
Semantic & Translation: Theory and Practice

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Abstract

Translation is the language of people and the portal of their civilization. To understand the history of civilization or people, we need to read literature to learn more about them. Therefore, the text has great importance for communicating and understanding civilizations through the process of translating hundreds of languages and dialects. Therefore, the text and meaning share some features. Furthermore, translation and semantics have the same commonality. Is translation simply a matter of translating words from one language to the next? In this regard, the translation renders the source language sense into the target language (Ghazala, 2008).

Translation is a key tool for information exchange around the world. Translating serves as the bridge between cultures. This makes it possible for humans to open the doors of an unknown cultural and linguistic world. Translation is an important part of people's lives. That gives them the ability to communicate with people who speak different languages. Indeed, it is certain that the people of different countries speak different languages. Translation will become increasingly important. In other respects, semantics is central to the translation process. One of the fundamental factors for making a reliable translation for a better comprehension of semantic elements. We need reasonable comprehension and simple language, therefore, we had to rely on translation to facilitate and close these meanings. The purpose of the translator is crucial to bring out the real connection and communicate the meaning in the source text (Larson, 1998).

This paper aims to shed light on the relation between translation and semantics from the point of view of practice and theory. To achieve the goal of this article, some examples and verses of the Qur'an have been cited with reference to some literature reviews. This document follows the descriptive and comparative methodology based on the narrative example and quotations. The findings show that there is a strong relationship between translation and semantics in both practical and theoretical terms. The Translation could not take place on its own without interpreting the meaning and analysis beyond the text. The paper called for more research and studies in the field of

translation and semantics. Given the few studies and books that deal with this issue, further studies are necessary on this subject.

Keywords: Semantic Theory, Semantic Translation, Translation Theory, Translating Practice, Quran verses, meaning.

علم الدلالة والترجمة: بين النظرية والتطبيق

الملخص

الترجمة لغة الشعوب وبوابة الحضارة. وهي الأساس في فهم تاريخ الحضارات والشعوب، ولطالما ارتبط الأدب بتاريخهم. لذلك، فإن للنص أهمية كبيرة في التواصل وفهم الحضارات. فمن خلال عملية الترجمة التي تتم بين مئات اللغات واللهجات. يتشارك النص والمعنى في بعض الميزات. علاوة على ذلك، فإن الترجمة وعلم الدلالة لهما نفس القواسم المشتركة. هل الترجمة مجرد مسألة ترجمة كلمات لغة ما إلى لغة أخرى؟ في هذا الصدد، تنقل الترجمة معنى اللغة المصدر إلى اللغة الهدف (غزالة، 2008). تعد الترجمة أداة أساسية في تبادل المعلومات بين دول العالم. فالترجمة بمثابة ذلك الجسر الذي يربط بين الثقافات. ولذلك يمكن للبشر أن يطرقوا عوالم ثقافية وفكرية ولغوية لم تطرق من قبل. الترجمة جزء مهم في حياة الناس. أنها تمنحهم القدرة على التواصل مع الأشخاص الذين يتحدثون لغات مختلفة. في الواقع، أن الناس من مختلف البلدان يتحدثون لغات مختلفة. وتزايد أهمية الترجمة مع مرور الوقت. من جهة أخرى، نجد أن علم الدلالة يمثل الركيزة الأساسية في عملية الترجمة. أنها أحد العوامل الأساسية في فهم وتفسير الترجمة بشكل دقيق من خلال التعمق في مكونات العناصر الدلالية. نحن بحاجة إلى فهم معقول ولغة بسيطة، لذلك كان علينا الاعتماد على الترجمة لتسهيل هذه المعاني وتقريبها. لذا يعد دور المترجم هام وبارز في عملية الاتصال الحقيقي وإيصال المعنى من النص المصدر (لارسون، 1998).

تهدف هذه الورقة العلمية إلى إلقاء الضوء على العلاقة بين الترجمة وعلم الدلالة استناداً إلى وجهات النظر في النظرية والتطبيق. ولتحقيق الهدف من هذه الدراسة، تم الاستشهاد ببعض الأمثلة والآيات القرآنية مع الإشارة إلى بعض المراجع الأدبية. تتبع هذه الورقة المنهج الوصفي المقارن القائمة على الأمثلة السردية والاستدلالات. وتظهر النتائج أن هناك علاقة قوية بين الترجمة وعلم الدلالة من الناحيتين العملية والنظرية. فليس من الممكن أن تتم الترجمة من تلقاء نفسها دون تفسير المعنى وتحليل جوانب النص. وتوصي هذه الدراسة بأجراء المزيد من البحوث والدراسات في مجال الترجمة وعلم الدلالة. بالنظر إلى الدراسات والكتب القليلة التي تتناول هذا الموضوع.

الكلمات المفتاحية: نظرية علم الدلالة، الترجمة الدلالية، نظرية الترجمة، ممارسة الترجمة، آيات قرآنية، المعاني النصية.

1. Introduction

Since then, the researcher has seven years' relevant professional experience in translation. This paper discusses the semantics and translation theory and their roles in the establishment of a clear understanding. During the course of translation, the researcher wondered whether knowledge of theoretical semantics had helped translators to be a better translator. Semantics was a postgraduate course taken by the scholar. This allowed him to gain numerous benefits as a translator and scholar. Semiotics (from a practical standpoint) and etymology are the most useful in his translation work. Therefore, this article will focus on the relevance of semantic theory to translation theory and translation practice. It will give readers an insight into the history of translation. Translation and semantic theory and the role that derive their meanings. Moreover, the theory of translation and a sterile debate from Cicero until the middle of the twentieth century. Concerning the relationship between semantics and translation theory, the practice of translation and the role of meaning in the profession of translation.

2. Objective of the study

The overall objective of this study aims to shed light on the relationships between translation and semantics.

3. Question of the study

The main question of this study:

Are there any relationships between translation theory and semantic theory?

4. Statement of the problem

There are overlap between translation theory and the semantic theory, a plenty of translators give minor attention for these relationships, this more obvious and crystal in Quranic verses. Literal translation away of the deep meaning of the text in some cases leads to misunderstanding to the source texts. Several scholars tackle the issue of semantic and its relationship with translation. Unfortunately, there is a rare research and studies in this scope, therefore, the researcher will try to shed the light on this relationship in related to Quranic verses and other relation context.

5. Significance of the Study

This study will disclose the cover and open the wide door for researchers and scholars to do deep studies and researchers in the relationships between semantic and

translation. Translators should know more about the underline words that translated literally and try to figure out the nature of the religious texts.

6. Literature Review

Vandevorde (2020) stated that the notion of meaning has always been at the core of translation, the invariance of meaning has, partly due to practical constraints, rarely been challenged in Corpus-based Translation Studies. She discussed the invariance of meaning in translated texts: would it be possible to identify differences between translated and non-translated language on the semantic level too? Three questions have been raised, (ii) Are there any differences on the semantic level between translated and non-translated language? and (iii) if there are differences on the semantic level, can we ascribe them to any of the (universal) tendencies of translation? finally she established a way to visually explore semantic similarity on the basis of representations of translated and non-translated semantic fields. By comparing the visualizations of the semantic fields on different levels (translated Dutch with French as a source language, with English as a source language and non-translated Dutch) she explored the differences between translated and non-translated fields of inchoatively in Dutch can be linked to any of the well-known universals of translation. The main results of this study are explained on the basis of two cognitively inspired frameworks: Halverson's Gravitational Pull Hypothesis and Paradis' neurolinguistic theory of bilingualism.

LAXÉN & LAVAUR, (2009) examined the influence of multiple translations of a word on bilingual processing in three translation recognition experiments during which French–English bilinguals had to decide whether two words were translations of each other or not. In the first experiment, words with only one translation were recognized as translations faster than words with multiple translations. Furthermore, when words were presented with their dominant translation, the recognition process was faster than when words were presented with their non-dominant translation. In Experiment 2, these effects were replicated in both directions of translation (L1–L2 and L2–L1). In Experiment 3, they manipulated number-of-translations and the semantic relatedness between the different translations of a word. When the two translations of a word (i.e., *bateau*) were related in meaning (synonyms such as the English translations *boat* and *ship*), result showed that the translation recognition process was faster than when the two translations of a word (i.e., *argent*) were unrelated in meaning (the two translations *money* and *silver*). The consequences of translation ambiguities are discussed in the light of the distributed conceptual feature model of bilingual memory (De Groot,

1992b; Van Hell and De Groot, 1998b).

Huang et al., (2002) identified the relation to translation equivalence relation as a bilingual lexical semantic relation. Such relations can then be part of a logical entailment predicting whether source language semantic relations will hold in a target language or not. They testified that with a study of 210 Chinese lexical phrases and their possible semantic relations links bootstrapped from the Princeton WordNet. The results show that lexical semantic relation translations are indeed highly precise when they are logically inferable.

7. Methodology

This paper follows the descriptive and comparative method that depend on narrative examples and citations.

7.1. Translation Theory

«A translation theory harks back to the debate that has dominated much of translation theory in what calls the ‘pre-linguistics period of translation» (NewMark, 1981). It was a theme which Susan Bassnett, in ‘The history of translation theory’ discussed (Bassnett, Lefevere, 1990). Much of the western translation theories from Cicero to the twentieth century were centered on the recurring debate as to whether translations should be literal (word-for-word) or free (sense-for-sense). In the second half of the twentieth century, these theories began focusing on the status of the ST and the form of the TL and dismissed the translation from being followed for the other sciences to be an independent science. George Steiner, in his detailed idiosyncratic classification of the early history of translation theory, listed a small number of fourteen writers who represented «very nearly the sum total of those who have said anything fundamental or new about translation» (Steiner & ed, 1975). Controversy over the translation of the Bible was central to translation theory in the west for over a thousand years. Early theorists tended to be translators who presented a justification for their approach in a preface to the translation, often paying little attention to (or not having access to) what others before them had said. Dryden’s proposed triad of the late seventeenth century marked the beginning of a more systematic and precise definition of translation, while Schleiermacher’s respect for the foreign text was to have considerable influence over scholars in modern times. Translation theory is not to be regarded only as an exercise focusing on language learning, it is an aid to the translator helping him to capture the sense and the spirit of verbal and non- verbal elements in texts.

7.2. *Semantics Theory*

Semantics is a bridge discipline between linguistics and philosophy (Kempson, 1997) Semantics is the study of meaning expressed by elements of a language, so «the semantic theory tries to understand the nature of language to describe and explain the way in which linguistic expressions have meaning» (Rieme.N, 2010). The study of semantics includes a variety of issues and approaches. The nature of the lexicon, e.g, words and word meanings, is a fundamental aspect of understanding how language works, including issues relating to deixis and demonstratives in a broad range of languages; motivations for various lexical categories-including nouns, verbs, and adjectives-and their grammatical properties; the relationship between verb semantics, case marking, and argument structure; and lexical choice in discourse-i.e., how the syntactic and semantic properties of lexical items or lexical categories are manipulated by speakers to achieve discourse goals, nature of lexical entries, thematic relations, representation of logical form; relation between semantic interpretation and syntactic representation, quantification and scope relations, reference and presupposition, «connotation and denotation, components analysis, referential meaning, explicit and implicit meaning, signifier and signified and lexical meaning» (Cruse, 2000). Semantics is one of the richest and most fascinating parts of linguistics; linguistics in general, and semantic theory in particular, assume that language are mutually translatable in a way that preserves important meaning components. One of the crucial tasks of the semantic theory is the meaning and context.

Translation is as a sort of rendering the message and the semantics as the core of that act. In terms of the semantic relations between words which are expressed often seem bewildering to language learners and translators (Nida, 2001).

7.3. *The relationship between Translation and Semantics*

It is particularly necessary and helpful for a translator to have an idea of the relationship between semantics and translation and to have general knowledge of semantics and translation. Semantic translation can be reflected in the denotation and connotation of the original text. the relationship between semantic theory and translation theory was a vague secret and controversial issue generation after generation. A translator can hardly avoid falling into error in translation. It's clear that context is very important in understanding the original text correctly; without contextual knowledge and information, a translator is sure to make mistakes. When translators translate any given

text from one language into another, they will definitely have to make some decisions as to the choice of certain vocabulary in the target language or the structure of the target text. Catford's assertion that translation equivalence depends on communicative features such as function, relevance, situation and culture rather than just on formal linguistic criteria. When the two concepts diverge, a translation shift is deemed to have occurred. In Catford's own words, translation shifts are thus "departures from formal correspondence in the process of going from the SL to the TL" (Munday, 2001). Vinay and Darbelnet's touched on the concept of used seven strategies when they both drew comparisons between the linguistic systems of English and French and came up with some translation strategies or procedures which would help the translators of this language pair to translate as accurately as possible. This means that meaning is the soul of text; without meaning the translation is distorted. In this area, Jakobson follows the relation set out by Saussure between the signifier (the spoken and written signal) and the signified (the concept signified). Together, the signifier and signified form the linguistic sign, but that sign is arbitrary or unmotivated (Saussure, 1983). Thus, the English word cheese is the acoustic signifier, which 'denotes' the concept 'food made of pressed curds' (the signified), although there is no inherent reason for that to be so. Jakobson stresses that it is possible to understand what is signified by a word even if we have never seen or experienced the concept or thing in real life. The examples he gives are ambrosia and nectar, words which modern readers will have read in Greek myths even if they have never come across the substances in real life; these words contrast with cheese, which they almost certainly have encountered first hand.

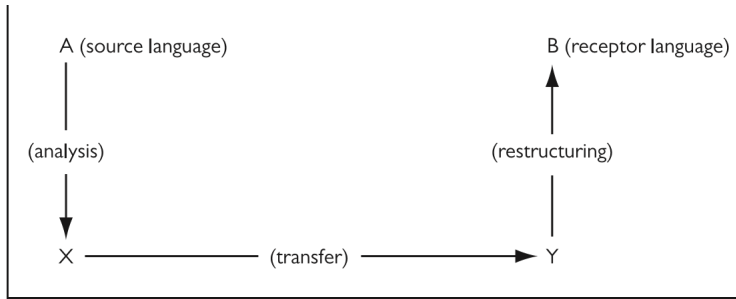
The translator recodes and transmits a message received from another source. Thus, translation involves two equivalent messages in two different codes". (Munday, 2001). Nida describes various 'scientific approaches to meaning' related to work that had been carried out by theorists in semantics and pragmatics (Nida E., 1964). Central to Nida's work is the move away from the old idea that an orthographic word has a fixed meaning and towards a functional definition of meaning in which a word 'acquires' meaning through its context and can produce varied responses according to culture. Meaning can be broken down into the linguistic meaning (borrowing elements of Chomsky's model), referential meaning (the denotative 'dictionary' meaning) and emotive (or connotative) meaning. A series of techniques, adapted from work in linguistics, is presented as an aid for the translator in determining the meaning of different linguistic items. Techniques to determine referential and emotive meaning focus on analysing the structure of words

and differentiating similar words in related lexical fields. These include hierarchical structuring, which differentiates series of words according to their level (for instance, the superordinate animal and its hyponyms goat, dog, cow, etc.) and techniques of componential analysis. The latter seek to identify and discriminate specific features of a range of related words. «The results can be plotted visually to assist in making an overall comparison» (Nida E. , 1964). One example is the plotting of relationship terms (grand-mother, mother, cousin, etc.) according to the values of sex (male, female), generation (the same, one, two or more apart) and lineality (direct ancestor/descendant or not). Such results are useful for a translator working with languages that have very different kinship terms. Another technique is semantic structure analysis in which Nida (1964: 107) separates out visually the different meanings of spirit ('demons', 'angels', 'gods', 'ghost', 'ethos', 'alcohol', etc.) according to their characteristics (human vs. non-human, good vs. bad, etc.). The central idea of this analysis is to encourage the trainee translator to realize that the sense of a complex semantic term such as spirit (or, to take another example, bachelor) varies and most particularly is 'conditioned' by its context. Spirit thus does not always have a religious significance. Even (or perhaps especially) when it does, as in the term Holy Spirit, its emotive or connotative value varies according to the target culture (Nida E., 1964). The associations attached to the word are its connotative value, and these are considered to belong to the realm of pragmatics or 'language in use'. In general, techniques of semantic structure analysis are proposed as a means of clarifying ambiguities, elucidating obscure passages and identifying cultural differences. They may serve as a point of comparison between different languages and cultures.

8. Sample Analysis

8.1. Beyond the Meaning and Contradictory of Translation

Nida incorporates key features of Chomsky's model into his 'science' of translation. In particular, Nida sees that it provides the translator with a technique for decoding the ST and a procedure for encoding the TT (Nida E., 1964), though he reverses Chomsky's model when analysing the ST. Thus, the surface structure of the ST is analysed into the basic elements of the deep structure; these are 'transferred' in the translation process and then restructured semantically and stylistically into the surface structure of the TT. This three-stage system of translation (analysis, transfer and restructuring) is presented in this Figure: (Nida and Taber, 1969).



The popular saying «practice makes perfect». In fact, the more one practises translation, the more one realizes that translation is an open-ended learning process which always reveals new tricks of the trade, unlike probably many practical fields. A typical example of this case is the language pair of English and Arabic. English, on one hand, belongs to the Indo-European family. Arabic, on the other hand, is a Semitic language. As a result of this distinct disparity, the linguistic systems of English and Arabic are as different from each other as chalk and cheese. This great difference gives rise to a strong relationship between semantics and translation, which obviously accounts for the translators' preference for free translation over literal translation when the source language and the target language belong to two completely different families. Ibn Rashig Alqurawani in his book "Al-Oumdah" said that "The context is the body and the meaning is the soul. They have a strong relation between them. If one be weak, the other influenced by and vice versa". For instance, the word "spring" have a multi meaning a according to the context as "ربيع، زنبرك، مرونة، يقفز، ينشأ، ينبوع، مصدر". Also the word "tender" has a different meaning according to the context as "مؤلم" in medical text or "عمله عطاء" in commercial text or "سفينة تموين أو عربة الوقود والماء" in literary text or as verb "يقدم أو يعرض أو يطرح" and etc.... this does not occur in English only but also the same thing happens in Arabic when we translate from Arabic to English, e.g. the verb "ضرب اللاعب ; ضرب الكرة The player hit the ball, ضرب الرجل الولد. The man beat the boy, ضرب مثلاً.. He set an example, ضرب المدفع.. He fired the gun, ضرب في الأرض He travelled through the land, ضرب اخماس في اسداس.. He schemed and plotted, ضرب في الأمر بسهم.. He shared in the matter, ضرب النوم على أذنيه.. Sleep overtook him, ضرب له موعداً.. He made him an appointment (Najeeb, 2005).

8.2. The Role of Semantics in Quranic Translation

Here the word's meaning is defined by its context. If we want more example in

semantic translation, let me go through the translation in Quran; the following example the Qur'an (7:40)

(إِنَّ الَّذِينَ كَذَّبُوا بِآيَاتِنَا وَاسْتَكْبَرُوا عَنْهَا لَا تُفَتَّحُ لَهُمْ أَبْوَابُ السَّمَاءِ وَلَا يَدْخُلُونَ الْجَنَّةَ حَتَّى يَلِجَ الْجَمَلُ فِي سَمِّ الْخِيَاطِ وَكَذَلِكَ نَجْزِي الْمُجْرِمِينَ) (40)

I have selected five translations to know how translators translated this verse.

«Until the camel pass through the eye of the needle» Mohsin Khan and Al-Hilali

«Until the camel pass through the eye of the needle» Pickthal

«Until a camel enters into the eye of a needle» Shakir

«Until the camel pass through the eye of the needle» Dr. Ghali

«Until the camel pass through the eye of the needle» Yusuf Ali

It is noted that the translations above render the meaning of the verse literally. Translators do not go beyond the semantic (lexical, referential) meaning of Quranic verse; a portion of the original meaning is lost. They have been to capture an extra-meaning by inserting the parenthetical phrase. Nida mentioned that a translator focuses attention on the message itself, in both form and content, so the translators should explain the semantic meaning and the aim from this proverb to foreigner reader that means « The doors of Heaven will not be open for the unbelievers, deeds, nor for their souls. « Good deeds nor their souls will be raised to Heaven. According to Dr.Alabbasi's study, the translations of the Qur'anic meaning shall convey the whole meaning, shades of meaning and context-based meanings which are intended by the Almighty, Allah (SWT) as understood by Arabs along with the generation and in accordance with the Arabic language rules, semantic translation shall be taken care of when they are very much related to core meanings (Dr.ALabbasi, 2011). In addition, Dr. Al Dirbijji said that, "Sacred texts do defy translation the maximum we may shoot for is to be able to account for the potential meaning(s) embedded in secret texts via acts of translation." (Al Dirbijji.A, 2015). Hence, it can be concluded that semantics remains a cardinal stone in translation either on theory or practice.

9. Findings and Conclusion

The findings show that there is a strong relationship between translation and semantics in both practical and theoretical terms. The translation could not be alone without interpreting the meaning and analyzing beyond the text. Certain Quranic translations show the external denotation of the meaning and neglect the invisible connotation in the text. The area of semantic/thematic roles is interesting for translation

if you compare materials that have been translated in different ways and which express various semantic ways of expressing the same idea, yet in the area of practical and professional translation studies, I have found it interesting and useful to learn semantic and translation theory. I think any attempt to teach translation without resorting to translation theory would fail to produce certain elements, which are essential to the theory and translation practice. Translation theory enriches the translator's knowledge of the text. It provides insights into cross-cultural semantics and pragmatics. Above all, it equips the translator with adequate knowledge and understanding of the techniques and ways of approaching a text. The paper recommended to do more research and studies in the field of translation and semantics. Given to scarce studies and books that address this issue more extended studies are required in this topic.

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