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**Editor-in-chief**
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Shakespearean Language and Figures of Speech in Romeo and Juliet: A translator's insights
Safaa Ramzi Muhammad *
Atheel Abd Elkhalek Al Hayaly **

Abstract:
This paper highlights and discusses the type of language used in Shakespeare’s play of “Romeo and Juliet” (Shakespeare, 2011), which is usually referred to as Shakespearean language. In addition, it discusses and exemplifies the types of figures of speech employed in “Romeo and Juliet”. The aim behind bringing out and analysing such aspects is to raise translators’ awareness of the difficulties they may encounter when indulged in translating literary works as such, and to provide a possible method to overcome such difficulties. Our investigation shows that translating literary works in general, and “Romeo and Juliet” in specific demands a certain suggested method in order to render close or similar versions of the original texts, due to the complex archaic and/or Shakespearean language used, and due to the meanings of some of the figures of speech which require careful analysis and study of the text and what lies beyond the text. The method that we suggest for translators who are involved in the translation of Shakespearean language and/or Shakespeare’s figures of speech is the use of both semantic and communicative (pragmatic) translations, as some instances would be translated appropriately by following a semantic approach only, and others would be translated appropriately by following a communicative one only. However, in order to conduct such a method successfully, a translator must be an expert in the field, skillful, and have a deep and thorough understanding of Shakespeare’s time, works, and style.

Key words: figures of speech ؛ Translation ؛ Shakespearean Language.
1. Introduction

The English word “translation” is sourced from the Latin ‘translatio’ which means “a carrying across” or “a bringing across” (Kasparek, 1983, p. 83). It is an ancient literary work device that goes back to early centuries, as even the earliest literature shows evidence of translation into different languages. Thus, translation is a unique aspect of literature because it involves the conversion of other people’s works of literature into different languages while trying to maintain the original source as much as possible.

Different definitions from different authors have been proposed for translation. Some authors emphasise the linguistic aspects of the message, and define it as an aim at reproducing the nearest equivalent of the source language (SL) text in the target language (TL) text (Nida and Taber, 1974, p. 72; Bassnett-mcguire, 1980, p. 29; Newmark, 1988, p. 5; Faiq, 1998, p. 224). Others, e.g. (Baker and Malmkjaer, 1998, p. 3) pay more attention to the cultural aspects of translations, and define it as a “process of intercultural communication, whose end product is a text which is capable of functioning appropriately in specific situation and context of use”. Although both of these definitions view translation as a reinstatement of the SL, their priorities differ.

Translation is considered as an artwork that requires creativity and skills on the part of translators rather than the mere task of translating works into other languages. The efficacy of translation relies on two demands, which are, the need to stay as close as possible to an original script or text, and the need to create work that impresses readers and specialists. In other words, translations that are meant to be conveyed to certain audiences require close or near images of the sources, so that the concepts as well as the effects that are meant to be passed are maintained (Bandia, 2018, p. 504). Thus, it is usually allowed to omit and/or add when translating certain works, as long as these alterations do not affect the meanings and/or effects that are intended to be conveyed. The reasons why such alterations are acceptable in certain translations are probably due to 1) linguistic differences across the languages involved in the process of translation, and 2) finding exact equivalences for literary, archaic and/or culturally related words or phrases, such that preserving an
original source would be impossible without such necessary alterations.

One of the most demanding translations is perhaps the ones related to the literary genre. The literary genre includes areas such as poetry, prose, plays, novels, short stories, and bibliographies. Translations involved with such genre aim at translating a piece of literary work from one language into another. The difficulty of such a translation is in the maintaining of the original, as the translation may be affected by language barriers represented in the differences between an SL and a TL, as well as by the presence of certain archaic words or phrases that no longer exist nowadays. Thus, the transition of written literature from one language to another may not be effective enough, and may result in loss of meanings or lead to different meanings.

The aim of this paper, therefore, is to highlight and discuss certain characteristics in literary works that may cause difficulties to translators involved in translating such works from one language into another. More specifically, we highlight and discuss characteristics, such as; Shakespearean language, as well as figures of speech used by Shakespeare in his play “Romeo and Juliet”, and show how and why these characteristics may confuse inexpert translators and probably make them produce inappropriate translations of such characteristics.

2. Research context

A figure of speech is defined as a divergence from literal language to a figurative one. Arp & Johnson (2012, p. 73) define it as “any way of saying something other than the ordinary way”. Most of the time, authors prefer using figurative language to create imaginations in the minds of their readers, or at other times to accomplish some other certain effects in their work, such as the creation of emphasis or humor.

Translation of figures of speech from one language to another is not an easy task. It requires expertise, skills, strategies, and careful understanding of their meanings and intentions in order for them to achieve the roles that the original authors wanted them to achieve. Shakespeare’s “Romeo and Juliet” is one of the common pieces of literature, which is highly equipped with figures of speech,
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and which has been frequently translated from one language into another. However, translations of these figures of speech have been scarcely investigated, and few have provided effective translations.

Shakespeare’s plays are known to be among the greatest in English and western culture, and have been translated into many languages and cultures. They are classified into three major genres, which are comedy (e.g. “As you like it”, “Tempest”, and “Taming of the shrew”), history (e.g. “Henry IV”), and tragedy (e.g. “Hamlet”, “Macbeth”, “Othello”, and “Romeo and Juliet”). Our focus is on “Romeo and Juliet”, which is one of his tragic plays. In this play as well as the others, Shakespeare’s use of language is extraordinary and exceptional (Bruster & Smith, 2016, p. 310). He uses language in a way that is unique and appealing to the readers and theater audience. According to an admirer of Shakespeare’s works named Jespersen, no author yet has shown such expertise in adopting the character to the language (Danner & Musa, 2019, p. 88). The exceptional use of literary language in “Romeo and Juliet” is reflected in the use of figures of speech and the effects they convey, character development, and the building of the story at large. In most of his tragedies, Shakespeare used both Shakespearean and literary language. He brings out the attractive unique way of passing his message, and uses English that is poetic and full of iambic pentameter (Delmonte, 2019, p. 46). His work is written in the old queen Elizabeth English that is difficult to comprehend for a modern reader today. Some of the properties of the language used are that it is poetic and contains specific beats per line. This poetic nature of the work adds complexity to most of his works, including “Romeo and Juliet”. He used a lot of new words out of his creativity and most of them can only be understood in the context of the work that he wrote. This is why sometimes people refer to some of his works as containing Shakespearean language (Ibid). It is claimed that he invented approximately 1700 new English words through his works (Shakespeare birthplace trust, 2020).

The most difficult task that faces translators working on Shakespeare’s works is translation of his language into other languages. This is due to the complexity of the English language
used, as well as the difficulty in finding equivalents for some of the words, as almost every known literary device is used to enrich his work. The choice of words in these literary devices does not always have equivalents, particularly in modern English. Thus, when such literary devices are translated into other languages, the meanings may be lost and the structures may be altered (Luong, 2016, p. 22). Despite the fact that Shakespeare’s works are translated into many languages, most of the translations, if not all, may have deficiencies, since the translators do not transfer everything that is in the original source.

3. Shakespearean language in Romeo and Juliet

Genres that include novels, poems, plays, songs, etc. are composed in a way that distances them from ordinary language. Such genres manifest alterations of words, syntax, and/or sounds to create what is referred to as “literature language” (Fabb, 2010, p. 1219). In simple terms, literary language refers to a form of language which is used in its literary writing, either in its standard variety of the language or in its non-standard one(s) (Austin, 1984, p. 70). Some common examples of words that can be used as such include the use of “slay” instead of “kill”, “asunder” instead of “apart”, “perish” instead of “die”, etc. (Lexico, 2020). Literary language refers to terms or devices used by writers to emphasize or embellish their work like allusion, personification, rhyming, amongst others (Literary Terms, 2015). They include styles and techniques that are masterfully used to enhance literature in their works. Figurative languages include the organization of words to bring about rhythm, attraction of audience and the enhancement of the language being used.

In most of his works, Shakespeare used literary language that is mostly poetic. Examples of those literary devices include alliteration, allusions that refer to images of cultures and religions, metaphors, oxymoron and many more. He also used foreshadowing and personification in his plays (Melion & Ramakers, 2016, p. 3). These devices aided him in making his plays more vivid to his audience, interesting, and poetic on stage.
Shakespeare wrote most of his work in a time when the English language had not evolved to its current state, and when the English dictionaries were not yet developed. Therefore, his plays mostly contain words that would be difficult to understand by readers who are unfamiliar with languages like Spanish, Latin, and French. Additionally, they are mostly made of unusual sentence structures that accommodate poetic words, omissions, compressions, and word play. Therefore, to read and comprehend such plays, one has to have the ability to recognize and understand them clearly, as some of the words are out of use in the present day and others have different meanings from what they meant today. It is therefore important for one to study the language and understand it, so that one can read, understand, or even participate in a play (Johnson, 2017, p. 502).

3.1. Shakespearean words in Romeo and Juliet

Generally speaking, Shakespeare’s plays are equipped with words like “misadventured” which means “unlucky”; “an” which means “if”, “soft” which means “hold”, and “marry” which means “indeed” in Shakespeare’s world. These words no longer mean the same thing that they meant in the time when Shakespeare wrote his plays. Thus, it is crucial to make sure that one has read most of the plays and read about the kind of English in Shakespearean time so that one can understand and avoid missing the intended message (Johnson, 2017, p. 499).

More specifically, Shakespeare has used some words in “Romeo and Juliet” that have different meanings nowadays. This is known as Shakespearean language, and only the people who have read this work for some time would be able to associate exact meanings to the words and their intended meanings at the time. Some of the words that are used in “Romeo and Juliet” include “sorrowful” which means “heavy”, “cousin” that means any type of “kinsman”, “still” which means “always”, and “envious” which means “malicious” (Ibid.).
3.2. Shakespearean sentences in Romeo and Juliet

In English, the arrangement of words and the position they have in a sentence bring different meanings to the sentences. Shakespeare, therefore, like any other person using poetic language changes the structures of sentences to abnormal ones so that he could achieve effects like rhyme, give characters a certain way of speaking, and achieve certain special messages through them (Johnson 2017, p. 450). For example, in “Romeo and Juliet”, Montague says: “Away from light steals home my heavy son” (ACT 1. SC. 2, L. 140) instead of saying “my son steals home” this would not be understood by someone who is unfamiliar with the words used in Shakespeare's plays.

Another example of abnormal structures is when Shakespeare places objects before subjects in the limits of a single sentence, which also creates problems in understanding his work by readers and actors. An example of an object preceding the subject is when Sampson is speaking to Gregory, he says: “Me they shall feel” (ACT 1. SC. 1, L. 29). There is also a similar instance when Paris says: “Of honorable reckoning are you both” (ACT 1. SC. 2, L. 4). In present day English, these would have the normal order of “They shall feel me” and “You are both of honorable reckoning”, respectively. Sentences with such inversions would be confusing and hard to understand for someone who is unfamiliar with this tendency of changing the structure.

A further example of abnormal structures that show the complexity and uniqueness of Shakespearean language is when Shakespeare replaces words across a group of sentences, which is done to attain rhyme in his plays. An instance is when Benvolio says: “A troubled mind drove me to walk abroad / Where underneath the grove of sycamore / That westward rooteth from this city side / So early walking did I see your son” (ACT 1. SC. 1, L. 122-125). The normal contraction of the last line would be “where did u see my son”. Such an instance would convey a different meaning for someone who does not know the language, as it would be misinterpreted as if the son had already been seen.
Shakespeare also omits some words in sentences to make the sentences appear as if they were produced in spoken language. Such omissions were necessary as the plays were acted on stage, and doing so produced smoother rhymed spoken sentences during acting. Examples of such omissions include “were you by when it began?” (ACT 1. SC. 1, L. 107) instead of “were you nearby when it began?”, and “Peered forth the golden window of the east” (ACT 1. SC. 1, L, 121) instead of “Peered forth from the golden window of the east”. In normal circumstances, reading such sentences that have undergone omissions would sound abnormal and incorrect. If they are spoken, however, they would sound normal and correct. Thus, apart from achieving rhyme, the sentences feel more spoken than written.

3.3. Shakespearean wordplay in Romeo and Juliet

The whole play of Romeo and Juliet is made of different types of playing with words, such as puns and metaphors. Examples of puns are seen in the opening of the play in the use of “move” to mean “provoke”, and in the use of “stand” to mean “take a stand on something” (Johnson, 2017, p. 452). Shakespeare also used words to imply other meanings than the ones known in general. An example is when Mercutio says: “Borrow Cupid’s wings / And soar with them above a common bound” (ACT 1. SC. 4, L, 17-18). The word "bound" is generally known as “a limit”, but here it implies “a leap”. Shakespeare's playing with words in this play brings a lot of meanings, and thus sometimes cause difficulty if someone is unfamiliar with puns and metaphors. This play was mainly written for performance and bringing about implied action on stage. Hence, when someone is reading this play, they should realise it’s a performance script meant to be spoken and not read.

4. Figures of speech in Shakespeare’s Romeo and Juliet

Figures of speech can be regarded as literary language, but not all literary languages can be termed as figures of speech. They are literary devices that include certain literary concepts, such as,
simile, metaphor, oxymoron, personification, amongst many others. Shakespeare uses figures of speech in his works to make them more interesting and to capture his audiences or readers attentions. They also help him create images of certain instances vivid to his readers (Bin, 2018, p. 25).

Figures of speech are commonly used in Romeo and Juliet. An example is “a pair of star-crossed lovers” (prologue to ACT 1, L. 6) which refers to Romeo and Juliet as being destined together in life and even in death. Another use of Shakespearean figure of speech is seen when Romeo says that his name does not matter. Romeo says: “What’s in a name? That which we call a rose, by any other word would smell as sweet” (ACT 2. SC. 2, L. 46-47). This is a famous quote used even in the present day. However, Romeo uses it to mean that no matter where he is from his character would never be affected by the family name that he bore (Bin, 2018, p. 2). There is also a further instance of use of figures of speech when Mercutio says: “Nay, if our wits run the wild-goose chase, I am done” (ACT 2. SC. 4, L. 73-74). The phrase “wild-goose chase” is also a common phrase that is used nowadays to indicate a dead-end chase. Shakespeare used this phrase to show how the speaker here feels frustrated and is done with chasing something that is impossible to find (Ritchie, 2016, p. 51).

Different types of figures of speech are employed in literary works to serve rhetorical purposes. Below are some explanations and exemplifications on some of the figures of speech used in Shakespeare’s “Romeo and Juliet”.

4.1. Simile

Simile is the use of “as” or “like” to compare things directly. One of the things is mostly within the context of the work written and the other possesses certain characteristics that suit the thing it is being referred to. An example of simile in “Romeo and Juliet” is “Is love a tender thing? It is too rough, too rude, too boist’rous, and it pricks like thorn.” (ACT 1. SC. 4, L. 25-26). Here, Romeo compares love to a thorn while talking to Mercutio before the start
of the Capulet’s party. A further example is when Mercutio is talking about dreams, and as a result compares vain fantasy to the air. He says: “Begot of nothing but vain fantasy, which is as thin of substance as the air” (ACT 1. SC. 4, L. 105-106).

4.2. Metaphor

Metaphor is an implicit use of comparison between two totally unrelated things (Romano, 2017, p. 7). An example used in “Romeo and Juliet” is where Romeo says: “O, I am fortune’s fool” (ACT 3. SC. 1, L. 142). He compares himself with a fortunes fool because he has been naive and acted in a spur of the moment when killing Tybalt, and now the consequences are going to cost him a lot. Another example is where Romeo says: “Thou detestable maw, thou womb of death” (ACT 5. SC. 3, L. 45). Here, Romeo compares Juliet’s tomb to a “womb of death”, and “detestable maw” which indicates a monster’s jaws. Romeo is implying that a tomb is what shelters death, decay, and destruction. The use of such metaphors is to create a clear picture of the situation by the character so that the emphasis of the moment, its occurrence, and its magnitude can be seen clearly in the mind of the reader.

4.3. Alliteration

Alliteration is the repetition of one or more consonant sounds that follow one another in succession (Adel, 2016, p. 3). The words can be adjacent to one another or separated by few words. Alliteration can be used sometimes to bring an idea home, bring beauty to a play, or even emphasize them. An example of this figure of speech in “Romeo and Juliet” is “From forth the fatal loins of these two foes / A pair of star-crossed lovers take their life” (Prologue to ACT 1, L. 5-6). The alliteration is seen in the repetition of sounds /f/ and /l/, and it is used to emphasize the feud and tragedy that will happen to the families. A further example is manifested in the repetition of the sound /d/ in “Now old desire doth in his deathbed lie” (Prologue to ACT 2, L. 1). The repetition here
emphasises an irony, as Romeo once declared that he would die for his former beloved Rosaline, but later died for Juliet.

4.4. Hyperbole

Hyperbole involves the use of exaggerations of things so that the emphasis of matters can be brought out (Adel, 2016, p. 2). An example of this in “Romeo and Juliet” is “A man, young lady—Lady, such a man / As all the world—Why, he’s a man of wax” (ACT 1. SC. 3, L. 81-82). The lines are used to praise the attractiveness of Paris to convince Juliet to marry him. The repetition exaggerates his attractiveness and makes him look that he is an extraordinary man. Another example is when Romeo says: “The brightness of her cheek would shame those stars / As daylight doth a lamp; her eye in heaven / Would through the airy region stream so bright / That birds would sing and think it were not night” (ACT 2. SC. 2, L. 19-23). Romeo here is exaggerating as Juliet’s face does not shine like the sun, and her eyes do not cause the birds to think it is daytime.

4.5. Consonance

Consonance is the use of repetitive consonant sounds in a sentence or a phrase. It is used to emphasize certain messages or highlight parts of something that the writer wants to deliver. It can also be used to make a poem attractive or bring rhyme to it, so that the beauty of it is brought out when reading it (Manning, 2018, p. 164). In “Romeo and Juliet”, examples of consonance are “And, on my life, hath stol’n him home to bed” (ACT 2. SC. 1, L. 5), and “Blind is his love and best befits the dark” (ACT 2. SC. 2, L. 35). In the first there is repetition of /h/ sound, and in the latter there is repetition of /b/ sound. Use of such repetitions brings about emphasis, and the word would attract the audience and the actor when read or spoken.
4.6. Synecdoche

Synecdoche is a figure of speech in which part of something refers to the whole thing (Leveen, 2017, p. 156). It denotes one thing to refer to the whole thing that is being talked about. It is used to make the part of the play figurative, and can only be achieved when one of the things carry deep meaning(s) that cannot be predicted from the surface meanings (Ibid, p. 160). Therefore, this figure of speech is very deep and needs careful listening, thinking, and application of knowledge in literature so that it can be understood properly. An example of synecdoche in “Romeo and Juliet” is “Where civil blood makes civil hands unclean” (Prologue to ACT 1, L. 4). Here, the hands stand for the whole person and the blood stands for the bad acts that can be committed like killing or any other type of crime. Another example is where Benvolio addresses Mercutio by saying: “And if we meet we shall not ’scape a brawl” (ACT 3. SC. 1, L. 3). The phrase “’scape a brawl” means avoiding a fight or quarrel that involves lots of Capulets vs. lots of Montagues, and not one against another.

4.7. Oxymoron

Oxymoron involves the use of contradicting words in one phrase to express some meaning or effect (Sakaeva & Kornilova, 2017, P. 410). Oxymoron mainly focuses on using words in a way to attract the reader, as well as to make certain situations or scenes seem bearable to the people involved (Ismaeil et al., 2019, P. 260). It has a rhetorical effect in a paradoxical use, and what makes it different from other paradoxes is that it has intentional use with a certain effect that a writer or speaker wants to bring out and sometimes the intention can be seen clearly. The combined contradictory or opposite words that form an oxymoron are accommodated in a single phrase or sentence. The words that make up the oxymorons can be viewed from syntactic and/or semantic perspectives. The first perspective focuses on the types of parts of speech that build an oxymoron, whether of the same, e.g. noun + noun, or of different syntactic classes, e.g. noun + adjective (Flayih,
The latter focuses on the strength of the opposition across the involved words (Ibid, p. 32), that is, whether the words are directly (deeply), or indirectly (openly) related. An example of an oxymoron in “Romeo and Juliet” is the use of the phrase “brawling love” (ACT 1. SC. 1, L. 181), which is composed of an adjective plus a noun. The two opposing words indicate forbidden love which is deduced from the effect of love that brings about sorrow or pain. A further example is “woeful sympathy” (ACT 3. SC. 3, L. 93), which also consists of an adjective plus a noun. The two contradicting words are used to describe the painful separation of Romeo and Juliet.

4.8. Personification

Personification refers to “the projection of characteristics that normally belong only to humans onto inanimate objects, animals, deities, or forces of nature” (Literary devices, 2017). These characteristics may as well stand as “emotions, feelings, or motives given to objects incapable of thought” (Ibid). An example of personification in “Romeo and Juliet” is where Benvolio says: “Alas that love, so gentle in his view” (ACT 1. SC. 1, L. 174). The object “love” is personified as a human, as it is associated with humanly characteristics such as “gentle”. A further example is where Lord Capulet says: “Earth hath swallowed all my hopes but she;” (ACT 1. SC. 2, L. 14). The object “earth” is personified as a living entity, as it is associated with “swallowed” which is a characteristic of a living being.

To sum up the discussions in Sections 3 and 4, it is crucial for a given translator to clearly and deeply understand and study Shakespeare’s ways of using language in “Romeo and Juliet” in order to provide an appropriate translation of the SL text. However, some figures of speech, e.g. simile, alliteration, hyperbole, consonance, and oxymoron, whether used here by Shakespeare or by other writers in other works, do not require such study and understanding to translate their meanings, as their meanings are quite obvious from the semantics of the words involved. In contrast, other figures of speech, e.g. metaphor, personification, and
5. Discussion

The main objective of this paper, as stated in Section 1, was to identify with exemplification certain language features and literary devices used by Shakespeare in “Romeo and Juliet”, which may pose as a challenge to translators involved in its translation. Through explanations of examples of such features, it was implied that inexpert translators who are unaware of such features would possibly render inappropriate translations of these features.

Generally speaking, establishing equivalence between SL and TL literary texts represents central concerns and problems to translators. The complication arises from the fact that equivalent translations of certain words or phrases do not exist in one or both languages involved. For example, the Arabic extract بالهناء والعافية, whether separated or used as a phrase, would pose as a challenge when translated, as an exact equivalent does not exist in English. Thus, translators have resorted to words such as bliss, wellness, good health, well-being, etc. in an attempt to provide a proper translation of this Arabic extract. However, none of these English words or phrases can be regarded as an exact equivalent, but rather a close or near interpretation of the extract.

Finding equivalent words or phrases is not the only issue when translating literary works. The differences in syntax between languages involved can cause problems related to economy. For instance, the Quranic Arabic word فسیکفیکهم، which is a single word, yields a full sentence when translated into English, e.g. “So will suffice you against them” (“Almaany, an online electronic dictionary”, n.d.). The reason why this is the case is due to the flexibility of the Arabic structure which allows attachment of articles, pronouns, coordinators, etc. to single words. (Dickins, 2010) highlights a similar issue in his work, and shows how a single
Arabic coordinated sentence can end up as four or more sentences when translated into English.

Besides the above linguistic issues represented in semantics and syntax, there is yet other issues, which are, translation of cultural aspects and/or literary devices in a given literary work. Cultural traces, though restricted, can be spotted in most fields except when translating matters related to science. More specifically, influence of culture can be mostly seen when establishing literary translations, such as in the fields of poetry, novels, drama, prose, amongst other literary works. Translators who come across culture related instances and/or figures of speech need to have a clear picture of the SL and TL cultures and audiences. Moreover, they need to fully comprehend the archaic and/or Shakespearean language used, as well as surface or deep meanings and intentions conveyed by figures of speech. Additionally, they need to be knowledgeable in the field of translation in order to determine appropriate strategies to deal with such instances.

Translating Shakespearean language and/or figures of speech, whether culture-specific or not, is not a straightforward process and may be confusing to the reader if the translator is unfamiliar with the methods that are usually adopted in preserving and transferring close or identical versions of the original literary work. This is the reason why some scholars, e.g. (Newmark, 1988), (Aixela, 1996), (Davies, 2003), etc. have proposed certain solutions to overcome such issues when translating literary works in general. These authors, amongst many others suggest adopting a semantic approach, and/or a communicative (pragmatic) approach to translate literary works. Semantic translation resides within the original culture. It has no interest in the transmitter's intentions, and thus it does not demand strategies, such as, adding information, reducing, etc. It is neutral, objective, more complex, and more detailed as compared to communicative translation. On the contrary, communicative translation tries to produce identical contextual meaning as close as that obtained from the readers of the original text. It requires strategies of adding, reducing, etc., since it is concerned with transmitter's intentions. It is somehow subjective,
6. Conclusion

Through analysing and investigating Shakespearean language and figures of speech employed by Shakespeare in “Romeo and Juliet”, and highlighting their complexity in regard to translators involved in their translations, we conclude that translators should be knowledgeable, and have deep as well as thorough understanding of Shakespeare’s works in general, his use of language including figurative speech, and his life including the period of time in which he lived in order to produce appropriate and effective translations of “Romeo and Juliet”. In addition, we suggest the method of adopting semantic and communicative translations when translating Shakespearean language and/or Shakespeare’s figures of speech, since both of these approaches are applicable in this regard and the choice of using either one of them largely depends on the extract encountered.

References


Shakespearean Language and Figures of Speech in Romeo and Juliet: A translator’s insights

Safaa Ramzi Muhammad & Atheel Abd Elkhalek Al Hayaly

The study examines the language used in Shakespeare’s play “Romeo and Juliet” (2011), which is often referred to as Shakespearean language, and discusses the various linguistic figures of speech used in the play; this area aims to increase the translator’s awareness of the difficulties they may face during their translation of the plays, and suggests a possible solution to overcome these difficulties, and shows that translating Shakespeare’s works, and “Romeo and Juliet” in particular, requires a special method to produce translations that are close or similar to the original texts due to the complexity of the language used and the meanings of some of the figures of speech that require a detailed analysis of the text and the context. The translation method proposed for Shakespearean language and/or the figures of speech in Shakespeare’s works is that of semantic and communicative translation; in some cases, it is possible to translate in a suitable manner by following a semantic approach only, and in other cases, a communicative language approach only. However, to successfully implement such a method, the translator must be an expert in this area and have a comprehensive understanding of Shakespeare’s era and his works and style.

Keywords: Language, translation, Shakespearean language.