The Aesthetic Effect of Semantic Translation on English Texts Translated into Arabic

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Abstract:

The past twenty years have witnessed much progress at translation, and good results have been achieved in this field, as it has led to the exchange of knowledge between countries, provided the ground for the exchange of information and experiences, and worked to ensure that countries become a comprehensive and potential driving force for economic growth and human development. Translation has various types, one of these types is the semantic translation where the translator attempts to keep the exact contextual meaning of the original language. This study aims at investigating the extent to which the aesthetic effect (AE) of semantic translation on English texts translated into Arabic namely quotes from George R. R. Martin' novel "a song of Ice and Fire", Hans Küng's book Islam: "Past, Present and Future" (translated by Al-Shuraiqi and examples translated by Safia Al-Sa'di in the last work of her entitled "Life in Japan". A comparison between the original text aesthetics and the target text (TT) was made based on the selection of

sentence structure, lexical and metaphors employed. The data of the study are illustrative examples chosen randomly to be analysed according to Yan Fu's (2012, cited in Zhang, 2013) triple translation criteria of faithfulness, expressiveness, and elegance in combination with Nida's (1964) functional equivalence. The results reveal clearly that the chosen translations show a distinct amount of adequacy in terms of expressing the aesthetic effect (AE) in the target text (TT). The results also show that semantic translation appears to be more creatively appropriate in preserving the AE and transferring it into the TT.

keywords: aesthetic effect, semantic translation, source text

التأثير الجمالي للترجمة الدلالية على النصوص الإنجليزية المترجمة إلى العربية

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الملخص:

شهدت السنوات العشرين الماضية تقدما كبيرا في ميدان الترجمة، وتحققت نتائج جيدة في هذا الميدان، حيث أدى ذلك إلى تبادل المعارف بين البلدان، وأتاح المجال لتبادل المعلومات والخبرات، وعمل على كفالة أن تصبح البلدان قوة دافعة شاملة ومرجحة للنمو الاقتصادي والتنمية البشرية. وللترجمة أنواع مختلفة، وأحد هذه الأنواع هو الترجمة الدلالية حيث يحاول المترجم الحفاظ على المعنى السياقي الدقيق للغة الأصلية. تهدف هذه الدراسة إلى التحقيق في مدى التأثير الجمالي   للترجمة الدلالية على

النصوص الإنجليزية المترجمة إلى العربية وهي اقتباسات من جورج آر آر مارتن "رواية" أغنية من الجليد والنار "، كتاب هانز كونغ الإسلام: «الماضي والحاضر والمستقبل» (ترجمة الشريقي وأمثلة ترجمتها صفية السعدي في آخر عمل لها بعنوان «الحياة في اليابان». وأجريت مقارنة بين جماليات النص الأصلي والنص المستهدف استنادا إلى اختيار هيكل الجملة والمعاجم والاستعارات المستخدمة. بيانات الدراسة هي أمثلة توضيحية تم اختيارها بشكل عشوائي لتحليلها وفقًا لمعايير الترجمة الثلاثية لـ Yan Fu (2012)، المذكورة في (Zhang 2013): الأخلاص والتعبير والأناقة، جنبًا إلى جنب مع معيار التكافؤ الوظيفي لـ Nida (1964) . تكشف النتائج بوضوح أن الترجمات المختارة تظهر قدرًا مميزًا من الكفاية من حيث التعبير عن التأثير الجمالي في النص المستهدف. و تظهر النتائج أيضًا أن الترجمة الدلالية تبدو أكثر ملاءمة بشكل إبداعي في الحفاظ على التأثير الجمالي ونقله الى اللغة المستهدفة.

1. Introduction

The subject of translation and language is gaining a growing importance especially after comparing our world to a small village and that is thanks to the tremendous scientific development, especially with regard to the means of communication and the media. Rather, it can be said that linguistic diffusion has become a necessity to facilitate scientific, cultural and commercial exchange, and in response to the growing requests to engage in what is called "the Dialogue of Civilizations.

In literary translation, aesthetic progression is "a psychological procedure acting on and building representations of what is described in the text". The main purpose of utilizing it is to show how the image is mentally represented in literary translation. The translator's main duty is to imagine images and takes into consideration the potential linguistic means in order to recreate them, transfer them into the target language. The process of turning images into reality is a cumulative process bringing together the meanings to help construct a knowledge or an understanding in the mind of the translator–reader. Through the aesthetic experience in semantic translation, the mind of the translator must operate between the two languages. The translator, just like the ordinary reader, actualizes the image gradually from one draft toward

another draft which undergoes more development in the process of transformation until he converts it to another language.
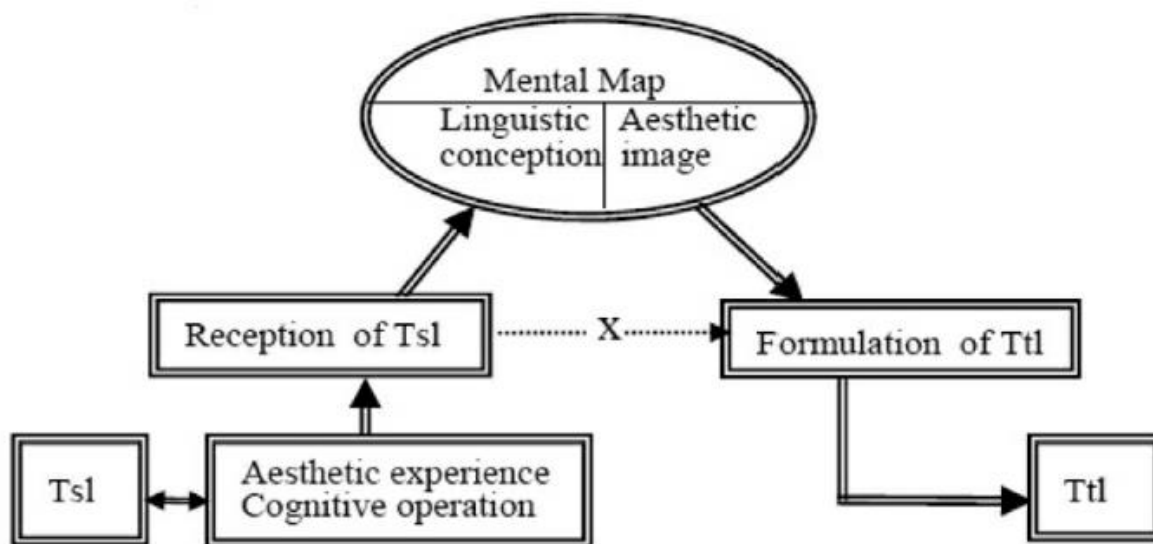
Figure 2.1 Mind map for the translation process

Translation is one of the most important contemporary cultural issues. As the task of the translator is not limited to the replacement of vocabulary, but must form a bridge of communication between the culture of the source language and the target language to create a rapprochement between the two cultures. One of the problems that translators have long faced is obtaining the equivalent of elements that exist only in one culture without the other. Consequently, the translation process may result in creating translated texts that are dull, or without any aesthetic value. Therefore, the current study attempts to measure the extent to which semantic translation can translate texts from English into Arabic with keeping its aesthetic value.

The study aims at identifying the extent to which the semantic translation adds aesthetic effect on the texts that are translated from English to Arabic.

The procedures of the research start with putting forward an illustration from the source language along with their semantic translations in Arabic so that

they can be examined by the researcher to determine whether the AE (aesthetic effect) has been preserved and included in definite parts of the source text to the recipients. Since the focus of the analysis is the AE segments in the ST and their TT counterparts, these parts were written in bold.

The process of the analysis begins with a short consideration of the contextual environment in which the AE parts where take place in the ST. The following step is a discussion of the mean in which these AE were preserved when they were translated into Arabic. More attention was given to the way lexical, sentence structure, and metaphors were selected and employed. Therefore, the semantic translation was analysed with accordance to these three criteria within Yan Fu's (2012) model of faithfulness, expressiveness, and elegance to examine whether or not the semantic translation has succeeded in saving these and delivering these elements for the Arab recipients.

2. Translation

The art of translation is as old as humanity, and that the texts that were found inscribed in two languages on the tombs of the princes of a Pharaonic dynasty on the island of "Fountaine" near the city of Aswan date back to three thousand years BC. It appears that oral translation was earlier in appearance and more widespread due to the urgent need for it, especially in business dealings and political protocols at a time when writing had not yet developed, or had not even existed. Translation, which generally intends to take a text from one language and transfer it to another language, would not have posed a problem of any kind if some linguistic and cultural phenomena in general related to it had not emerged. Translating from Arabic into English and vice versa is one of the most important and urgent issues of contemporary culture, especially since globalization is almost making this electronic village in which we live a multi-room home for people and ideas. Rather, it forces us to

communicate with the life cycle in the world, and to benefit from advanced technologies, and all of this cannot be achieved for humanity in an effective way except by exchanging experiences and sciences between humans and generalizing the benefit through the way of translating the various sciences, arts, and literatures (Dang,1999:8)

Over the years, translation has proven to be the gateway to link societies in their diverse languages and cultures, and has played a major role in the history of nations, and helped transfer knowledge across countries and continents of the world. Now that we are on the threshold of a future society, it is necessary to enhance the importance of translation, translators and those in charge of them, which leads to a better understanding of the various cultures of the world and contributes to creating a more peaceful world. Translation is a complex mental, intellectual, linguistic and creative process where the translator first comprehends the text that was written in another language beyond form and style to the contents and ideas, and this is a matter that requires strong linguistic and intellectual skills (Rabin, 1958: 123).

Secondly, translation is to convey the information in an honest way. Otherwise its harm would be greater. Therefore, the translator must transmit the text that differs in syntactic and semantic levels and cultural and historical backgrounds from its original language, in a way that ensures understanding of the text, and this is a work that involves creativity as well (Simpson, 2011:40).

2.1 Semantic Translation

Semantic Translation seeks to convey the exact contextual meaning of the original as much as the syntactic and semantic structures of the second language allow.

- Accuracy
- Economy

In theory, the two concepts differ a lot, while the conductive theory addresses the second reader (the translation reader), who has the right to obtain a text free of difficulties and ambiguity, waiting for the translator to transfer to him all the foreign elements to his own culture and language. Of course, it remains that the mechanisms of his work should not come out about the original text. The semantic translation remains bound to the original language and faithful to what the author produced in a specific time and place. The researcher suggests the following example for clarification:

Chien méchant (FR)

The semantic translation gives us for this phrase:

Dog that bites / Savage dog (Eng)

Whereas with conductive translation you will get:

Be aware of the dog (Eng)

We note that (the semantic translation) provided us with "information" that there are predatory dogs (that bite) in this place, but the (conductive translation) became to the essence of the subject and in a direct manner without procrastination warned against that

The dogs were more effective

It also notes that the semantic translation "Savage dog" did not depart from the original phrase "Chien méchant" and remained faithful to the vocabulary used, while the conductive translation "Be aware of dog" exceeded the vocabulary limits and reader understanding of the original text because it seeks to convey the contextual meaning of the original phrase directly to the reader who is the focus of her work. The semantically translated phrase to think about the intended meaning according to his mental abilities, so it takes a longer period (Rojo López,2004: 312).

2.2The Difference between Semantic Translation and Literal Translation

Newmark (1988) differentiates between semantic translation and literal translation. H defines literal translation as transferring the initial meanings of words in an out-of-context translation while respecting the syntactic structures of the target language.

Table 2.1. The difference between semantic and literal translation

Semantic translation	Literal translation
1.Take into consideration the context	1.Does not consider the context
2.The translator's loyalty is primarily towards the author.	2.The translator's loyalty is primarily towards the rules.

In addition, the translator is authorized in "semantic translation" to interpret a metaphor, for example – as a last resort – if it is confirmed that the reader does not have basic knowledge of the target language for this metaphor, and this is not allowed to the translator in a literal translation.

Newmark (1981) believes that whether the translation is semantic or communicative, literal translation is considered the most appropriate method of transmission at all. He warns against resorting to synonyms that do not benefit from them, and paraphrase on the pretext of moving away from literal translation and escaping from it for fear of offending the text and criticizing primitiveness. It is possible that the two theories (semantic and communicative) intersect when the text is general in its content and the author and the reader are of equal importance to the translator, especially when confronted with religious, philosophical or even technical and scientific texts that require the second reader to reach the same capacity of understanding and information as he does. For the first reader, this part of a text may require a conductive translation, while other parts of the same text need semantic

translation, and this leads us to say that we should not judge a text to follow one theory without the other, as there are areas of intersection and overlap between the two theories in the text. He also sees that the semantic translation always remains less valuable than the original because of the lack or loss of meaning that it conceals, while the conductive translation can surpass the original by compensating for the loss of meaning factor with what it gains from the power of influence and clarity (Shen,1987:33).

2.3 Aesthetic Progression and the Translator

The translator is considered an artist; therefore, he needs to own the capability to recreate in his thoughts the source text. The translator can be symbolized to the painter with extraordinary imagination. Zwaan (1993: 170) states that the understanding of a text affected by both textual and cognitive factors. In other words, understanding a text depends on the text meaning and also on the way reader receives it and reacts to it. In the process of understanding a text meaning, the reader and the translator utilize imagination to represent the meaning and accomplish certain aesthetic experience.

Since every translator has distinct processes of psychological faculties, therefore, translators will have different interpretations of one text, and consequently producing different translated versions. This situation is originally described by Iser as follows:

> "In the same way two people gazing at the night sky may both be looking at the same collection of stars, but one will see the image of a plough and the other will make out a dipper. The stars in a literary text are fixed; the lines that join them are variable."

(Viehoff, 1986)

This adoption explains the concept of dynamics the way comprehension operates in people's mind, which can be applied to the understanding of text meaning. Therefore, subjective perception and judgment determine the

realization of the image's aesthetic qualities r. There is no a definite structure for the artistic image, instead there is dynamic reality that changes into an aesthetic perception. Firstly, the origin of the aesthetic quality is the creative process in which there is a crucial experience it involves with. In his process of re‒present, the translator works as author and communicates the life of the mind. Consequently, in actualizing quality or image, the reader involves his dynamic activity. This why we consider his psychological operations when he actualizes quality or image. The psychological operations are mainly established by passive synthesis and active operation, which can be further analysed as imagination and reflection.

3.Data Analysis

The analysis of the data is conducted through applying Yan Fu's (2012) model of faithfulness, expressiveness, and elegance and Nida's (1964) functional equivalence. Therefore, a more detailed explanation of the procedures of data analysis is presented.

3.1 The Models of the Analysis

Taking into account what is mentioned above, the data of the analysis were analysed using an eclectic model. Namely, Yan Fu's (cited in Zhang 2013) model, the main point of the model is that there is a triple translation criterion which are faithfulness, expressiveness, and elegance in combination with Nida's (1964) functional equivalence. Nida (1964: 94) defines translation as "an activity that consists in reproducing in the receptor language the closest natural equivalent of the source language message, first in terms of meaning and secondly in terms of style". Taking into consideration Nida's definition, the translator is demanded to give more attention to the meaning of the source text (ST) and its spirit instead of focusing on the structure and form. According to this concept, functional equivalence is based on "the principle of equivalent effect [in which] the relationship between receptor and message should be

substantially the same as that which existed between the original receptor and the message" (ibed: 159).

4. Results and Discussion

The analysis starts with examining the selected translations using the selected model (Yan Fu's triple translations criteria) along with Nida's (1964) functional equivalence, as previously mentioned. Therefore, the source text examples are analysed side by side with their TT counterparts. The selected texts were semantically translated into Arabic and then examined in terms of the Arabic equivalents that are employed for the ST intended meanings focusing mainly on lexical selections, sentence structures, and metaphors employed. The first example to start with is as follows:

Example (1) "the true history of the world is the history of great conversation in elegant rooms"

TT: أن التاريخ الحقيقي للعالم هو تاريخ المحادثات العظيمة في الغرف الأنيقة

In example (1), the translator semantically translated the text into Arabic by taking into consideration the contextual environment of the source text so that the AE were kept Arabian receiver would understand the original intended meaning. The speaker of utterance refers to the political process and how politicians control the history of the world.

Example (2) "Fear cuts deeper than swords."

TT: الخوف يقطع أكثر من السيف

In this translation, the aesthetic effect of the ST (source text) is clearly and effectively maintained in the translated text. The source text contextual meaning indicates the importance of bravery by stating that fear can cuts deeper than the swords.

Example (3) "A man who fights for coin is loyal only to his purse."

TT: من يقاتل لأجل النقود، لن يكون ولاءه إلا لجيبه.

Example (3) is full of images and metaphors written in such as "coin" and "purse". Where the speaker refers to the avarice of the people and how could it affect their loyalty. In other words, their loyalty can be bought by a bunch of money. The semantic translation of the ST successfully   preserved the AE of the source text.

   Example (4) "lions care not for the opinions of the sheep"

TT:أن الاسود لا تهتم برأي الخراف

In example (4), the speaker uses metaphors to express certain idea, which is also related to the political system. The word "lion" is used to refer to the powerful people in power and sheep refers to the weak or vulnerable people. Therefore, the ultimate meaning of utterance is that weak people opinions are of no value to those in power. Thus, the AE of this text is successfully transmitted to the TT to be received by the recipient.

   Example (5) "Every flight begins with a fall"

TT: كل تحليق يبدأ بسقطة.

Example (5) is a brief and short sentence but carries a deeply meaningful moral lesson about life. This moral lesson is about the obstacles blocking the way of success and how they could be the stone for this success. In the semantic translation, the suitable words were skillfully and effectively selected and thus the AE of ST are normally perceived from the translated text.

More two examples from "Life in Japan" (2015: 2):

   ST: "One of the first things you notice in Japan – trash cans are impossible to find at public places!"

TT: فأول الأشياء التي ستلاحظها في اليابان واستحالة أن تجد صناديق القمامة في الأماكن العامة

The example shows that the word **impossible** is turned into the Arabic word استحالة indicates that the translator managed to maintain the AE of the ST and transmitted it fully to the Arabic language by choosing this Arabic word

as an equivalent. Therefore, the translation process is faithful, expressive, and elegant.

> ST:"When living in Japan, you will learn a lot about handling trash. As the islands are tiny and densely populated, it was crucial for the Japanese to focus on recycling and minimizing their impact on the nature around."

TT : في الحقيقة عندما تعيش في اليابان، فإن التعامل مع النفايات هو أحد الأمور التي تتعلمها. ولأن الجزر صغيرة وآهلة بالسكان، فقد كان حري باليابانيين أن يركزوا على إعادة التدوير وتقليل تأثير النفايات على الطبيعة المحيطة بهم.

The translator in this example employed the world اليابانيينa genitive case in an attempt to indicate the Japanese people and a genitive construction أعادة التدوير to refer to the word recycle. Clearly, the translator conducted a shift in class and unit in an attempt to preserve the aesthetic effect of the ST and in which he succeeded in it. What is need to be mentioned here is that such kind of shifts is necessary since there are differences between the interfacing languages.

To further illustrate this, two examples are taken from Hans Küng's book Islam: Past, Present and Future (translated by Al-Shuraiqi 2016: 23):

> ST: " The Islamic economic system could not become the equal of the European. It was also vitally important that until well into the twentieth century, almost all Islamic countries were economically dependent on the European colonial powers."

TT : ولم يستطع النظام الاقتصادي الإسلامي أن يكون نداً للنظام الاقتصادي للدول الأوروبية. ومن المهم ذكره أنه وحتى فترة متقدمة من القرن العشرين، كانت غالبية الدول الإسلامية تعتمد اقتصادياً على قوى الاستعمار الأوروبي.

The source text employs 'could not' to indicate the incapability of the Islamic economic system to be the same as the European in a definite time in the past. Hence, the translator must take into account three main components ,

that is, ability, negation, and past. Taking into account these three components, the translator has resorted to **لم يستطع**. Therefore, he successfully transferred the inability of the Islamic economic system to become the equal of the European in a specific period of time in the past and maintained the AE of the ST.

5.Conclusion

The study aimed to analyze the extent to which the semantic translation added and maintained an aesthetic effect to English texts translated into Arabic. In order to fulfill the aims of the study, the researcher collected English texts translated into Arabic to be analyzed. These English texts include quotes from George R. R. Martin' novel 'a song of Ice and Fire', Hans Küng's book Islam: Past, Present and Future (translated by Al-Shuraiqi and examples translated by Safia Al-Sa'di in the last work of her entitled "Life in Japan". These texts were translated semantically, therefore, they were analyzed to examine the extent to which the AE of these texts was preserved when they were translated into Arabic. The process of analysis was conducted using an eclectic model of Yan Fu's (2012) (cited in Zhang 2013) triple translation criteria of faithfulness, expressiveness, and elegance in combination with Nida's (1964) functional equivalence.

The results of the study revealed that almost all of the chosen translations have their meaning being presented into the TT accurately. Nevertheless, the AE preserving is different from one text to another. According to the data analysis, the studied texts of Safia Al-Sa'di in her work entitled "Life in Japan" has succeeded in capturing the ST aesthetic value and transferred it into TT. On the other hand, texts translated by Al-Shuraiqi appears to have caught the exact meaning of the ST and then skillfully transferred it into the TT. He carefully chose the suitable words and the appropriate   sentence structure along with the needed metaphor and image

that can matches the culture of the both languages. Consequently, the semantic translation of these texts appears to fulfill the Yan Fu's criteria of faithfulness, expressiveness, and elegance, and Nida's functional equivalence.

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