

Writing Sima Qian's Rhetorical Style into English— On Burton Watson's Translation of *Shi Ji (Records of the Grand Historian)*

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The Chinese historian Sima Qian employed a great many rhetorical devices in his writing of *Shi Ji (Records of the Historian)*. The canonized status *Shi Ji* has acquired as a literary masterpiece among Chinese and other Asian readers for centuries, is attributable, to a great extent, to the creative rhetoric recurring in its narrative and direct speeches. To facilitate a better understanding of Oriental thought and literature, Columbia University undertook a huge translation project of Asian traditions in the 1950s.

A young American translator Burton Watson was commissioned to reproduce Sima Qian's *Shi Ji* for the general educated readership in America by the Program Committee of Translations from the Oriental Classics. Watson, employing subtle literary devices in modern English prose style, successfully constructed an image of Sima Qian as a master stylist in his translation entitled *Records of the Grand Historian*, which ignited decades of studies on *Shi Ji* as a literary masterpiece as well as a historical text in the English-speaking world. This paper explores the strategies Watson adopted in writing Sima Qian's rhetorical style into English and stresses the role of the translator as a mediator in intercultural translation.

In order to transmit to Western readers representative works of the major Asian traditions in thought and literature, Columbia University undertook, in the 1950s, a huge translation project Translations from the Oriental Classics. *Shi Ji (Records of the Historian)* was selected to be part of the series for Chinese tradition, numbering LXV of an even larger cultural construction mission - the enormous "Records of Civilization: Sources and Studies" project edited under the auspices of the Department of History. The translation policy was to provide translations based on scholarly study but written for the general reader rather than primarily for other specialists. In other words, the aim was to put these translations within the reach of ordinary readers and students to facilitate a better understanding of Chinese thought and literature (DeBary, 1969; Watson, 1961a).

Initiated by the Columbia College Program Committee of Translations from the Oriental Classics, Burton Watson's translation project was under way in the late 1950s. His two-volume translation *Records of the Grand Historian*, published by Columbia University Press in 1961, was so successful that it was collected into the Chinese Translations Series of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) (Watson, 1961a). The base text was Takikawa Kametarō's edition of the *Shi Ji* published in Tokyo in 1934. Upon its publication, Watson's translation was well-received for its intelligibility as well as the ease and elegance of a fluent natural modern prose style. A distinguished Sinologist Timoteus Pokora commented that Watson's translations were both highly readable and quite reliable (Pokora, 1963). William H. Nienhauser, Jr., Professor of Classical Chinese Literature at the University of Wisconsin-Madison, the chief editor and translator of a new

full *Shi Ji* translation project, stated that “Watson succeeded in introducing a literary aspect to the western work on the *Shih chi* through his analysis and his own eloquent English style” (Nienhauser, 1996, p. 9), and Nienhauser was so moved by Watson’s work that he dedicated the second volume of his translations to Watson “for conveying much of the music” of the original (Nienhauser, 2002, p. vii).

Shi Ji, a representative and pattern-setting monumental work, ranking No.1 of the 24 Standard Histories of China, has been appreciated as a masterpiece of Chinese literature as well as an innovative historical text for centuries both in China and other Asian countries like Japan and Korea. The special stylistic effect in *Shi Ji* in portraying characters and conveying the author’s perceptions of the world is due, to a large extent, to Sima Qian’s adept employment of the language-specific and culturally loaded rhetorical devices, which presents a big challenge to anyone trying to reproduce a similar rhetorical effect in another language. Yet Watson’s translation, which is in itself a stylistically literary masterpiece, is widely recognized for its rhetorical success while being smooth, natural, easy-flowing, immediately intelligible and free of interference by both Sinologists and general English readers in America (Nienhauser, 1991, 1996; Pokora, 1963).

How did Watson interpret *Shi Ji*’s rhetorical significance and what procedures did he follow to reproduce an effect close to the original in English? What implications does it have for translation practice and studies and intercultural communication? This has remained largely an unexplored area, yet an interesting source for reflections on intercultural communication and translation studies.

An analysis of Watson’s strategies in translating *Shi Ji* from the perspective of contrastive rhetoric reveals that the translator’s flexible approach to the rhetorical constructions in *Shi Ji* led to the final success of the English version as a literary masterpiece. It is suggested that rhetorical stylistic equivalence is not a mechanical match between the source and the target text segmentations, but a flexible reconstruction process. The translator plays an important role as a mediator in this intercultural reconstruction.

The Rhetorical Style of *Shi Ji*

According to Hatim and Mason (2001), texts are the result of motivated choice: producers of texts have their own communicative aims and select lexical items and grammatical arrangement to serve those aims (p. 4). Rhetoric is, as stated in the Collins Cobuild English Dictionary, “the skill or art of using language effectively” (Sinclair, 2000, p. 1427). Rhetorical structures reinforce the expressiveness through syntactic balance, semantic resemblance, and rich associations.

Literarily speaking, *Shi Ji*’s enduring success as one of the most influential prose writings in ancient China lies largely in the rhetorical devices Sima Qian adeptly employed in presenting a sweeping account of 3000 years of Chinese history and portraying the unique characters of this historical drama. The “brilliant fusion” of style and content and “uniqueness of artistic expressions” endowed *Shi Ji* with an extraordinary rhetorical effect, as “the syntactic and semantic dependency relations are largely co-extensive” (Wilss, 2001, p. 154). In principle, the intermingling of aesthetic and semantic denotative and connotative information is true of practically all literary prose (Wilss, 2001). The point is that these

features in *Shi Ji* were created to such an exquisite extent that they have influenced the way Chinese prose has been composed and appreciated for more than two thousand years.

The rhetorical devices Sima Qian employed, including allusion, parallelism, antithesis, metaphor, metonymy, hyperbole, repetition, rhetorical question, irony, euphemism, etc. gave the historical narrative and the direct speeches a touch of aesthetic achievement and literary significance: vivid, imaginable, moving, knowledgeable and philosophical. These effects relied heavily on the ancient Chinese language structures and culture for the semantic and syntactic significance, especially when the devices were put into the mouths of the characters. In view of the linguistic and cultural differences between ancient Chinese and modern English, it seems almost impossible to transfer the original rhetorical effect into modern English. However, Watson succeeded in making the delicate uniqueness of Sima Qian's rhetorical style part of his English version, with all the "music" *Shi Ji* seems to convey.

Watson's Interpretation of *Shi Ji*'s Style and His Strategies in Writing the Rhetorical Style of *Shi Ji* into English

Every reading of a text is a unique, unrepeatable act and a text is bound to evoke differing responses in different receivers (Hatim & Mason, 2001). The translator's reading of the source text is but one among infinitely many possible readings, yet it is the one which tends to be imposed upon the readership of the TL version (Hatim & Mason, 2001).

Although *Shi Ji* was and has been renowned as a historical classic with a literary touch, Watson (1961a) stated *Shi Ji* was more "a unified work of literature" than "a source for historical data" (p. 8). Watson (1961a) argued "the reason for its continued popularity and the incalculable influence it has had upon the literatures of these countries lies undoubtedly in its moving portraits of the great men of the past, its dramatic episodes and deft anecdotes" (p. 6).

Watson (1961a) claimed that "the literary devices Ssu-ma Ch'ien used in creating the dramatic effects resemble those of his Western contemporaries" (p. 5), and Sima Qian was "hardly less concerned than they with rhetoric and questions of style" (p. 5). Watson (1961a) also maintained that:

Like Thucydides or Tacitus, Sima Qian relies heavily upon elaborate and probably fictitious speeches put into the mouths of his characters to explain and advance the action and to delineate personality, speeches composed with the same balanced periods, the hyperboles, the erudite allusions and homely metaphors familiar to us in the Western rhetorician's art. (p. 5)

Watson (1995) also stated that if he could not make Sima Qian "sound like a Gibbon or a Macaulay", he would at least do his best "to render him in a language that suggested the work of a major stylist" with all the music and grandeur (p. 202). Watson (1982) confirmed his intention years later: "In my own translations from the *Shih chi* and *Han shu* I attempted to concentrate on the literary appeal of the works" (p. 36).

Popovič sees "the essence of literary translation as consisting of a stylistic interpretation which he sees as an 'analysis of the stylistic means used in the text of a translation in the light of the stylistic properties of the original'" (Wilss, 2001, p. 108). Hatim and Mason (2001) claimed that "stylistic effects are traceable to the intentions of the text producer and these are

what the translator seeks to recover” (p. 10). Wilss (2001) maintained that “Whether or not this artistic correspondence succeeds depends largely on how well the translator can identify himself with the text and his ability to discern and reproduce the literary qualities of a text” (p. 77). Gačečiladze argued that the field of literary translation studies “must begin at the point where the problem of linguistic correspondences organically crosses over into the problem of the artistic correspondence between the original and the translation” (Wilss, 2001, p. 77).

Accordingly, the analysis of the strategies Watson employed in rendering *Shi Ji*'s rhetoric style will focus on those aspects recognized by Watson: “the same balanced periods, the hyperboles, the erudite allusions and homely metaphors” (1961a, p. 5).

Translation of the Balanced Structures

The balanced structures in *Shi Ji* are often composed of an equal number of words in a neat parallel and antithesis structure, with a sharp contrast of meaning and a strong force in expression as well as a special kind of melody and rhythm.

The Four-Character Structures

[Shi Ji]

一生一死，乃知交情。一贫一富，乃知交态。一贵一贱，交情乃见。

[Watson's Translation]

When you're alive one moment, all but dead the next, then you know who your real friends are.

When you're rich one moment, poor the next, then you know the quality of friendship.

When you're lordly one moment, lowly the next, then friendship shows its true face.

Through the repetition of one character “Yi” (one) and three pairs of semantically contradicting states of existence when real friendship is put to a test: life and death, poverty and wealth, honor and lowliness, Sima Qian skillfully delineated the situations in which false friends may show their true face, profoundly satirized the sad state of human relations and expressed his emotional reflections on the fickleness of human friendships. These connotations are skillfully transferred through the antithesis and parallel structures in Watson's translation in which “alive” and “dead,” “rich” and “poor,” and “lordly” and “lowly” are contradicted to illustrate two different situations a person may find himself in, signifying a test of true friendship, and then “real friends,” “quality of friendship,” and “true face” of “friendship” are used to hold the trend of thought throughout the contradictions, avoiding a monotonous repetition of the word “friendship.” On the level of syntactic structures, the repetition of “when” and “then,” acting as a marker, together with the repetition of “you're,” “one moment,” “the next” and “you know,” creates a rhythmic melody in a parallel construction, thus an aesthetic rhetorical effect is regained in the translation.

The Six-Character Structures

[Shi Ji]

蒯通对曰：“贵贱在于骨法，忧喜在于容色，成败在于决断，以此参之，万不失一。”

[Watson's Translation]

High or low position are revealed in the bone structure, sorrow or joy in the countenance, and success or failure in the power of decision. If one considers these three factors, he will make no mistake in a thousand cases!

The strategist Peng Tong made the speech so as to dissuade Han Xin, the tragic hero in *Shi Ji*, from following Liu Bang, the victor of the War between Xiang Yu of the Chu State and the Han State at the end of the Qin Dynasty, and later founder of the Han Dynasty. Peng Tong resorted to reading people's faces to make Han Xin listen to him. So Peng Tong contrasted six different concepts in three pairs, reinforcing his persuasion with the move of each pair of contrasts. The contrasts and the strengthening force of persuasion are transferred in the English renderings by the rebuilding of three pairs of contrasts in parallel structures, where “nobility and humbleness,” “worry and joy,” and “success and failure” are reproduced in contrasting structures “high or low position,” “sorrow or joy,” “success or failure,” in which the marker “or” shows the contradiction between the two poles of the situation, while the prepositional phrase of the “in” structure is repeated, together with the three pairs of contrasts, forming a parallel structure. Watson did not stick closely to the original structure, though. The structure “are revealed” is omitted in the second and third contrasts to ensure the fluency of the sentence.

The Nine-Character Structures

[Shi Ji]

韩信曰：“汉王遇我甚厚，载我以其车，衣我以其衣，食我以其食。吾闻之，乘人之车者载人之患，衣人之衣者怀人之忧，食人之食者死人之事，吾岂可以乡利倍义乎！”

[Watson's Translation]

Han Xin replied, “The king of Han has treated me most generously, placing me in his own carriage, clothing me with his own garments, and giving me food to eat from his own plate. I have heard it said that he who rides in another man's carriage must share his woes, he who puts on another man's clothes dons his sorrows as well, and he who eats another man's food must serve him to the death. How could I turn my back on what is right merely for the hope of gain?”

The original is composed with two groups of parallel structures, the first showing the kindness Liu Bang showered on Han Xin, the second demonstrating Han Xin's great gratitude to Liu Bang for what he did. The structure of “placing..., clothing..., giving...”, with “his own” emphasized to show the special personal favor, reinforces the meaning of how Han Xin felt towards the kindness of Liu Bang, implying a return of kindness towards the small

considerations from Liu Bang, while the second group of structures “he who ...”, and “share his woes,” “dons his sorrows,” “serve him to the death” bring out a climax, showing vividly the loyalty of Han Xin. On the syntactic level, the idea that “the King of Han was very kind to me” was turned into a main clause “The king of Han has treated me most generously,” stressing the concept of Liu Bang’s kindness with a verbal structure, and then the present participle structures “placing..., clothing..., giving...” are used as evidence to justify his kindness, not only forming a standard English sentence structure, but also embodying the increasing force of a passionate tone. This is further elevated to a declaration in a rhetorical question close to a vow, “How could I turn my back on what is right merely for the hope of gain?”, to pledge allegiance to a cunning king, implying a tragic end due to blind faith in someone who might not be worth his loyalty.

Translation of the Hyperboles

Hyperboles are often employed in *Shi Ji* to make the description more vivid and the expression more appealing to readers. Some of these hyperboles have become part of the Chinese language and commonly used even in modern literature. They are often a delicate combination of metaphor, antithesis and hyperboles. Some of them are comparatively easier to translate, while others are really a challenge to reproduce in another language.

For example, at the feast of Hongmen, Fan Kuai, a loyal follower of Liu Bang and also a stout fellow, forced into the tent where Liu Bang was paying “respects” to Xiang Yu, who had been enraged to the fact that Liu Bang had conquered and controlled Xianyang, the capital city of the Qin Dynasty, ignoring the mighty power of Xiang Yu, who thought it should have been he himself that had entered Xianyang first considering his dictating power at the time. Liu Bang was in a delicate political crisis in which he might have been killed right on the spot. Therefore, Fan Kuai was so devastated that his hair stood upright and the frame of his eyes were bursting open when he realized Liu Bang was on the verge of being killed any time then. Here’s what Sima Qian wrote:

[Shi Ji]

遂入，披帷西乡立，瞋目视项王，头发上指，目眦尽裂。

[Watson’s Translation]

Entering the camp, he went and pulled back the curtain of the tent and stood facing west, glaring fixedly at Xiang Yu. His hair stood on end and his eyes blazed with fire.

Here two hyperboles are used to imply Fan Kuai’s anger. Watson transferred the first hyperbole “His hair stood upright” literally as “His hair stood on end” as such an equivalent expression in English does exist, and changed “the frame of his eyes were bursting open” into “his eyes blazed with fire” to sustain the connotation of extreme anger in a vivid idiomatic expression in English. Watson’s English rendering skillfully transfers the implied meaning of the hyperbole “the frame of his eyes were bursting open” while sounding natural and comprehensible, a successful effort in reproducing the rhetorical effect.

In the well-known *Song of Gaixia*, Sima Qian put two hyperboles into the mouth of Xiang Yu to reveal his inner feelings at the end of his dramatic short life and struggle for power. Xiang Yu sang in extreme sorrow:

[Shi Ji]

力拔山兮气盖世, 时不利兮骓不逝;
骓不逝兮可奈何, 虞兮虞兮奈若何!

[Watson's Translation]

My strength plucked up the hills,
My might shadowed the world;
But the times were against me,
And Dapple runs no more,
When Dapple runs no more,
What then can I do?
Ah, Yu, my Yu,
What will your fate be?

In this song, Xiang Yu wanted to show that he was so strong that he could lift up the mountain and so mighty that no one could rival against him. By using two hyperboles, Xiang Yu elevated himself to a mythical and heroic state. Watson picked up the sense and the image and then used two vivid verbs “pluck” and “shadow” to reproduce the tragic but heroic theme of the song. To pluck strength, like cotton, does not need much strength, so when Watson used “pluck” in “My strength plucked up the hills” to show how strong Xiang Yu was, he was trying to show that it was as easy for Xiang Yu to lift up the hill as to pluck something like cotton, which makes the exaggeration very vivid and ironic. This sense is further developed by using the verb “shadow” in “My might shadowed the world,” as when one thing shadows another, the first thing stands out quite brightly. Therefore, the rhetorical connotation contained in the two hyperboles, Xiang Yu was a mighty and dictating power, was delicately transferred into English, creating an aesthetic appeal to the general readership.

Translation of the Homely Metaphors

Sima Qian also used metaphor to convey his deeper thoughts. Some of the metaphors are interwoven with hyperboles to secure a rhetorical effect. When the denotative meaning of a metaphor is intelligible if translated literally, Watson kept the original image and expressions and translated it faithfully. However, when the concrete words and expressions serve as a detailed and vivid description of a deeper analogy between one thing and another, and cultural background knowledge is required to identify what is suggested metaphorically, Watson resorted to a flexible approach to bring out the implied resemblance. For example:

[Shi Ji]

曰：“富贵不归故乡，如衣绣夜行，谁知之者！”说者曰：“人言楚人沐猴而冠耳，果然。”项王闻之，烹说者。

[Watson's Translation]

“To become rich and famous and then not go back to your old home is like putting on an embroidered coat and going out walking in the night,” he [Xiang Yu] said. “Who is to know about it?” ... [Later the adviser] remarked, “People say the men of Chu are nothing but monkeys with hats on, and now I know they’re right!” Xiang Yu heard about the remark and had the adviser boiled alive.

This conversation occurred after Xiang Yu controlled Xianyang, and someone advised him to stay within the Pass for its strategic importance. Xiang Yu longed to go back home to the east of the Yangtze River, though. The metaphor “the men of Chu are nothing but monkeys with hats on” and the vivid simile “like putting on an embroidered coat and going out walking in the night” do not pose a readability problem, so Watson translated both literally, keeping the rich and imaginative expressions of the original in the target text. For example:

[Shi Ji]

刘邦曰：“吾入关，秋豪不敢有所近……”。

[Watson’s Translation]

“Since I entered the Pass”, he said, “I have not dared to lay a finger on a single thing.

When he said he did not dare to come close to “秋豪”, the thin hair on the animals in autumn, Liu Bang meant to prove he did not have any political agenda for domination behind his entrance of the Pass and control of Xianyang, the Qin capital, and he was still a loyal follower to Xiang Yu. The thin hair on the animals in autumn in the metaphor is used metaphorically to represent any single small thing in Xianyang. Though “the thin hair on the animals in autumn” is common in ancient Chinese and has been lexicalized as part of modern Chinese idioms, like *ming cha qiu hao* (to know every single detail), it is not an acceptable expression in English, therefore Watson transferred the sense by transforming the image into a finger, turning the metaphor and its contextual information into an English idiomatic expression “lay a finger on a single thing.” Thus, the translation retained the closest extent of original sense but changed the image so as to regain the rhetorical effect. For example:

[Shi Ji]

樊哙曰：“大行不顾细谨，大礼不辞小让。如今人方为刀俎，我为鱼肉，何辞为。”

[Watson’s Translation]

Great deeds do not wait on petty caution; great courtesy does not need little niceties,” replied Fan Kuai. “This fellow is about to get out his carving knife and platter and make mincemeat of us! Why should you say goodbye to him?”

This speech is composed of a parallel structure combined with antithesis, in which two pairs of contradictory concepts are contrasted, signifying two different rules, and a metaphor, in which Xiang Yu was compared to the knife and board and Liu Bang the fish, clearly presenting the unfavorable situation Liu Bang was in. Watson kept the sense but turned the

latter half of the metaphor “we are the fish” into an idiomatic English expression, “make mincemeat of us.” Thus Watson reinforced the intelligibility of the English version.

Translation of the Erudite Allusions

Some of the erudite allusions in *Shi Ji* are easier to understand when translated literally, while others are deeply rooted in Chinese culture and more difficult to transfer. For example:

[Shi Ji]

信曰：“果若人言，‘狡兔死，良狗亨；高鸟尽，良弓藏；敌国破，谋臣亡。’天下已定，我固当亨！”

[Watson’s translation]

“It is just as men say,” sighed Han Xin. “When the cunning hares are dead, the good dog is boiled; when the soaring birds are gone, men put away the good bow; when the enemy states have been defeated, the ministers who plotted their downfall are doomed. The world is now at peace, and so it is fitting that I be boiled!”

Watson produced primarily a literal translation in a parallel structure, but the translation is comprehensible because the images and the sense are both explicit to readers. Yet some allusions are more demanding to readers as the appropriate cultural background information is essential for comprehension. For example:

[Shi Ji]

[良曰:]“……今始入秦，即安其乐，此所谓‘助桀为虐’。且‘忠言逆耳利於行，良药苦口利於病’，原沛公听樊哙言。”

[Watson’s translation]

“...Having just entered the capital of Qin, if you were now to indulge yourself in its pleasures, this would be ‘helping the tyrant Jie to work his violence.’ Good advice is hard on the ears, but it profits the conduct just as good medicine, though bitter in the mouth, cures the sickness. I beg you to listen to Fan Kuai’s counsel!”

Although *Jie*, the last king of the Xia Dynasty in ancient Chinese history, who lost his throne because of his tyrannious and violent government, has been known to general Chinese readers as a symbol of tyranny, this presupposed association of *Jie* is alien to foreign readership that do not have the cultural contextual information. Watson supplied the explicit background information “the tyrant” to show who “*Jie*” was precisely, making his translation transparent and coherent. The analogies “Good advice is hard on the ears, but it profits the conduct just as good medicine, though bitter in the mouth, cures the sickness” are quoted from *The Analects*, but they are intelligible semantically, so Watson translated them literally, only adding the connective “just as” to secure cohesion between the two analogies.

Discussion of Watson's Strategies

Every translation is subject to a translational individuality principle (Wilss, 2001). When a translator focuses on the literary effect of the original text, his translation always reveals his aesthetic outlook on the rhetorical effect of both the original and the translation. However, as the entire system of the source language and its rhetorical conventions as well as their cultural features will bear on the act of textual transfer, what has value as a sign in one cultural community may be devoid of significance in another, it is the translator who is uniquely placed to identify the disparity and seek to resolve it (Hatim & Mason, 2001).

Watson's aesthetic attitude towards the reading of *Shi Ji* as a literary masterpiece "triggered" his literary rendering of the classic, while his intention to bring the rhetorical styles of the original across linguistic and cultural barriers shaped his strategies in handling the rhetorical effect of the rhetorical expressions on both semantic and syntactic levels.

The balanced structures in *Shi ji* exhibit an exact character-to-character correspondence and produce a special rhetorical effect, which is unique to traditional Chinese, yet they pose a great challenge when being transferred into another language like English, which may not have an exact word-to-word structure with a resembling semantic and syntactic function to the original. When handling such balanced structures, Watson did not stick exactly to the original lexical and syntactic structures, instead, he chose to remain close semantically but flexible syntactically to the original so that some sense of the original syntactic structure is transferred while the naturalness and smoothness of the translation is also secured.

When translating hyperboles, Watson kept the sense but changed the image to make the translation idiomatic and easy-flowing in English if a faithful translation would sound awkward and alien to the target readers, as shown above with the translation of "the frame of his eyes were bursting open." On the other hand, if the target language has a similar expression, Watson just followed the natural expression like "His hair stood on end." What is striking most is that Watson employed skillfully the verbs such as "plucked" and "shadowed" to sustain a connotation in the original hyperboles and to add aesthetic value to the translation. Some of the metaphors won't pose a readability problem when translated faithfully, others like "come close to the thin hair on the animals in autumn" and the rivalry between "the knife and board" and "the fish" might interfere with intelligibility when translated literally, so Watson adapted those images into semantically close target language expressions which sound more natural in English: "[not] lay a finger on a single thing"; "make mincemeat of us."

As for the erudite allusions, those which might lead to confusion are always provided with well-chosen, concise, explicit background information as illustrated above by "helping the tyrant *Jie* to work his violence."

It can be concluded that when "there is a predominance of syntagmatic, connotative elements of expression, which are often distributed differently in the SL and the TL context", the translator is demanded to "creatively reshape an artistic statement on a text's 'level of content' and 'level of expression' ..." as De Beaugrande stressed (Wilss, 2001, p. 76). Moreover, as readers have to call up their cultural background and knowledge structures (Hatim & Mason, 2001) to perceive subtleties of intended meaning, the translator needs to bring out an inference or an implication of the literal as well as the figurative significance of a metaphor a little more clearly than in the SL text (Newmark, 2001) and piece together "a

chain of inter-textual references” (Hatim & Mason, 2001, p. 121) if a gap between text-presented knowledge and world knowledge presents itself when translated literally. Translation cannot simply reproduce, or be the original (Newmark, 2001).

The rhetorical correspondence is not a mechanical reproduction of the original’s form and style. The form of a source text may be characteristic of SL conventions but so much at variance with TL norms that rendering the form would inevitably obscure the “message” or “sense” of the text (Hatim & Mason, 2001, p. 8). The translator’s task is to ensure the closest natural equivalent of the original’s stylistic elegance while reckoning with the interests of the target language readership, that is, to preserve as much of the original style as possible while keeping the intelligibility of the translated version in mind. A flexible approach to the rhetoric styles of the original would prove effective to ensure that translation is an act of communication, which could be better facilitated if the balance between the aesthetic taste and the intelligibility considerations in the communicative process is kept. In this process, the translator has to mediate between the source language/culture and the target language/culture to facilitate successful intercultural communication.

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