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**SEMIOTICS OF UMBERTO ECO IN A LITERARY TRANSLATION CLASS:
THE MODEL READER AS THE COMPETENT TRANSLATOR¹**

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ABSTRACT

Classroom environment can be thought as an absolute place to practice and improve translation skills of students. They have the possibility to brainstorm and discuss problematic points they face with each other during a translation activity. It can be estimated in the same way in a literary translation class. Students who are supposed to become model readers need to use their background knowledge, vocabulary, and *encyclopedia* to understand the text properly, to infer the unsaid from said, and to translate them into a target language without disrupting the structure and taste of the source text. Bearing Umberto Eco's view in mind, the structure of literary texts requires the *cooperation of the reader* -which is a sophisticated process- and most of the words tend to be used with their connotations. When it is thought with the term of Umberto Eco, as the structure of literary texts which require *the cooperation of the reader* is sophisticated and most of the words are tend to be used with their connotations, students who are supposed to become *model readers* each need to use their background knowledge, vocabulary and *encyclopedia* not only to understand the text properly but also to infer the unsaid from already said and to translate them into a target language without disrupting the structure and taste of source text. Therefore, becoming a competent translator in order to conduct literary translation can be considered a crucial notion. This study aims at determining whether students, as translator candidates, are future 'competent translator' enough for literary translation. To achieve this goal, a case study is carried out in literary translation class. In this process, translations of 10 sophomore students from Trakya University, Division of English-Turkish Translation and Interpretation will be gone through. Students are asked to translate the short story titled *Hopeless Romantic* written by Susan Daitch into Turkish. To analyze the translations of students, the 'Reviewing Model of Competent Translator' is devised with the favor from Eco's thoughts and experiences in *Mouse or Rat: Translation as Negotiation*. In this study, through Eco's thoughts, experiences and the translation reviews, the applicability of 'Reviewing Model of Competent Translator' will be evaluated. It can be thought that this study will not only shed light on the researches in literary translation but also suggest a new model to evaluate the texts of translators.

Key Words: competent translator, model reader, literary translation, translation education

1. Introduction

This study is rooted from the doctoral study entitled "From the Model Reader to Competent Translator: A New Model in the Education of Literary Translation"⁴. In the doctoral study two fields of study were brought together: theories and practices of education and semiotics. The purpose of the doctoral thesis is to make use of the semiotics of Eco in translation studies and to examine to which extend semiotics of Eco is fruitful and useful in literary translation classes. To put this aim into practice and carry out the doctoral study, an elective course named "Semiotic Practices in Literary

¹ This study was presented under the title "From the Model Reader to the Competent Translator: Theory and Practice of Umberto Eco's Semiotics in a Literary Translation Class" at the 1st Congrès Mondial de Traductologie (1st World Congress on Translation Studies) in Paris – Université Paris Ouest-Nanterre-La Défense, April 10-14, 2017.

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Translation” was designed and opened in the Division of English-Turkish Translation and Interpretation at Trakya University, aiming at providing the students with the opportunity to make use of semiotics of Eco in the pursuit for meaning in literary translation. This idea began to develop in the doctorate courses of “Semiotics of Translation” and “Theories, Methods and Practices in Semiotics of Translation” coordinated by Prof. Sündüz Öztürk Kasar and through the works and studies carried out by Ph.D. candidate Can for these courses in Yıldız Technical University Graduate School of Social Sciences, Ph.D. Program in Interlingual and Intercultural Translation Studies. Besides, the methods and practices in literary translation and semiotics put forward by Öztürk Kasar in (Öztürk Kasar 2007, 2009a, 2009b, 2013) and (Öztürk Kasar & Tuna, 2015, 2016, 2017) gathered round for the topic of doctorate thesis and shed light on the research infrastructures.

As previously mentioned, to carry the research into effect “Semiotic Practices in Literary Translation” was designed as an elective course. Considering the needs of the students, a syllabus was designed and 14-week lesson plans were prepared by Can as part of the forenamed course. The course includes theoretical knowledge and terms of Eco presented in *The Role of the Reader* (1979) such as semiotic process, types of signs, the relationship between semiotics and translation notion, metatextual strategy, the strategies of narrative and discursive structures, open text, notion of possible worlds, textual cooperation and model reader. Apart from these theoretical knowledges, students have the chance to translate short stories written in English into Turkish. The short stories are rich in advanced words, idioms and proverbs, and have not been translated into Turkish before, as well. Therefore, students do not have the possibility to be influenced by translated texts.

During the first week of the research, the aim and content of the course, the scope of the semiotic analyses and translation activities were introduced to the students. To determine the education status of the students in the second week, they were questioned about Eco and his semiotic approach. Between the third and sixth weeks, the foundations of semiotics of Eco and translation samples, which students would make use of in their translation processes, were presented and feedback was obtained from them. At the end of these four-week teaching sessions, a mid-term examination was conducted to evaluate what the students learned about semiotics of Eco. Translation practices were started between the eighth and thirteenth- weeks and original texts were requested to be read in detail. After the students read the texts, they were asked to make a semiotic analysis paying attention to Fabula and Intreccio levels, to examine and discuss the signs in the texts. In the following steps, the students were asked to find out what kind of problems they might encounter while translating the texts. In the final stage of the course, a list of problems that the students might encounter was created with the contribution of all students. At the end of the course, the students were asked to translate the text for the next lesson. The students translated four short stories in total and the translations were examined according to ‘Reviewing Model of Competent Translator’, which was suggested by Can. In the last week of the research period, the final exam was applied.

2. Reviewing Model of Competent Translator

‘Reviewing Model of Competent Translator’, suggested by Can is composed of the categorization of the translation experiences mentioned by Eco in his book *Mouse or Rat: Translation as Negotiation* (2004). The model is used to evaluate translated texts retrieved from students. In his study, Eco criticizes essays on the theory of translation as they do not provide enough examples for translation

experiences. To fill this gap as an editor, a translator and a translated author, he tries to illustrate translation experiences. Eco classifies translation cases giving examples from the translators who have translated his works into other languages. In his study, *Mouse or Rat: Translation as Negotiation*, he examines translation cases according to classifications made by him, such as *loses and gains*, *translation and reference*, *source vs. target*, *to see things and texts*, *from rewording to translating substance*, *from substance to matter*. 'Reviewing Model of Competent Translator', inspired by the classifications of Eco's book, is constituted by focusing on the titles *loses and gains* (ibid, 34), *translation and reference* (ibid, 63) and *to see things and texts* (ibid, 114). As short stories were examined in the thesis, it is thought appropriate to center upon these titles.

To take up the constitutive titles of 'Reviewing Model of Competent Translator' comprehensively, *loses and gains* is the first title. According to this title, the predominating idea is that translators are aware that no matter how competent they are, they will experience some loss and some gain in their translations in order to negotiate with author, text, reader and the structure of two languages and encyclopedias of two cultures (ibid, 34). Under this class, Eco states many subtitles but we pick the ones in line with our study, such as *censorship by mutual consent*, *compensations*, *adding and improving*, *effect* and *partial rewriting*. For *censorship by mutual consent*, Eco (ibid, 43) stated that there may be some cases in which translators are obliged to work at a loss and the translators resign themselves to accept a cut. As a translated author, he adds that he authorizes his translators to drop some words which cannot be translated into other cultures and languages. In terms of *compensations*, he remarks that in some cases translators can enrich their translation texts up to a certain point without depending on the source text, in accordance with the encyclopedia of translation culture and readers, in order not to miss the very important details presented in the source text (ibid, 47). To maintain the negotiation with the text, Eco states that translators should figure out what kind of world the original sentence pictures, and then to see what kind of sentence in the destination language can contribute to create the same world-picture in the mind of the reader. For the next title *adding and improving*, Eco (ibid, 50) points that to avoid a possible loss, one says more than the original and perhaps to say more means to say less, because the translator fails to keep an important and meaningful reticence or ambiguity. Therefore, *adding and improving* should be applied carefully not to ruin the mystery in the text. Under the *loses and gains* class the next subtitle is *effect*. According to Eco, the aim of a translation, more than producing any literal equivalence is to create the same effect in the mind of the reader as the original text wanted to create (ibid, 56). *Partial rewriting*, being the last subtitle in this class, is considered as the cases in which translators, in order to produce the same effect as intended by the original text, partially rewrites it (ibid, 59).

Eco emphasizes that for a translation, referential equivalence has a very significant place. He also makes a definition of reference as "an act by which, once one knows the meaning of the uttered words, one determines states of a possible world and asserts that in a given spatio-temporal situation certain things or certain events happen" (ibid, 62). In translation, references can be changed. A novel describes a world, a possible one, even though not a fictitious one, as in historical novels. Translators are not allowed to change the true references in text (ibid, 63). The second class of 'Reviewing Model of Competent Translator', *translation and reference* includes three subtitles such as *disregarding reference*, *surface and deep stories* and *radical rewriting*. Beginning with the first subtitle, *disregarding reference*, Eco (ibid, 64) points that when a given expression has a connotative force it must keep the same force in translation, even at the cost of accepting changes in denotation. For the second subtitle, *surface and deep*

stories, Eco (ibid, 65) emphasizes and invites the translators to disregard the literal sense of text in order to preserve what the author considers to be the 'deep' one or the effect it has to produce. At this point, Eco invites translators to translate, not in the sense of words but in terms of the meaning and prominence it carries in the deep structure of the narrative. As for the last subtitle of the class, *radical rewriting*, it can be said that to compensate for a loss, the operation of rewriting alters the reference of the original text which is transformed, disregarding the semantic equivalence, in order to play the same game with the target text that the author played with the source text (ibid, 73).

To see things and texts, forms the last class of 'Reviewing Model of Competent Translator'. In this class, there is only one subtitle: *intertextual allusion*, wherein Eco (ibid, 114) focuses on *double-coding*. This term is explained through naive readers and competent readers: Naive readers do not catch the references and intertextual points; however competent readers catch the quotations and intertextual references. The possibility of a double-coding depends on the size of encyclopedia of the reader and thus, the practice of translation offers a good opportunity to recognize the strategy of double-coding in a text. To get the general idea and see the big picture, it is illustrated how 'Reviewing Model of Competent Translator' is constituted and below there is the table of all the classes and subtitles.

Table 1: Reviewing Model of Competent Translator

Negotiation Classes	Negotiation Strategies (Subtitles)
Loses and Gains	Censorship by Mutual Consent Compensations Adding and Improving Effect Partial rewriting
Translation and Reference	Disregarding Reference, Surface and Deep Stories Radical Rewriting
To see Things and Texts	Intertextual Allusion

3. Pilot Study

For the doctorate study, the applicability of this model was tested with a pilot study before using it for analyzing the translated texts of students. There were ten students participating in the translation practice in the pilot study and they translated the short story titled *A Hopeless Romantic* written by Susan Daitch. Upon proving the practicality of the model through the pilot study, in order to collect data for thesis, four short stories were translated and examined according to 'Reviewing Model of Competent Translator'. However, for this paper, only the data obtained from the pilot study is presented.

In the pilot study before examining the students' English-Turkish translations, a semiotic analysis of the short story was done respective of the Levels of Textual Cooperation of Eco (2015, 72). As it is a complicated and detailed model and it is difficult to apply its all levels on texts in a two-hour literary

translation class for undergraduate level, a simplified version is implemented instead. The doctorate thesis of Betül Parlak (2001), where she used the simplified version of Levels of Textual Cooperation, can be considered a proof of the simplified version's applicability. Respective of the Levels of Textual Cooperation, first, the Fabula and Intreccio levels of the short story are clarified. Following this, Turkish translations of the short story are examined by making use of the 'Reviewing Model of Competent Translator'. For *loses and gains*, a phrase and a word are examined. There are two phrases analyzed in *translation and reference* class. Lastly in the class of *to see things and texts*, there are two notions investigated.

3.1. Semiotic Analysis of the Short Story titled with *A Hopeless Romantic* with the Simplified Version of Levels of Textual Cooperation Scheme

"In the translation of a literary text with the signs that constitute its universe of meaning into a target language, a semiotic analysis applied to the text may have a significant contribution to make. [...]. Furthermore, when a short story is in question, semiotic analysis may be particularly useful because, in a short story, the number of signs that constitute the universe of meaning and that lead to the conclusion is limited. Many things are meant in a few words, and this is why it is important not to leave out any of the signs" (Tuna, 2016, 76). Table 2 below shows semiotic analysis of the short story titled *A Hopeless Romantic*, with the Simplified Version of Textual Cooperation Scheme is presented in Table 2 below.

Table 2: Fabula and Intreccio Levels in *A Hopeless Romantic*

Segments of <i>A Hopeless Romantic</i>	FABULA	INTRECCIO
The Waitress		Describing the leftovers. Describing how her aunts reuse the leftovers in her times.
Waiting for Him	She counts her tips while waiting for the man. The man says that she smells cinnamon.	Describing the rocks and marine animals mentioned in the book. Presenting information on the last time she saw the man.
The World of Dreams	She daydreams.	Describing the dream she had about the man.
Back to Reality	She gets bored as she waits for the man. She leaves the restaurant, faces the real world and regains consciousness. On the other hand, she has still some hope for the man.	Describing the scene she saw outside of the restaurant. Dialogues with her children in her dream.

3.1.1. Fabula Level in *A Hopeless Romantic*

The discursive structure, in other words the basic scheme of the narrative, is named as Fabula level. In this level, the events occur in a temporal order and the characters join the event. The Fabula level of *A Hopeless Romantic* is as it follows: Routine works done by a young girl working as a waitress in a restaurant; a man comes to the restaurant every day and the girl likes him a lot; he works on his computer and reads books without noticing the girl; she dreams that the girl has about the man; lingering in the restaurant although her shift is over in order to see the man, despite her expectations; the man does not come at the end of the day, she leaves the restaurant and stops dreaming.

3.1.2. Intreccio Level in *A Hopeless Romantic*

Unlike the Fabula level, Intreccio level is identified with narrative structure in which the temporal order is absent. In this level, thoughts, feelings, dreams and the descriptions made by narrator and other characters occur. The Intreccio level of *A Hopeless Romantic* is as it follows: In today's world and during the Great Depression, the changes in people in terms of frugality; information on old life forms and how they survive until today; liking someone and as a result dreaming, having interest in someone, which does not change the flow of life.

3.2. Examining the Translated Texts of *A Hopeless Romantic* with Reviewing Model of Competent Translator

Loses and Gains

Table 3: Loses and Gains in the Translated Texts of *A Hopeless Romantic*

Negotiation Classes	Source Text	Target Text	Back Translation	Negotiation Strategies
Loses and Gains	wacko	T1, T4, T5, T6, T8: - T9: wacko	T1, T4, T5, T6, T8: - T9: wacko	No Negotiation
		T2: garip T3: ilginç T7: sıradışı T10: tuhaf	T2: weird, bizarre T3: interesting T7: extraordinary T10: strange, odd	Effect
	getting somewhere	T1: bir yöne doğru sapıyorlardı T3: onlar bir yerlere gidiyorlar	T1: They were turning out to a direction T3: They were going to somewhere.	No Negotiation
		T2: ikisi bir yere varabilirlerdi T4: varmaya başlamışlardı T5: aşama kaydediyorlardı T6: sanırım bir yerlere geliyoruz T7: bir yerlere varıyorlardı T8: bir yerlere gelmekteydiler T9: bir yerlere varmaya çalışıyorlardı T10: ikisi arasında bir şeyler başlıyordu	T2: They could have reached to somewhere. T4: They were started to reaching. T5: They were making progress. T6: I think, we are reaching to a point. T7: They were getting somewhere. T8: They were coming to somewhere. T9: They were trying to get somewhere. T10: something starts between them.	Adding and Improving

The points that could cause problems while translating for the students, who are translator candidates, were determined beforehand in the classroom as they read the story. It is understood that students tended to have problems with idioms and colloquial language. With the aim of solving the possible problems, students decided to use *adding and improving* and *effect* strategies as negotiation points.

The first point that is posing a problem in the translation of the story is the word 'wacko'. According to the table above, six of the students failed to cooperate with the text, and thus, they could not establish a negotiation point. It might be because that they did not know the word 'wacko' or how to translate it respecting the context of the text. However, four of the students succeeded in using the word 'wacko' appropriately and created the same effect in their target texts by offering synonyms.

In the source text, the phrase 'getting somewhere' is translated correctly by eight students having the negotiation point of *adding and improving*. On the contrary, two students were unable to cooperate with the text and failed to follow a strategy. It is clear that translating this structure did not cause serious problems for the students and the majority of them could translate it accurately.

Translation and Reference

Table 4: Translation and Reference in the Translated Texts of *A Hopeless Romantic*

Negotiation Classes	Source Text	Target Text	Back Translation	Negotiation Strategies
Translation and Reference	not giving her a second thought	T1, T6, T8: -- T3: ikinci bir düşünce daha vermeden T5: onu düşünmesine bile gerek yoktu T7: adam onun ikinci kez düşünmesini gerektirmeksizin T9: ona bir saniyelik bir düşünme vakti bile vermeden	T1, T6, T8: - T3: not giving a second thought T5: There is no need to think of her. T7: without needing to think of her, the man T9: not giving her even the right of one second thinking	No Negotiation
		T2: kızı bir ikinci kez daha aklına getirmeden T4: onun üzerine düşünmüyordu bile T10: onu fark etmiyordu bile	T2: before thinking of her again T4: he wasn't thinking of her at all. T10: He doesn't recognize her at all.	Disregarding Reference
	mastodon craps	T1, T7, T8: mamut pisliği T2: mastodon eşyaları T3: mastodon zarlari T4: mastodon artıkları T5: mastodon saçmalıkları T6: -- T9: çerçöp	T1: mammut crap T2: mastodon stuff T3: mastodon dice T4: mastodon scraps T5: mastodon bullshits T6: - T9: brushwood	No Negotiation
		T10: mastodon dışkısı	T10: mastodon craps	Surface and Deep Stories

The points that could cause problems while translating for the students were determined beforehand in the classroom as they read the story. With the aim of solving these problems, the students decided to make use of *disregarding reference* and *surface and deep stories* strategies as negotiation points.

The first sign believed to cause difficulty for the students is the idiom 'not giving her a second thought'. According to the table, seven students could not cooperate with the text and failed to find a negotiation point as they translated the idiom by using different idioms in Turkish. However, three of the students were successful in maintaining connotative force by accepting changes in denotation. In short, students could maintain a cooperation by applying 'disregarding reference' negotiation point.

Related to *translation and reference* negotiation class, the second structure that students had difficulty in while translating is the phrase 'mastodon craps'. Only one student could analyze this phrase and could translate it correctly into Turkish. On the contrary, nine of the students could not establish a negotiation point as they failed to analyze the phrase.

In conclusion, when the translated texts are considered, it can be seen that the vast majority of the students cannot set a cooperation and be successful in identifying a negotiation point. From this data, it is apparent that students generally failed while translating idioms and homonymic words such as 'crap'. This is why they could not set a negotiation point properly respecting to the context presented in the source text and they failed to carry the same reference to their target texts.

To See Things and Texts

Table 5: To See Things and Texts in the Translated Texts of *A Hopeless Romantic*

Negotiation Classes	Source Text	Target Text	Back Translation	Negotiation Points
To See Things and Texts	during the Depression	T1: Bunalım zamanında T5, T8: Buhran dönemi T9: Ekonomik Bunalım Zamanı	T1: in depression time T5, T8: Depression Era T9: Economic Crisis Time	No Negotiation
		T2, T6: Büyük Buhran zamanında T3, T4, T7: Büyük Buhran döneminde T10: Büyük Buhran'da	T2, T6, T3, T4, T7, T10: during the Depression	Intertextual Allusion
	Cambrian	T1, T5, T7, T8: Kambiryum T2: Kambiyum T4: --	T1, T5, T7, T8: no back translation T2: Cambium T4: -	No Negotiation
		T3, T6, T9, T10: Kambriyen	T3, T6, T9, T10: Cambrian	Intertextual Allusion

Being the third section of "Reviewing Model of Competent Translator", in the *to see things and texts* negotiation class, problematic parts are identified and analyzed respective of the negotiation point *intertextual allusion*.

The first point considered a problem in the translation of the story is the notion of 'the Depression'. According to the table above, four of the students failed to cooperate with the text as their encyclopedias were not efficient, and thus, they could not establish a negotiation point. However, six of the students, succeeded in translating and can establish a double code for the sign of 'the Depression'.

The other sign thought to be a difficulty for the students was the word of 'Cambrian'. This structure, which means the first period of the Paleozoic period, was translated appropriately by four students. On the contrary, six of the students could not understand its meaning as their encyclopedias were inadequate.

According to the analyses of the *to see things and texts* negotiation class, half of the students could recognize the intertextual allusions and could set up double codes. However, the remaining half, could not discern the intertextual allusions and failed to translate them into Turkish appropriately. The reason of this problem is related to background knowledge of students. Students who have historical and geographical knowledge could understand the intertextuality in the source text and maintain the integrity in their target texts. In conclusion, sustaining intertextual points in target texts is a crucial function, which depends on the encyclopedia of the translators.

4. Conclusion

It is obvious that to translate literary texts demands linguistic and cultural competence. For translators to gain and utilize grammatical knowledge is not sufficient by itself. In addition, to negotiate between two cultures and languages necessitates acquiring cultural competence. In this regard, literary translation classes should be designed by focusing on these mutually complementary notions. Bearing in mind these points, in this study, some remarks and implications on literary translation classes, translators as candidates and 'Reviewing Model of Competent Translator' have come out.

To summarize the results of the pilot study, most of the students failed to set up a negotiation strategy in their target texts. From this result, one can draw a conclusion that the 14-week lessons plan and syllabus can be effective for students' literary translation competence including linguistic and cultural competence and it may fill gaps in students' encyclopedias. Considering the material used in literary translation classes, the texts to be translated by students -four short stories written in the modern days- have advanced words, various idioms, proverbs and colloquialism representing English and American culture. As they provide many aspects of English language and culture, they offer students opportunity to learn new words and idioms, to have linguistic performance while translating, and to enhance cultural accumulation that students need as translators of literary texts. They are all achievement facts on an individual basis contributing to students' encyclopedias, focusing on historical, social, literary, cultural back demands.

Besides, with the pilot study, it is substantiated that 'Reviewing Model of Competent Translator', which is designed under the inspiration from Eco's classifications of translation cases, can be used to evaluate literary translations and it may be thought that it not only provides convenience but also novelty in literary translation classes. However, it would be better to keep in mind that this model is not fixed and it is open to innovation and improvement. Considering other translation cases presented in Eco's book, new negotiation classes can be added to the model.

Ultimately, throughout this study, both the requirements of students and translator trainers are thought to be met. Providing a 14-week lesson plan enriched with modern short stories and theory of Eco, it is estimated that students will fulfil their professional abilities and translator trainers can put 'Reviewing Model of Competent Translator' to good use for evaluating the translated texts of students. Nevertheless, different genres and types of texts can be conducted and various translation activities can be applied according to the needs of the students. By means of such variety, students will have the chance to practice their translation skills on diverse texts types and besides, translator trainers will have the opportunity to try different education strategies, to monitor their teaching skills and to compare education strategies with each other in order to identify the most effective way to train their students.

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