

Investigating the Inadequacy of Machine Translation in Conveying the Sense and Sensibility Towards Arabic Texts Translated into English

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ABSTRACT

This paper aims to investigate the inadequacy of Machine Translation for reflecting the intended meaning of Arabic translation words into English. The researchers have adopted the qualitative method and the content analysis as a tool for collecting data relevant to the study and needed to highlight the importance of sense and sensibility in translating Arabic text. The sample of this study was randomly selected from Sudanese folklore songs performed by a Sudanese Great Singer, Mohammed Wardi. The marks obtained from the analysis were compared. From one hand, the results have revealed that Machine Translation is inadequate for reflecting the intended meaning of Arabic translation words into English. The result has also shown that the Machine Translation does not have great significance in conveying the sense and sensibility towards Arabic translated texts.

1- INTRODUCTION

Machine Translation (MT) is considered as a valuable area for researchers, profitable to developers and users (Hovy et al., 2002). Researchers want to stratify their concepts to find out the dissimilarities that can be made by Machine Translation translators. By doing so, it will be easier for designers to identify the most challenging issues and make enhancements on the Machine Translation translators. Shaalan (2000) said that the translation of Arabic sentences into English language was a problematic task. The difficulty comes from various the length of Arabic sentences. Another challenge is the sentence structure. An Arabic phrase is actually syntactically unclear and complex, due to the usage of many grammatical relationships, order of words and content along with conjunctions.

Therefore, most of the studies in Arabic Machine Translation (AMT) have mostly focused on the translation from English to Arabic. Also Alawneh et al. (2011) reiterated the need to deal with the arrangement and the order of words in a Machine Translation from English language to Arabic language, and offered hybrid-based strategy to handle those problems. Moreover, Alawneh et al. (2011) stated a couple of characteristics that had an impact on the ordering issue that were derived from the fact that various languages have different text orientation. Sudanese et al., (2012) also claimed that remarkable

differences between the Syntax of the Arabic language and that of English language are another source of difficulty. Moreover, Izwaini (2006) said that an important feature of Machine Translation is to maximize the meaning of text so that minimum attempts and fewer times are needed to comprehend the output. The operator should not put upwards too much effort to join the various elements of the translation.

2- LITERATURE REVIEW

General Definition of Translation

Translation typically has been used to transfer written or spoken SL texts into equivalent written or spoken TL texts. In general, the purpose of translation is to reproduce various kinds of texts—including religious, literary, scientific, and philosophical texts—in another language and thus making them available to wider readers. If language were just a classification for a set of general or universal concepts, it would be easy to translate from a SL to a TL; furthermore, under the circumstances the process of learning anL2 would be much easier than it actually is. In this regard, Culler (1976) believes that languages are not nomenclatures and the concepts of one language may differ radically from those of another, since each language articulates or organizes the world differently, and languages do not simply name categories; they articulate their own (p.21-2). The conclusion likely to be drawn from what he

(1976) writes is that one of the problems of translation is the disparity among languages. The bigger the gap between the SL and the TL, the more difficult the transfer of message from the former to the latter will be. The difference between an SL and a TL and the variation in their cultures make the process of translating a real challenge. Among the problematic factors involved in translation such as form, meaning, style, proverbs, idioms, etc.

The translating procedures, as depicted by Nida (1964), are as follow:

Technical Procedures:

- A. Analysis of the source and target languages;
- B. A through study of the source language text before making attempts translate it;
- C. Making judgments of the semantic and syntactic approximations. (pp. 241-45)

Organizational Procedures:

Constant re-evaluation of the attempt made; contrasting it with the existing available translations of the same text done by other translators, and checking the text's communicative effectiveness by asking the target language readers to evaluate its accuracy and effectiveness and studying their reactions (pp. 246-47).

Krings (1986:18) defines translation strategy as "translator's potentially conscious plans for solving concrete translation problems in the framework of a concrete translation task," and Seguinot (1989) believes that there are at least three global strategies employed by the translators: (i) translating without interruption for as long as possible; (ii) correcting surface errors immediately; (iii) leaving the monitoring for qualitative or stylistic errors in the text to the revision stage.

Moreover, Loescher (1991:8) defines translation strategy as "a potentially conscious procedure for solving a problem faced in translating a text, or any segment of it." As it is stated in this definition, the notion of consciousness is significant in distinguishing strategies which are used by the learners or translators. In this regard, Cohen (1998:4) asserts that "the element of consciousness is what distinguishes strategies from these processes that are not strategic."

Furthermore, Bell (1998:188) differentiates between global (those dealing with whole texts) and local (those dealing with text segments) strategies and confirms that this distinction results from various kinds of translation problems.

Venuti (1998:240) indicates that translation strategies "involve the basic tasks of choosing the foreign text to be translated and developing a method to translate it." He employs the concepts of domesticating and foreignizing to refer to translation strategies.

Jaaskelainen (1999:71) considers strategy as, "a series of competencies, a set of steps or processes that favour the acquisition, storage, and/or utilization of information." He maintains that strategies are "heuristic and flexible in nature, and their adoption implies a decision influenced by amendments in the translator's objectives."

Taking into account the process and product of translation, Jaaskelainen (2005) divides strategies into two major categories: some strategies relate to what happens to texts, while other strategies relate to what happens in the process.

Product-related strategies, as Jaaskelainen (2005:15) writes, involves the basic tasks of choosing the SL text and developing a method to translate it. However, she maintains that process-related strategies "are a set of (loosely formulated) rules or principles which a translator uses to reach the goals determined by the translating situation" (p.16). Moreover, Jaaskelainen (2005:16) divides this into two types, namely global strategies and local strategies: "global strategies refer to general principles and modes of action and local strategies refer to specific activities in relation to the translator's problem-solving and decision-making."

Newmark (1988b) mentions the difference between translation methods and translation procedures. He writes that, "[w]hile translation methods relate to whole texts, translation procedures are used for sentences and the smaller units of language" (p.81). He goes on to refer to the following methods of translation:

- Word-for-word Translation: in which the SL word order is preserved and the words translated singly by their most common meanings, out of context.
- Literal translation: in which the SL grammatical constructions are converted to their nearest TL equivalents, but the lexical words are again translated singly, out of context.
- Faithful Translation: it attempts to produce the precise contextual meaning of the original within the constraints of the TL grammatical structures.
- Semantic Translation: which differs from 'faithful translation' only in as far as it must take more account of the aesthetic value of the SL text.

- **Adaptation:** which is the freest form of translation, and is used mainly for plays (comedies) and poetry; the themes, characters, plots are usually preserved, the SL culture is converted to the TL culture and the text is rewritten.

- **Free translation:** it produces the TL text without the style, form, or content of the original.

- **Idiomatic Translation:** it reproduces the 'message' of the original but tends to distort nuances of meaning by preferring colloquialisms and idioms where these do not exist in the original.

- **Communicative Translation:** it attempts to render the exact contextual meaning of the original in such a way that both content and language are readily acceptable and comprehensible to the readership (1988b: 45-47).

Newmark (1991:10-12) writes of a continuum existing between "semantic" and "communicative" translation. Any translation can be "more, or less semantic—more, or less, communicative—even a particular section or sentence can be treated more communicatively or less semantically." Both seek an "equivalent effect." Zhongying (1994: 97), who prefers literal translation to free translation, writes that, "[i]n China, it is agreed by many that one should translate literally, if possible, or appeal to free translation."

In order to clarify the distinction between procedure and strategy, the forthcoming section is allotted to discussing the procedures of translating culture-specific terms, and strategies for rendering allusions will be explained in detail.

Procedures of Translating Culture-Specific Concepts (CSCs)

Graedler (2000:3) puts forth some procedures of translating CSCs:

1. Making up a new word.
2. Explaining the meaning of the SL expression in lieu of translating it.
3. Preserving the SL term intact.
4. Opting for a word in the TL which seems similar to or has the same "relevance" as the SL term.

Defining Culture-Bound Terms (CBTs) as the terms which "refer to concepts, institutions and personnel which are specific to the SL culture" (p.2). Harvey(2000:2-6) puts forward the following four major techniques for translating CBTs:

1. Functional Equivalence: It means using a referent in the TL culture whose function is similar to that of the source language (SL) referent. As Harvey (2000:2) writes, authors are divided over the merits of this technique: Weston (1991:23) describes it as "the ideal method of translation," while Sarcevic (1985:131) asserts that it is "misleading and should be avoided."

2. Formal Equivalence or 'Linguistic Equivalence': It means a 'word-for-word' translation.

3. Transcription or 'Borrowing'(i.e. reproducing or, where necessary, transliterating the original term): It stands at the far end of SL-oriented strategies. If the term is formally transparent or is explained in the context, it may be used alone. In other cases, particularly where no knowledge of the SL by the reader is presumed, transcription is accompanied by an explanation or a translator's note.

4. Descriptive or Self-explanatory Translation: It uses generic terms (not CBTs) to convey the meaning. It is appropriate in a wide variety of contexts where formal equivalence is considered insufficiently clear. In a text aimed at a specialized reader, it can be helpful to add the original SL term to avoid ambiguity.

The following are the different translation procedures that Newmark (1988b) proposes:

- **Transference:** it is the process of transferring an SL word to a TL text. It includes transliteration and is the same as what Harvey (2000:5) named "transcription."

- **Naturalization:** it adapts the SL word first to the normal pronunciation, then to the normal morphology of the TL. (Newmark, 1988b:82)

- **Cultural Equivalent:** it means replacing a cultural word in the SL with a TL one. however, "they are not accurate" (Newmark, 1988b:83)

- **Functional equivalent:** it requires the use of a culture-neutral word. (Newmark, 1988b:83)

- **Descriptive Equivalent:** in this procedure the meaning of the CBT is explained in several words. (Newmark, 1988b:83)

- **Componential Analysis:** it means "comparing an SL word with a TL word which has a similar meaning but is not an obvious one-to-one equivalent, by demonstrating first their common and then their differing sense components." (Newmark, 1988b:114)

- **Synonymy:** it is a "near TL equivalent." Here economy trumps accuracy. (Newmark, 1988b:84)

- **Through-Translation:** it is the literal translation of common collocations, names of organizations and components of compounds. It can also be called: calque or loan translation. (Newmark, 1988b:84)

- **Shifts or Transpositions:** it involves a change in the grammar from SL to TL, for instance, (i) change from singular to plural, (ii) the change required when a specific SL structure does not exist in the TL, (iii) change of an SL verb to a TL word, change of an SL noun group to a TL noun and so forth. (Newmark, 1988b:86)

- **Modulation:** it occurs when the translator reproduces the message of the original text in the TL text in conformity with the current norms of the TL, since the SL and the TL may appear dissimilar in terms of perspective. (Newmark, 1988b:88)

- **Recognized Translation:** it occurs when the translator "normally uses the official or the generally accepted translation of any institutional term." (Newmark, 1988b:89)

- **Compensation:** it occurs when loss of meaning in one part of a sentence is compensated in another part. (Newmark, 1988b:90)

- **Paraphrase:** in this procedure the meaning of the CBT is explained. Here the explanation is much more detailed than that of descriptive equivalent. (Newmark, 1988b:91)

- **Couplets:** it occurs when the translator combines two different procedures. (Newmark, 1988b:91)

- **Notes:** notes are additional information in a translation. (Newmark, 1988b:91) Notes can appear in the form of 'footnotes.' Although some stylists consider a translation sprinkled with footnotes terrible with regard to appearance, nonetheless, their use can assist the TT readers to make better judgments of the ST contents. Nida (1964:237-39) advocates the use of footnotes to fulfill at least the two following functions: (i) to provide supplementary information, and (ii) to call attention to the original's discrepancies.

A really some trouble areas in the field of translation appear to be the occurrence of allusions, which seem to be culture-specific portions of a SL. All kinds of allusions, especially cultural and historical allusions, bestow a specific density on the original language and need to be explicated in the translation to bring forth the richness of the SL text for the TL audience.

Appearing abundantly in literary translations, allusions, as Albakry (2004:3) points out, "are part of the prior cultural knowledge taken for granted by the author writing for a predominantly Moslem Arab [SL] audience. To give the closest approximation of the source language, therefore, it was necessary to opt for 'glossing' or using explanatory footnotes." However, somewhere else he claims that, "footnotes ... can be rather intrusive, and therefore, their uses were minimized as much as possible" (Albakry, 2004:4).

Strategies of Translating Allusions

Proper names, which are defined by Richards (1985:68) as "names of a particular person, place or thing" and are spelled "with a capital letter," play an essential role in a literary work. For instance let us consider personal PNs. They may refer to the setting, social status and nationality of characters, and really demand attention when rendered into a foreign language.

There are some models for rendering PNs in translations. One of these models is presented by Hervey and Higgins (1986) who believe that there exist two strategies for translating PNs. They point out: "either the name can be taken over unchanged from the ST to the TT, or it can be adopted to conform to the phonic/graphic conventions of the TL" (p.29).

Hervey and Higgins (1986) refer to the former as exotism which "is tantamount to literal translation, and involves no cultural transposition" (p.29), and the latter as transliteration. However, they propose another procedure or alternative, as they put it, namely cultural transplantation. Being considered as "the extreme degree of cultural transposition," cultural transplantation is considered to be a procedure in which "SL names are replaced by indigenous TL names that are not their literal equivalents, but have similar cultural connotations" (Hervey & Higgins, 1986:29).

Regarding the translation of PNs, Newmark (1988a:214) asserts that, "normally, people's first and sure names are transferred, thus preserving nationality and assuming that their names have no connotations in the text."

The procedure of transference cannot be asserted to be effective where connotations and implied meanings are significant. Indeed, there are some names in the Persian poet Sa'di's work *Gulestan*, which bear connotations and require a specific strategy for being translated. Newmark's (1988a:215) solution of the mentioned problem is as follows: "first translate the word that underlies the SL proper

name into the TL, and then naturalize the translated word back into a new SL proper name." However, there is a shortcoming in the strategy in question. As it seems it is only useful for personal PNs, since as Newmark (1988a:215), ignoring the right of not educated readers to enjoy a translated text, states, it can be utilized merely "when the character's name is not yet current amongst an educated TL readership."

Leppihalme (1997:79) proposes another set of strategies for translating the proper name allusions:

i. Retention of the Name:

- a. Using the name as such.
- b. Using the name, adding some guidance.
- c. Using the name, adding a detailed explanation, for instance, a footnote.

ii. Replacement of the Name by Another:

- a. Replacing the name by another SL name.
- b. Replacing the name by a TL name

iii. Omission of the Name:

- iv. Omitting the name, but transferring the sense by other means, for instance by a common noun.
- v. Omitting the name and the allusion together. Moreover, nine strategies for the translation of key-phrase allusions are proposed by Leppihalme (1997: 82) as follows:
 - i. Use of a standard translation,
 - ii. Minimum change, that is, a literal translation, without regard to connotative or contextual meaning,
 - iii. Extra allusive guidance added in the text,
 - iv. The use of footnotes, endnotes, translator's notes and other explicit explanations not supplied in the text but explicitly given as additional information,
 - v. Stimulated familiarity or internal marking, that is, the addition of intra-allusive allusion,
 - vi. Replacement by a TL item,
 - vii. Reduction of the allusion to sense by rephrasing,
 - viii. Re-creation, using a fusion of techniques: creative construction of a passage which hints at the connotations of the allusion or other special effects created by it,
 - ix. Omission of the allusion.

3- AIMS AND SCOPE OF THE STUDY

This paper is set to highlight the problems of Machine Translation in conveying the Sense and Sensibility of Arabic Language Translation. The Scope is exclusively drawn from the Arabic - English Translators of non-native speakers. Exploring the problems of Machine Translation in conveying the Sense and Sensibility of Arabic Language Translation. It is an attempt to answer to "what extend Machine Translation is inadequate for reflecting the intended meaning of Arabic translation words into English?"

4- METHODOLOGY

The researcher has used the descriptive analytical and qualitative methods as well as content analysis as a tool in the collection relevant data and information in pursuing this paper. A sample of this study was randomly drawn from Sudanese folklore songs performed by a Sudanese Great Singer, Mohammed Wardi.

5- RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

غربته West

حيران يكفكف دمعته غربته

حيران يكفكف دمعته

حزان يغالب لوعته

Hieran, his tears are covered with his tears

Hieran tears his tears

Sadness overwhelms his curse

ويتمنى ... بس لعودته

طال بيه الحنين

فاض به الشجن

واقف يردد من زمن

He wishes ... but for his return

Tal Haya nostalgia

He was overwhelmed by the jinn

I stand and repeat from time

بالله .. بالله

يا الطير المهاجر للوطن زمن الخريف

تطير بسراع تطير ما تضيع زمن

او عك تقيف وتواصل الليل بالصباح

تحت المطر .. وسط الرياح

وكان تعب منك جناح فى السرعه زيد

God .. God

O bird migrating home during the fall

Fly with a fly fly

OhakTaqf and continue the night by morning

Under the rain .. amid the wind

It was tired of you wing in speed Zaid

فى بلادنا ترتاح

ضل الدليب

اريح سكن

In our country relax

DalebDaleb

Jericho housing

فوت بلاد .. وتسبب بلاد

وان جيت بلاد

وتلقى فيها النيل بيلمع فى الضلام

زى سيف مجوهر بالنجوم فى الظلام

تنزل هناك وتحى يا طير باحترام

حزنان يغالب لوعته

Vot country .. and the abandonment of the country

And Jetland

He received the Nile in a dream

The sword is a starry jewel in the dark

Go down there and live with respect

Sadness overwhelms his curse

ويتمنى ... بس لعودته

طال بيه الحنين

فاض به الشجن

واقف يردد من زمن

He wishes ... but for his return

Tal Haya nostalgia

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بالله .. بالله

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فوت بلاد .. وتسبب بلاد

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وتلقى فيها النيل بيلمع فى الضلام

زى سيف مجوهر بالنجوم فى الظلام

تنزل هناك وتحى يا طير باحترام

Vot country .. and the abandonment of the country

And Jetland

He received the Nile in a dream

The sword is a starry jewel in the dark

Go down there and live with respect

According to what was suggested earlier about the machine translation, the researcher has used the machine translation to translate the verses above which were written in Arabic; through interpretational analytical translation, the researcher has proved his point of view about the machine translation failure as follows:

If we take for granted the word in the title "غربة" it was translated in English "West" which is not matching the real meaning of word. The meaning ,which is intended in the song, is different from the translated word. When someone is being far away from his/her country, we called him Alien.

Relatedly, the word "Hieran" was not representing the same meaning of word "حيران". It was being wrongly translated; its intended meaning in the song is someone who does not able to concentrate or make use of his/her mind to think about something.

Relevantly, the same thing was happened again; the Machine Translation opt for using transliteration to translate the meaning of words such as “**Hieran**” and “**Tal Haya**”. They were not being translated as they should be. For example, “**Tal Haya**” should be translated as someone who is being far away from his home/country for many years; really, he/she will be in eager.

Relatedly, the Machine Translation was failed to translate the meaning of word “الشجن” which is actually meant “**Sadness**”. But the Machine Translation was mistaken again when it used transliteration in translating the word “الشجن”.

Accordingly, we were noticed that Machine Translation failed once again to translate the word “او اعك تقيف” into “**OhakTaqf**” as literal translation which is not equivalent to the intended meaning of word. The intended meaning of word is that to order someone not to stop for any reason, but he/she should keep on stopless.

The same thing it happened to the word “ضل الدليب” when it was translated into “**DalebDaleb**” as literal translation which is wrong, because it does not convey the exact meaning of word “**Balm Tree**”.

According to the verses above which were translated by the machine translation, the researcher has found that the machine translation has failed to translate the intended meaning of underlined words, whether these words were denotative or connotative, fiasco failure .

6- CONCLUSION

As it was proposed earlier machine translation is inadequate for reflecting the intended meaning of Arabic translation words into English. According to the analysis above, it was proved machine translation does not have a great significance in conveying the intended meaning of words when they were translated into Arabic.

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