified family relationship between the wolf and the dog which was silent in the source text. Translation B on the other hand identified the relationship between the dog and humans. These information were not spelt out in the source text they were implied. Here we also observed additional information.

c) ST Et le mâtin était de taille

A se defender hardiment

TA   And well the dog seem'd able

To save from the wolfish table

His carcass smug and tight

TB   and he was craven, save at night

For such dog would guard his throat

As well as any dog on note

To transfer the content of these verses, the translators employed various types of transposition. This is motivated by language competence in comprehension and expression, the ST just said that the dog was able to defend himself. The translated versions went further to explain from what the dog should defend himself-TA from been eating which is suggested by the table. Transposition. (Location-effect)

TB – from being killed suggested by throat (transposition from part to whole)

d) ST entre en propos, et lui fait complément

Sur son embonpoint qu'il admire

TA so then in civil conversation

   The wolf expressed his admiration
TB So the wolf, humbly flattered him

   Praise soft plumpness of each limb

In translation A, the wolf admired the dog but in translation B the wolf admired only the limb.

We observed the strategy of transposition in translation B

e) ST os de poulets, os the pigeon,

Sans compter de **maintes** caresses

TA All sorts of well-cook'd meat--

 Cold pullets, pigeons, savoury messes--

 Besides **unnumber'd** fond caresses.'

   TB   Fowl-bones or pigeons'—what you wish—

Aye, better things; and with these messes,

Fondlings, and **ceaseless** kind caresses."

TA did a sort of transposition (from part to whole) from the bones to the full chickens

TB did a literal translation of the source text.

We also observed that the personality and profession of the translators influenced their choice of words. Translator A, a mathematician selected words related to counting (unnumbered fond) while translator B a core poet and journalist employed softer and emotional words (ceaseless kind) the translators did not allow their audience to choose if the caresses was fond or kind or anything else like the source text . They went ahead to inform their audience that the caresses were fond and kind. This information was implied in the source text.

f) ST Chemin faisant, Il *vit* le col du chien pelé

TA   but fairing on, he **spies** a gall'd on the Mastiff's neck

    TB When all at once he **sees** a speck,

A gall upon the Mastiff's neck.

Translator B used the equivalent of the verb *vit* in his translation while translator A employed the verb to spy.   The dictionary defines spy as one who secretly watches and examines the actions of another individual or organization and gathers information on them to get advantage, his profession made him to be calculative, for him, the wolf even as he was following the dog, was not too sure though the benefit at first was appetizing. That why the moment he saw his identified a loop whole, he grabbed it with both hands.

g) ST Qu'est-ce la? Lui dit-il

TA   What's that? He cried.

    TB   what's that?

The translator A aroused the spirit of great shock and surprised. He saw it as something that should not be done. The ST simply said 'he asked' the TB was silent about. He completely ignores that part. This style was motivated by his profession a poet and journalist who handle shock and emotion on daily base in the course of his profession.

h) ST le loup déjà se forge une félicité

       Qui le fait pleurer de tendresse

TA   the wolf by force of appetite

       Accepts the terms outright

       Tears glistening in his eyes

TB The Wolf, delighted, as he hears

     Is deeply moved—almost to tears;

The source text directly says that the wolf actually cried. The translated versions did not transfer this message. The English culture was employed here to pass a message that is acceptable to the target culture. Probably for them men don't cry. They control their emotions.

4.0 Conclusion

A level of faithfulness to the source text was observed in both versions- faithfulness to the form, to the content and to the music.

The argument of loss in translation, which has created heated debate in translation, is not very much noticed in the two versions. Instead there is gain, hence, that there is nothing ''loss'' in translation but on the contrary, there is something ''gained'' by birth of a text which will not be a replica of the original text but will have the ability to achieve a sort to the SL/ this result was made possible because the translators chose the strategy necessary for each situation as the need arises.

This work highlights that, no single strategy is good enough for the translation of poetry and fable and that a translator's profession, religion and social life influence his choice of words/terms in his work. We there suggest that a translator should be very familiar with all the strategies of poem or fable translation. This will help him/her select the appropriate strategy.

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