Some problems of translation from English into Arabic

A thesis presented to the Department of Applied Linguistics for the partial fulfillment of the degree of B.A in Applied Linguistics

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Chapter No. 1

I. Introduction

"Communication between cultures can be achieved through translation. Through translation, people are introduced to different languages and ways of thought. It is important to understand the relation between language and culture in order to train translators and interpreters." (Roxana, 2016)

Delisle (1988, 74), indicates "What truly distinguishes translation is that it takes place in the context of the relations between two cultures, two worlds of thought and perception"

Newmark (1981, 183-185) argues that there is a cultural value in translation. Language is partly the reflection of a culture. Translators like linguists tend to define culture as the sum of people's customs and ways of thinking.

"Translation is important as a source of diffusion of knowledge of every kind. By understanding the development of every aspect of culture in other civilizations, people can also enrich their understanding of their own culture. Knowledge of the target culture is crucial for successful English-Arabic translation. Poor comprehension may arise from lack of insight into the target culture. There is a mismatch in cultural norms and beliefs between the Arab and Western cultures. Each different language has its own individuality, which makes it distinctive and peculiar to the people who speak it. Words denote things and put them in a distinct category of thought. As a result, differences between languages are not only related to the linguistic system, but involve differences in the speakers' interpretation and understanding of the world they live in. Languages classify knowledge in various ways for the purposes of speech." (Roxana, 2016)
II. Definition of Translation

- Words that have been changed from one language into a different language: words that have been translated.
- The act or process of translating something into a different language.
- The act or process of changing something from one form to another.
- The act, process or result of changing from one form or language into another. (Merriam-webster.com, 2016)

"Generally, translation is a process of rendering meaning, ideas, or messages of a text from one language to other language. There are some considerations which follow this process, which mainly related to the accuracy, clarity and naturalness of the meaning, ideas, or messages of the translation. It means that it is an important thing to consider whether the readers of the target text accept equivalent information as the readers of the source text do. These considerations are clarified in some definition of translation stated by some experts." (Bayu Nugroho, A.)

One of the most prominent definitions of translation is stated by Newmark (1988: 5) who defines translation as "rendering the meaning of a text into another language in the way that the author intended the text."

III. The aim of research

The main objectives of this research are to find out what is the concept of translation, the significance of translation and the problems which the translators are facing during the process of translation. Finally, to find out what are the solutions of those problems.
Chapter No.2:

Literature Review

"Through translation, people are introduced to different languages and ways of thought. It is important to understand the relation between language and culture in order to train translators and interpreters. (Roxana, 2016)

(Delisle 1988, 74), indicates "What truly distinguishes translation is that it takes place in the context of the relations between two cultures, two worlds of thought and perception"

Newmark (1981, 183-185) argues that there is a cultural value in translation. Language is partly the reflection of a culture. Translators like linguists tend to define culture as the sum of people's customs and ways of thinking.

Catford (1965, 1) defines translation as “a process of substituting a text in one language for a text in another”.

Whereas Hatim and Munday (2004: 6) define translation as “the process of transferring a written text from source language (SL) to target language (TL)”. 

Nida and Taber (1982), on the other hand, state that “translating consists in reproducing in the receptor language the closest natural equivalent of the source language message”.

The definition of Nida and Taber is more comprehensive than the definition of Hatim and Munday.

One of the most prominent definitions of translation is stated by Newmark (1988: 5) who defines translation as “rendering the meaning of a text into another language in the way that the author intended the text”.

Chapter No. 3

Translation problems

I. Introduction

"Translation problems can be divided into linguistic problems and cultural problems: the linguistic problems include grammatical differences, lexical ambiguity and meaning ambiguity; the cultural problems refer to different situational features. A difficulty in translation work is what As-Sayyd (1995) found when she conducted a study to compare and assess some problems in translating the fair names of Allah in the Qur’an. She pointed out that some of the major problems of translation are over-translation, under-translation, and untranslatability. Culture constitutes another major problem that faces translators. A bad model of translated pieces of literature may give misconceptions about the original. While Zidan (1994) wondered about the possible role of the target culture content as a motivating variable in enhancing or hindering the attainment of linguistic, communicative and, more importantly, cultural objectives of EFL (English as a Foreign Language education). Hassan (1997) emphasized this notion when he pointed out the importance of paying attention to the translation of irony in the source language context. He clarified that this will not only transfer the features of the language translated but also its cultural characteristics." (Nakhallah, 2016)
II. Types of translation problems

According to Dr. Miremadi (1991), translation problems are divided into two main categories: lexical problems and syntactic problems.

1. Lexical problems

In the interpretation of lexical problems, Miremadi states that, although words are entities that refer to objects or concepts, a word in one language may not be substituted with a word in another language when referring to the same concepts or objects.

2. Syntactic problems

Syntactic problems are the other main category of translation problems; as Dr. Miremadi (1991) quoted Nida (1975), one can find no two languages that have the exact identical systems of structural organizations (i.e. language structure varies from one language to another). These differences include:

1. Word classes: Languages differ from each other in the internal word formation of language classification.
2. Grammatical relations: This difference exists among the languages in the way that a constituent of a sentence functions within that sentence.
3. Word order.
4. Style.
5. Pragmatic aspects.
III. Definitions

**Definition of Grammatical**:  
- The study of the way the sentences of a language are constructed, morphology and syntax. (Dictionary.com, 2016)

**Definition of Lexical**:  
- The meaning of a word in common usage by speakers of the language. (Merriam-webster.com, 2016)

**Definition of ambiguity**:  
- Something that does not have a single clear meaning: something that is ambiguous. (Merriam-webster.com, 2016)

**Definition of Culture**:  
- The beliefs, customs, arts of a particular society, group, place, or time.
- A particular society that has its own beliefs, ways of life, art, etc. (Merriam-webster.com, 2016)
IV. **Meaning in translation**

Meaning in translation depends on the knowledge of the meanings of the terminology and how to translate the texts without errors. Knowledge of the differences between denotative and connotative meanings of each word, will help the translators to translate the texts correctly.

V. **Types of meaning**

There are two types of meaning: Denotative meaning and Connotative meaning. Denotative meaning means the surface meaning of the words or sentences, whereas connotative meaning means the deep meaning of the words or sentences. For example, the denotative meaning of the word "dear" is "غزال", and the connotative meaning is "جمال أو رشاقة".
VI. Some examples

1. It rains dogs and cats.
   - Denotative meaning ( إنها تمطر قططاً وكلاباً)
   - Connotative meaning (إذا تمطر بغزارة)

2. Like father like son.
   - Denotative meaning (والد مثل أبيه)
   - Connotative meaning (هذا الشبل من ذاك الأسد)

3. School of fish.
   - Denotative meaning (مدرسة السمك)
   - Connotative meaning (سرب السمك)

4. Beauty is skin deep.
   - Denotative meaning (الجمال هو الجلد العميق)
   - Connotative meaning (الجمال جمال النفس)

5. It is hard please everyone.
   - Denotative meaning (من الصعب ترجي الجميع)
   - Connotative meaning (رضي الناس غاية لا تدرك)

6. There is safety in numbers.
   - Denotative meaning (السلامة في الأرقام)
   - Connotative meaning (الأمان في الكثرة)

7. Out of sight, out of mind.
   - Denotative meaning (البعيد عن الأنظار خارج العقل)
   - Connotative meaning (البعيد عن العين بعيد عن القلب)

Denotative meaning of the sentence is one of reasons for translation problems because it does not give the intended meaning of the sentence. The translators must know the difference between denotative and connotative meanings.
In English, pronoun "It" can be used for either a subject or an object in a sentence or to ask an unknown person and for distance, time, animal and everything without feelings.

1. Who is **it** at the door?

من الذي عند الباب؟

2. **It** is the milkman.

إنه بائع الحليب.

3. **It** is hot today.

الجو حار اليوم.

4. **It** is about 300 kilometers from Qassim to Riyadh.

تبلغ المسافة حوالي 300 كيلومترا من القصيم إلى الرياض.

5. **It** is very curious that some people still worship idols.

من الغريب جدًا ان بعض الناس ما زالوا يعبدون الأصنام.

In Arabic language, there is no similar pronoun, to the pronoun "it" in English language. In Arabic language, talks about an unknown person, time, distance, animal and inanimate objects as masculine or feminine.
VII. Translation of texts from machine translation

In these pictures, translations for some sentences from English into Arabic to find out if the machine translation gives the intended meaning of each sentence or not.

Denotative meaning
(عقلان أفضل من عقل واحد)
Connotative meaning
(رأيان أفضل من رأي واحد)

Denotative meaning
(قطع الماس ألماس)
Connotative meaning
(لا ينفذ الحديد إلا الحديد)
According to what found out of the pictures, machine translation does not give the intended or connotative meaning of the words or sentences because it gives the denotative meaning of the words or sentences (literally translate).
Chapter No.4

I. Difficulties and problems in the translation process

"Difficulties and Problems arising from translation process fell into four categories:-

1- Cultural difficulties: Include the proper or improper usage of certain word, phrases based on the culture of a given society as well as the specifies of the society itself such as the education system, health care system, societal or religious taboos ...etc.

2- Conceptual / Semantic difficulties: Are those that arise in conveying the meaning of statement in a foreign language.

3- Idiomatic difficulties: Correspond to use of certain phrases ,or the means of conveying ideas that are unique to a particular region, country or society.

4- Grammatical difficulties: Include difficulties linked for and based on for instance to the grammar of a given language." (Nakhallah, 2016)
II. Solutions to translation problems

Any problem demands a solution. Without solutions we cannot continue doing things which have problems. Translation problems also demand solutions to process the problems which are in translation.

According to (Ghazala, 2008), the solutions proposed to translation problems are, therefore, based on the following criteria:

1. The types of text: general, technical, religious, political, etc.
2. The minor linguistic context: the preceding and the following word, phrase, clause or sentence.
3. The possibility of saying something in the Target Language or not (e.g. for "fat salary" we can say (راتب ضخم), but not (راتب سمين)).
4. The possibility or not of using an identical Target Language grammatical structure.
5. The understandability or not of an expression (e.g. "tall order" is understood when translated into (مهمة شاقة), but not understood as (أمر طويل)).
III. Terms of competent translators

Competent translators show the following attributes:

1. "A very translating (the source language);

2. An excellent command of the language into which they are translating (the target language);

3. Familiarity with the subject matter of the text being translated;

4. A profound understanding of the etymological and idiomatic correlates between the two languages;

5. Good knowledge of the language, written and spoken, from which they are

6. A finely tuned sense of when to meta phrase (translate literally)."

(Kasparek, 1986)
IV. **Conclusion**

One of the most significant problems in translation process is the plurality of meanings of the words. Knowledge of the differences between denotative and connotative meanings of each word, will help the translators to find out how to translate the texts correctly. All languages have their own compositions and specificities, to be translators are able to translate the texts without errors, they must have knowledge of the differences in specificity of each language.

Finally, a competent translator is not only bilingual, but bicultural.
Bibliography


