The Problem of Terminology of the Arabic Language:
Arabic Language and the Translation
of Emotive Expressions into English

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Abstract

It has been known that the translation of emotive expressions is one of the most challenging areas to deal with because of the particular importance they carry either in themselves or in the context they are entrenched in. In fact, the Arabic language is famous for its eloquence, expressiveness, clarity, richness, and emotiveness. This study sheds light on the way translators should look at emotive expressions in order to find the main source of emotiveness. It focuses on the strategies used in translating emotive expressions, especially those related to the meaning and musicality of poetry, in order to reach a good product in the target language.

Keywords: Arabic language, translation, translation strategies, emotiveness, translatability

Résumé

La traduction des expressions émotives est l'une des zones les plus difficiles à traiter en raison de l'importance particulière qu'elles portent soit en elles-mêmes ou dans le contexte, elles sont enchâssées. Par souci de savoir quels problèmes les traducteurs sont confrontés au cours du processus de traduction entre l'anglais et l'arabe, cette étude met en lumière la façon dont les traducteurs doivent examiner les expressions émotives afin de trouver la source principale d'émotivité. Cette étude met l'accent sur les stratégies utilisées pour traduire les expressions émotives, en particulier ceux liés à la signification et la musicalité de la poésie, afin de parvenir à un bon produit dans la langue cible.

Mots Clés: Langue arabe, Traduction, Stratégies de la traduction

Introduction

The main components, this paper is going to focus on, go from the difficulty of translation from English into Arabic until the difficulty of translating emotive expressions. The first part of this paper discusses emotions and culture as they are the most important element, which affect the way of translating expressive discourse, such as literary and especially poetic discourse, whose essence is based on feelings and emotions. The second part deals with translatability, in general, and the translatability of poetry and emotive expressions from Arabic into English, in particular. The third part focusses on the difficulty of translating emotive expressions, strategies used in translating poetic emotive expressions, and, especially, the interaction between translation, emotiveness, culture, and meaning.

1. Emotions and Culture

Experiencing emotions is a matter of temperament, personality, mood, and disposition. Harré (1998:43) defines the word emotion as follows:

> 'Emotion' is taken to be a bodily condition, either a feeling, for example an abdominal tension, or for some biologically oriented psychologists an emotion is a physiological state, for example a rise in the state of excitation of some part of the nervous system... From this point of view an emotion display is an expression of a complex judgment, and, at the same time, the display is often the performance of a social act. Both the biological and the discursive points of view allow that emotions can be both inherited and learned, though the biologically oriented students of emotion tend to pay little attention to the huge cultural variations in the repertoires and occasioned uses of emotion displays observed by anthropologists.

In fact, emotions are here in order to perform a social act. Thus, emotive words are used in order to express and perform different speech acts. In addition, each culture seems to have its own repertoire of emotions. But, what is important for one culture is not necessarily for the other. "This may have a profound effect on the repertoire of emotion displays competent members of a society are ready to perform" as explained by Harré (1998:51).

Emotions are controversial. They cannot be controlled or predicted in advance because they vary from person to person, according to the social context and the situation that triggers them. They reflect our attitudes and reactions towards things happening for us and touching other people around. As Alon (2005: 5) proposes:

> Emotions play an important role in culture: in our particular context, they are expressed in words, later to influence 'reality'... emotive meaning in the lexical sense consists in the hierarchical list of emotions that are aroused in the native user of the language upon using the word in question, augmented by the

peripheral sense, i.e., connotations, associations, metaphors, idioms, and nonverbal communication.

2. Translatability

Pym (1992) and Turk (1991) claim that translatability is the ability to transfer meaning from one language to another without resulting with a radical change. However, the issue that rises here is which type of meaning? Or, are all kinds of meaning translatable? Just few theories put emphasis on the translatability of all kinds of meaning. The main problem in both the theories, that stand with or against translatability, is in the expressions of the source text and the meanings that exist in the source language. Pym (1992) and Turk (1991) add that translatability works in three ways:

-The rationalists emphasize the universality of meaning, i.e., they believe that thinking and speaking are said to be loose. This implies that meanings and their representations are always translatable.

- The relativists, on the other hand, emphasize the bound relation between thinking and speaking and the different ways of thinking with are particular to each language. Translators have the choice to become closer either to the source language or to the target.

- The third approach stands between the first and the second. It emphasizes the possibility of translating since each language has its individuality and its own way of expressing things. These three standpoints have been summarized in the perspective of Brislin (1976: 63). He writes:

> The question of untranslatability has too often been discussed in terms of absolute rather than relative equivalence. If one is to insist that translation must involve no loss of information whatsoever, then obviously not only translating but all communication is impossible. No communication, whether intralingual, Interlingual or intersemiotic, can occur without some loss of information.

From these two claims, we may infer that there are three theories concerning the possibility or the impossibility of translating anything: The possibility to translate, the impossibility to translate, and the translatability of meaning and words in any case.

Snell-Hornby (1988) relates between translatability and culture and the extent to which the text is embraced in its culture and the distance, which exists between the source text and the target audience. Snell-Hornby (1988: 44) claims that:

> The extent to which a text is translatable varies with the degree to which it is embedded in its own specific culture, also with the distance that separates the cultural background of source text and target audience in time and place.

The concept of untranslatability is to be discussed in emotive expressions, which stir up strong feelings, like love, joy, hate, pleasure, fear, and grief.

In fact, studying the translatability of emotiveness is a very difficult task, which needs a deep reading of the Arabic text along with its translation because identifying whether a given lexical item is emotive or not is a tricky task. This is due to the reader's response, which depends upon the age, the background, and sometimes the context.

3. Problems in Translating Emotive Expressions from Arabic into English

Arabic language is a Semitic language, whereas English is a West Germanic Anglo-Saxon language. The culturesof both languages are different in many ways. In fact, the differences between these two languages rise different problem in the process of translation. These areas can be connectivity, punctuation, argumentation, paragraph organization, and grammatical categories, such as number, gender, relative pronouns, nouns, clauses, cultural bound expressions, emotiveness,…etc.

In this paper, we are highly concerned with the difficulty of translating emotiveness. This Arabic-bound phenomenon is related to different aspects, such as language, culture, and connotative meaning. These are prerequisite for any translation of emotiveness.

The relation between language and meaning is a deep one because language is made up of two main interrelated elements: signifier and signified. Catford (1965) defines meaning as "the total network of relations entered into by any linguistic form-text, item-in-text, structure, element of structure, class term in system, or whatever it may be." The meaning, then, is of two major types: denotative and connotative. Denotation and connotation are interrelated and, at the same time, opposites because when one occurs the other is absent. According to Armstrong (2005), the denotative meaning is the conceptual, cognitive, or propositional meaning. This implies that denotation is the meaning that a word expresses literally. Despite that, connotation is the secondary meaning of a word that is not attached to its denotative meaning, i.e., it is secondary to the core meaning of denotation. Sometimes, it is specific to a given language.

In fact, considering connotation as secondary does not reduce from its importance for the fact that this layer of meaning is the one which is intended in both poetry and emotiveness and to which the translator should pay attention because it is difficult to translate. It is subjective and it may not be shared by the speech community. According to Hervey and Higgins (2002), any text has different layers of meaning, such as: referential content, emotional colouring, cultural, social associations,…etc.. All these levels of meaning are found in poetry. Thus, any word has different overtones, which are called connotative meanings, i.e., the meaning, which stands above the literal meaning of words and expressions and which forms the

whole meaning of a word. Yet, here, we are particularly interested in the emotional meaning.

The connotative meaning includes the emotional associations suggested by the lexical items. It is equivalent to the emotive or expressive meaning. Truthfully, emotive expressions result in some deep emotions, such as love, hatred and fear. Emotiveness is one of the connotative meaning of a concept or a word. As a result, the meaning varies from one language to another, one culture to another, and from person to person. In some cases, emotive expressions depend on the context, text-type, and the intention of the speaker. As a result, emotiveness may be positive or negative. It may be used to have an emotional impact on the addressee or to reveal the intention or the feeling of the addressee towards a given subject matter. Volek (1987) divides emotive expressions into six categories: phonetic/phonological, morphological, lexical units, syntactical, intonational, and the use of direct address. Shunnaq (1993/1998) follows the same division of Volek but divides emotive expression into two types (negative and positive), and considers figures of speech and cultural expressions the major sources of emotive expressions. Figures of speech embrace mainly metaphor, euphemism, and personification.

4. Areas of Difficulty of Translating Emotiveness

Areas of difficulty in emotive expressions rise from the differences between cultures. The denotative meaning of a word is the same all over the cultures of the different speech communities, but its connotative meaning is various and very different. For example, the owl in the English culture is a symbol of wisdom and beauty. However, it reflects bad luck, and pessimism in Arabic culture. These differences, in the connotative meaning among cultures, are problematic in translation. Because language and culture are inseparable, there should be a great attention to the nature of the connotative meaning, which is part of culture. Nida (1964) says that we cannot separate translation from culture because languages are a major part of culture. One of the problems, which may rise in the difficulty of translating emotiveness, is to affect the target audience emotionally in order to convince or influence them.

5. Strategies of Translating Emotive Expressions

Hajjaj & Ferghal (1996) propose that there are three strategies for rendering a text from the SL to the TL, which may be summarized in the following:

5.1. Naturalization and Arabicization

Naturalization is a strategy, which enables the source language usage to be translated into a target language usage, i.e., to make a given item of a given language sound natural in another language, through searching for the way it is used in another language. This is done at the structural, collocational, and lexical levels. For example;

the English collocation *pay attention* translates into Arabic as: **/yuʻiru يعير الانتباه**

l'intibāh/; *It's raining now* translates into: **الجو ماطر الآن /al-jawu māṭirun al-'ān/.**

Arabicization is one type of naturalization, which occurs at the sound level or the concept level. In the first, the source language spelling and the pronunciation are changed into Arabic. However, in the second, the source language concept is loan-translated into Arabic. Thus, Arabicization is related to borrowing and loan-translation. For example, *skyscraper* is translated into Arabic as: **ناطحة سحاب/nātiḥatu saḥāb/**. This represents a good example of loan-words. Also, *garage* is arabicized into **كراج/karāj/** (Hajjaj & Ferghal, 1996: 23-24). Here, the source language word is adapted to the normal pronunciation then to the normal morphology of the target language.

5.2. Cultural Approximation

It is a translation strategy, which is related to the replacement of a source culture-specific item by a cultural substitute in the TL. For instance; *God* is translated into **الله /Allāh/**; *American secretary of state* into: **وزير الخارجية الأمريكي/wazīru al-khārijiati 'al-'amrīkī/**,…etc.. (Hajjaj & Ferghal 1996: 26).

5.3. Descriptive Translation

It is a translation strategy, which is used to paraphrase SL expressions into the TL by giving them conceptual description. This strategy occurs when the translator is confronted with a cultural gap because the SL concept is absent in the TL. Hence, **زكاة/zakāh/** is descriptively translated into English as *compulsory charity in Islam when income conditions are met,* and **تيمم/tayamum/**into *making ablution with earth by Muslims when water is scarce or missing.* This may also occur when a source lexical item does not have a target lexical item in the TL. For example: **خال/Khāl/** is translated into English as *maternal uncle* (Hajjaj & Ferghal 1996: 27).

All these strategies may be summarized in three strategies, which are inferred from the study of Ba-Jubair (201: 39): *Sense-centered translation, Sound-Centered translation,* or *recreation,* where both the source and target languages may share the general idea, but they may be different in form and content. Besides, to keep a balance between being faithful and colour the target text with a relish of poetry, the strategy of *compromise* is used.

6. Translation of Emotive Expressions Related to Musicality of Poetry

Poetry translation has incomparably stirred mind. It is the most difficult and the most demanding in translation. It is ambiguous and exhibits a special relationship between form and meaning, signifier and signified. Translation of poetry involves a special critical abilities and special mode of writing. Khalussi (1982) proposes that poetry is the most difficult type of literature in translation. It is advised to the translator to read the poem and taste it to feel it then to translate it using rhythmic prose. However, translating poetry needs a special talent. Sometimes the translated poem is better in terms of beauty than the original text. Some translators have used blank verse in order to translate poetry from Arabic to English. He adds that didactic poetry is the easiest type, which could be rendered from the source language to the target. Moreover, in lyric the translation is more difficult since the ideas are less organized and the degree of using fiction is too vast. As a result, poetry cannot be translated by the use of prose, and no one can translate poetry unless he is himself a poet. When comparing between two versions of the same poem, Aziz et. al. (1972) claim that the first is an explanatory text, which is faithful to the source text, but it is far from poetry. The second is a good translation of the original, mainly in its aesthetic dimension.

If we consider translating literary works as the most difficult in translation studies, translating poetry remains the most challenging, difficult, and demanding of all the types of literature. Connolly (1998) points out that more importance, in the field of literary translation, has been given to poetry more than prose and drama because of its difficulty. Poetry has been generally dealt with from the practical point of view since 2000 years. Yet, there are many problems that portray clearly the difficulty of the task because the number of strategies used in dealing with poetry translation are very few, and it is difficult to preserve the distinctive features from one language to another, especially idiomatic expressions. Moreover, no language is rich enough to preserve the stylistic traits and figures of speech of another, even if they are simple and primitive ones. Likewise, poetry is one of the most challenging genres to translate because of its distinguishing nature in both form and sound. Ba-Jubair (2011: 39) states that:

> Since languages are divergent in their poetic styles, the translators of poetic discourse may encounter many problems, such as: (1) preserving sound effect and tension between form and content, (2) maintaining figurative language, (3) transferring culture-bound expressions and (4) compensating for the incongruence in emotiveness between the SL and the TL expressions.

These four problems may rise in the process of translating poetry, especially between two distant languages, such as Arabic and English.

Jones (1989) claims that when dealing with poetry, there are three important stages that poetry translation passes by:

- The Understanding Stage : In this stage, the source text is being closely analyzed.

- The Interpretation Stage : In this stage, the translator should work with due reference to the source text and by giving a great importance to the target text.

- The Creation Stage : In this stage, the translator focuses on the target text and tries to adapt it with the target culture.

These three stages summarize what the translator should do when he translates poems from the beginning till the end. This implies that the translator should read the source text attentively and know about the writer, his culture, his country and his traditions. Moreover, he should find equivalents for the items that compose the source text in the target text, and this is done by knowing the different customs and traditions that are part of the culture of the target language. This could be done by travelling to the target language's country or by reading too much about the source culture. In the end, the translator should put the last touch to the target text as an inventive, sparkling reality.

Lefevere (1992) claims that, when translating, the translator should first pay attention to the subject matter and the meaning of the author he is translating for because this makes his translation accepted by the target text audience. Second, he should be excellent in both the language he translates and the language he translates into in order not to violate the beauty of anylanguage. Because of the difference between the characteristics of each language, the translator should pay attention to the diction, patterns, subtleties, and power of each language. All these characteristics should be translated. In fact, the shortage in one of the characteristics of both SL and TL will alter the message and hurt the author the translator is supposed to translate for. Third, the translator should not involve himself in the rendering of the source text word-for-word because it is difficult not to fall in slips when a foreign text is translated in this manner. He should translate it sense by sense unless he is dealing with the translation of scriptures, where the word order is a kind of mystery. Thus, a good translator is the one who takes the meanings of a sentence as a whole not line by line or verse by verse. Fourth, the translator should get rid of words, which have become out of common usage unless there is a big necessity for that. Fifth, a good translator is asked to observe the figures of speech in order to form a remarkable composition that pleases the ear and satisfies the soul.

In a nutshell, the translator may change some parts of the source text in order to suit the target language's stuff, and, in such a way, he will be a translator in some parts and a creator in others. He may invent new things in order to please the target audience. As an example of a good translator is **Antoine Houdar de la Motte,** (1672–1731), French writer, critic, and translator. He translated the epic poem , *Ilyad,* in a book that was published in 1714. **De la Motte** shortened the poem from twenty four volumes to only twelve, by omitting unnecessary detail, correcting defects of the poem and including gleam elements that make it acceptable and attractive in terms of

aesthetics. In fact, these are called spirited translators as they have the ability to replace the spirit of an ancient text by another which is modern.

When relating poetry to emotiveness, we find that there are plenty of emotive expressions, especially those that are considered as part of cultural and linguistic expressions, such as rhetorical questions, repetitions, personification, metaphor, proper names, and political emotive expressions.

In speaking about social expressions, Mahmoud Darwish relates between two words, which express "The Cypress Broke" in order to have an emotive expression in this verse; "السروة انكسرت كمئذنة" "the Cypress broke like a minaret". The emotive expression, here, is the religious icon "مئذنة" *minaret,* which is a tall tower of a mosque with balconies and from which the muezzin calls for prayer.The relation between the cypress tree and the minaret is deeply inlayed in the hearts of Palestinians as this tree is very important for them. It is a symbol of resistance against occupation.

In speaking about religious expressions, Darwish uses, in his poem "I Did not Apologize to the Well," the expression"قرأت آيات من الذكر الحكيم" "I read verses from the wise holy book." The book, he refers to here is **The Holy Quran**, which is considered a source of tranquility and peace. But the English translation misses the real meaning, which is **The Holy Quran**. The poet refers to the Muslim tradition when passing by a grave and reading the first Surat of 'Al-Fatihah' *the opening.*

In repetition, which is one of the linguistic expressions, Darwish repeats the word "idiot" *'ghabey'* three times in his poem "State of Siege." The repetition of the sound *'gh'* creates musicality, which evokes emotive expressions and reflects anger and injustice among others: ""لنفترض الآن أني غبي غبي غبي""Suppose now that I am an idiot, idiot, idiot."

Personification is another linguistic expression that Darwish uses in his poem "A Cloud from Sodom". expression " وجلست مع حريتي صامتين نحدّق في ليلتنا " "I sat with my freedom silently staring into our night." This verse is highly emotive, as it reflects the freedom of Palestinians sitting beside the poet in the form of a silent person, who is staring into the night.

Emotive metaphor is also discernible in Darwish's poem "State of Siege" in the verse "نخزن أحزاننا في الجرار" "we store our sorrows in our jars." In this verse, the poet compares sorrow to something we store in jars to hide. This reflects that Palestinians are keeping their sorrow away from the occupation authorities in order to hide their weakness during the siege and to show that their will is still strong.

In political expressions, Darwish uses the word "exile" *manfa* in his poem "If You Return Alone." This word echoes his homeland Palestine. Palestinians are refugees, discriminated against and deprived from living a normal life.

Conclusion

In a nutshell, we tried through this paper to illustrate that the translation of emotiveness is possible despite the linguistic, stylistic, and culture differences, which exist between languages. In reality, emotive expressions are part of the connotative meaning of any language, which cannot be unified in all the cultures of the world. Because Arabic is a very expressive and distinguished language, emotiveness has a great importance for Arab readers because of the context they may be embedded in. Chejne (1969) states that, "Praise to God who made the Arabic language the most palatable of all languages to utter the most accurate in its formation, the clearest in the meaning of expression, and the richest in the various branches of knowledge." This belief is reasonable nowadays, especially, in poetry, the most thoroughbred of Arabic literature.

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