

World Literature in English (Translations)

Discussion

Do you read world literature in original languages?

Have you ever read a translation that was not pleasant to read?

Would you ever want to start your own freelance translation business or translation agency?

What type of dilemmas do translators encounter?

What would you do if you were interpreting and a person said something that you strongly disagree with?

Should a translator/ interpreter translate every single word?

Matching

1. If you don't know the dead person, then you only stand to gain. There's nothing wrong with clearing things away: if the situation were reversed, the corpse would do the same to you, and you wouldn't mind that, either. The camp is a practical place. You can't afford to feel shame or horror. You proceed with steady indifference, or perhaps dejected contentment. And this has nothing to do with schadenfreude. I believe that the less skittish we are around the dead, the more we cling to life. And the more we fall prey to illusions. You convince yourself that the missing people have simply been moved to another camp. It doesn't matter what you know, you believe the opposite. Just like the bread court, the act of clearing away happens only in the present moment. But there is no violence, everything proceeds matter-of-factly and peacefully.

2. I was born in 1910, in Paris. My father was a gentle, easy-going person, a salad of racial genes: a Swiss citizen, of mixed French and Austrian descent, with a dash of the Danube in his veins. I am going to pass around in a minute some lovely, glossy-blue picture-postcards. He owned a luxurious hotel on the Riviera. His father and two grand-fathers had sold wine, jewels and silk, respectively. At thirty he married an English girl, daughter of Jerome Dunn, the alpinist, and grand-daughter of two Dorset parsons, experts in obscure subjects — palaeopedology and Aeolian harps, respectively. My very photogenic mother died in a freak accident (picnic, lightning) when I was three, and, save for a pocket of warmth in the darkest past, nothing of her subsists within the hollows and dells of memory, over which, if you can still stand my style (I am writing under observation), the sun of my infancy had set: surely, you all know those redolent remnants of day suspended, with the midges, about some hedge in bloom or suddenly entered and traversed by the rambler, at the bottom of a hill, in the summer dusk; a furry warmth, golden midges.

3. Dne 14. dubna, čtyřicet kilometrů severně od Forstu, vylovili vojáci třiačtyřicetiletého majitele přádelny z řeky a mrtvolu předali úřadům, které ho po obvyklé úřední prohlídce uložily do sklepa na dolní Nise, chlazeného obrovskými bloky ledu, k laskavému odvozu prostřednictvím vdovy, kterou o tom uvědomily. A tak ho 17. dubna odvezl koňský povoz s nápisem „Langerovo řeznictví – uzenářské výrobky z vepřového a hovězího masa“. ... Doma ve Forstu, mezi vepřovými a hovězími půlkami, vyváleli Ottu Herbsta kvůli nesnesitelnému zápachu v konzervační soli, potom ho zabalili do husté, nijak levné plstěné látky z proslulé forstské plstěné kolekce a uložili ho do dubové rakve, neumytého, neučesaného, protože to u Otty už nešlo udělat.

Match the three paragraphs with the following characteristics:

- A. *Lolita* by Vladimir Nabakov
- B. *The Hunger Angel* by Herta Muller (translated by Philip Boehm)
- C. *Moje německá matka* by Niklas Frank (translated by Vlastimil Dominik)
- D. Translation from German
- E. Text by a non-native writer
- F. Translation prize winner
- G. Translation anti-prize winner

Identify some language / translation problems in the paragraphs and suggest improvements.

Analysis

Amy said: „Will you go and see him?“ and I said: „Yeh, I’ll go and see him.“ She wasn’t crying and her voice was clear and steady. She wasn’t insisting or demanding. It was like she was asking a polite, considerate question, like a host to a guest. I even reckon she was holding her head a bit higher and her back a bit straighter, as if this was an important day, a very important day, and she had to see it got managed proper, like something special had happened to her and she wanted to share it.

Amy se zeptala: „Pudeš se na něj podívat?“ a já jsem odpověděl: „Jo, pudu se na něj podívat.“ Neplakala, hlas měla jasnej a pevnej. Nenutila mě ani nežádala. Spíš jako by mi kladla zdvořilou, ohleduplnou otázku, jako když hostitelka konverzuje s hostem. Dokonce mám dojem, že hlavu držela o něco vejš a záda o něco rovnějc, jako by to byl významnej den, velmi významnej den a ona měla dohlídnout na to, aby všechno řádně klapalo. Jako by ji potkalo něco mimořádnýho a ona to chtěla dopřát i druhejm.

From *Last Orders* by Graham Swift, translated by Alena Jindrová-Špilarová

Discuss the quality of the translation and identify techniques that were used:

Direct Translation Techniques are used when structural and conceptual elements of the source language can be transposed into the target language.

Oblique Translation Techniques are used when the structural or conceptual elements of the source language cannot be directly translated without altering meaning or upsetting the grammatical and stylistics elements of the target language. Oblique translation techniques include:

Transposition (blue ball becomes boule bleue in French)

Modulation (Te lo dejo means literally I leave it to you but translates better as You can have it.)

Reformulation or Equivalence (for example when translating idioms or slogans)

Adaptation ((for example France has Belgian jokes and England has Irish jokes)

Compensation (making good in one part of the text something that could not be translated in another)

Reading Practice

1. *Identify at least 5 key words of the following text:*

Students of English literature will instantly recognise classic titles like 'Heart of Darkness', 'Lolita' and 'Things Fall Apart'. These and countless other famous works of English literature were written by authors whose first language was not English! Joseph Conrad was from Poland and only learned English in adulthood, but his books are still studied, a hundred years after they were written. There have been many film adaptations of his books, such as Francis Ford Coppola's film 'Apocalypse Now', based on 'Heart of Darkness'. Russian Vladimir Nabokov was always dissatisfied with his most notable (and controversial) novel, 'Lolita', because of the “imperfection” of his English, but throughout the English-speaking world, it is celebrated for its delicate mastery of the language: exquisite descriptions, subtle word-play and alliterations. Chinua Achebe is hailed as the father of African English literature. His first novel, 'Things Fall Apart' describes the history and culture of his native country, Nigeria, and inspired other African writers like Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie to write in English to speak out against English colonialism.

I. _____ Generations of English children were raised reading the work of best-selling children's writer, Roald Dahl, who, himself, spoke Norwegian at home as a child. Japanese Haruki Murakami had been intrigued by Western culture since he was a child, and now contributes to it with his writing. A look at the winners of the Man Booker Prize, awarded annually to the best example of English literature from a Commonwealth country, shows that it is not dominated by British, Canadian or Australian writers. Winners include V.S. Naipaul from Trinidad, ('In a Free State'), Nigerian Ben Okri ('The Famished Road'), Japanese Kazuo Ishiguro ('The Remains of the Day') and four Indian authors, Kiran Desai ('The Inheritance of Loss'), Aravind Adiga ('The White Tiger'), Arundhati Roy (the breathtakingly beautiful 'The God of Small Things'), and Salman Rushdie's 'Midnight's Children', which was also given the highest award, The Booker of Bookers.

II. _____ In the words of Chinua Achebe, they are “expanding the frontiers of English”; shaping and growing the language to describe other cultures, and making valuable, lasting contributions to its canon of literature. Without these pioneers, English would be far less rich, diverse and colourful.

2. *Place the two topic sentences in the text:*

A. Non-native writers do not simply borrow English and use it clumsily to tell their tales, nor do they attempt to use it in the same way that native speakers do.

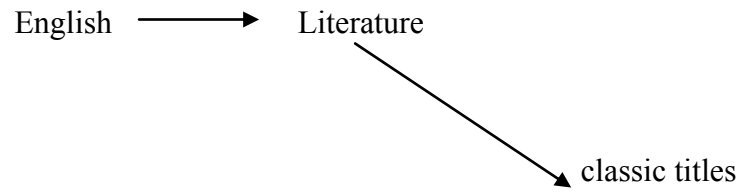
B. There are now more non-native speakers of English than native speakers, so it should hardly come as a surprise that speakers of other languages are growing in prominence as writers of English.

3. *Choose the best headline:*

Non-native writers borrow English to tell their tales / Pioneers of Non-native English Literature / Man Booker Prize not dominated by British, Canadian or Australian writers

Word Study:

Extract some useful vocabulary and phrases from the text:



Observe collocations:

recognise _____
_____ novel
_____ mastery of the language, _____ descriptions, _____ word-play
award _____
_____ contributions

Consider translating this section into your mother tongue: