Challenges of Literary Translation: Kahlil Gibran's the Prophet as a case study

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Abstract

The preservation of the aesthetic value of literary works especially poetry remains the main difficulty that translators face. Literary translation is in fact very challenging. The study compares three translations, two in Arabic and one in French, of Kahlil Gibran's the Prophet, a wonderful book of poetry originally published in English in 1923 and translated into more than forty languages. The purpose of this study is to see to what extent those translations have managed to assert and preserve the artistic essence of the original text. Besides, the study has examined the main strategies used in those translations. The data are drawn from some passages randomly chosen, of those translations. Relying on the structuralist approach, the study revealed that all the translations have succeeded in a way or another in maintaining the aesthetic value of the source text. But, one translation has been considered more creative than the other ones according to the study.

Keywords: aesthetic value, structuralism, poetry, translation.

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