

Student's Pragmatic Shifts in Translating Islamic Expressions from Arabic into English**Dr. Ibrahim Bani Abdo¹**

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Abstract

The purpose of this study is to cast light on the pragmatic shifts in translating Islamic expressions from Arabic into English. This study investigates presupposition and deixis shifts in translating Islamic expressions. Qualitative and quantitative instruments were used in the data collection. The study sample consisted of (30) senior students from the Department of English Language and Literature at the School of Languages in the University of Jordan /Aqaba. Participants were given (9) Islamic expressions to translate from Arabic into English. The findings of the study revealed that participants resorted to pragmatic shifts when employing the translation strategies of omission, addition, and substitution. Moreover, the findings showed that pragmatic shifts such as presupposition and deixis shifts sometimes change the intended meaning of the original text. Using pragmatic shifts by translators might sometimes cause distortion in translating the intended meaning of the source text. This study will explore the main causes of using pragmatic shifts amongst translation students when translating Islamic expressions.

Keywords: pragmatic shifts, Islamic expression, presupposition, deixis.

1. Introduction

Translation is essential to communicate between societies. It is a way of communicating between people having different languages. It is not only transferring meaning from the source language to the target language, but it is also a process that involves conveying all meaning features in the source language, and the target text must be equivalent to the source text. The target text should have the same impact of the source

text in semantic and mode (Baalbaki, 2008). The source language is the language being translated from whereas the target language is the language being translated into. Abu Helwah & Dweik (2014) pointed out that translation relies on practice because it gives the translators the chance to get the important skills they need to translate perfectly. The necessity for the translation increases every day because it is used widely in many fields such as science, communication, religion and all disciplines. Arabic is a second or a foreign language for many non-Arab Muslims in the world, so they want to know about their religion and everything about Islam. The best way for them to understand Islam is through translation. Translation is not only transferring the meaning from SL to the TL but it is a complicated process whose aim is to find the equivalence between SL and TL.

It is essential here to know the meaning of idioms and expressions. Idioms are words or phrases that cannot be translated literally; while expressions are words that have distinguished meanings. The translation of Islamic idioms and expression is a difficult process. It needs skillful translators because the translators deal with holy expressions and idioms and any kind of shifts may lead to misunderstanding the religious idioms and expressions. Khammyseh (2015) pointed out Islamic expressions have a distinguished meaning that makes them not similar to any other kinds of idioms and expressions. Furthermore, he remarked that the reason why Islamic expressions have a special meaning is that they have an effect on both the language and the heart of the listener together. Really, this seems to be a great difficulty for the translator to get the ideal and perfect meaning. Moreover, Arabic and English are totally two different languages where Islamic expressions are basically related to Arabic culture. The task of the translators is mainly to produce brief, simple, and accurate speech or text in the TL that is easily understood by non-Arab Muslims. Furthermore, the translators' mission or task is to produce translations of Islamic expressions in their cultural essence because they are relevant to culture and non-Arab Muslims cannot understand the accurate meaning without indicating the cultural aspects. Thus, this leads to obstacles for translators and make them produce confusing and wrong translations.

One of the main issues raised in the translation of Islamic idioms and expression is pragmatic issues. Pragmatics is the field of study that shows in what ways language is used and shows the impact of context on language (Panevov´a & Hana, 2011). Abdel Hafiz (2004) stated that the translators sometimes neglect pragmatic elements and principles such as implicature, presupposition, deixis, speech acts, and the maxims of the Politeness Principle. In addition, some problems appear at the word level while others at the phrase/clause level. Translating religious expressions is a complicated process. Jordanian students face problems in translating religious expressions from Arabic into English due to culture and religious beliefs. Therefore, this study aims to cast light on the drawbacks in pragmatic shifts in translating religious idioms and expressions Jordanian students encounter.

The overarching objective of the study is to highlight the main pragmatic shifts that senior students at the University of Jordan /Aqaba make in translating Islamic expressions from Arabic into English. It explores the effects of the shift on the meaning of the target text. The study compares between students' translations of fifteen Islamic expressions. To achieve these objectives, the present study will answer the following questions:

1. What are the pragmatic shifts that occur in students' translation of Arabic religious expressions into English?
2. How do these pragmatic shifts affect the original religious idiom or expression?

The study is important due to the fact that it deals with a new field of linguistics. It will be helpful for students and instructors because it will hopefully give the novice translators a chance to avoid making pragmatic shifts when translating religious idiomatic expressions from Arabic into English.

2. Review of Related Literature

Newmark (1988) pointed out that idioms and expressions are a kind of extended figurative language. He asserted that “an idiom has two main functions: pragmatic and referential. The pragmatic function is to appeal to the senses, to interest, to surprise, to delight”. He illustrated that “the first function is called cognitive, while the other is aesthetic”. The referential function is “to describe a mental process or state, a concept, a person, an object, a quality or an action more comprehensively and concisely than is possible in literal or physical language” (qtd. in Strakšiene, 2009, p. 14).

Mahmoud (2015) argued that translating Islamic religious idioms or expressions is problematic, and it sounds to be one of the most frequent contestation and barriers students of translation seem to face. The major problem is in finding the right rhetorical along with cultural equivalent for such idioms and expressions. Mehawesh & Sadeq (2014) illustrated that the language of religion is mostly implicit not explicit. They added that the language of religion leans on its real evaluation or its prominence. Moreover, they assert that religious idioms and expressions are very difficult and require accurate, functional, idiomatic and ideational translation.

Bahameed (2014) pointed out that the translation of religious idioms and expressions is sensitive, and requires a professional translator who is more knowledgeable of the Holy Scriptures and religious texts than any other general translators. He asserted that a translator of religious texts should have thorough knowledge of semantics, lexicology, syntax and pragmatics to avoid using shifts in translation. Moreover, he illustrated that there is a relation between religious translation and literary translation because a translator of religious idioms or expressions and a literary translator should know about culture and religious beliefs stated in the texts they translate. In religious idioms and expressions, words are important because they are the way we express our faith. Islamic religious expressions and idioms describe our spiritual experience and the real sentiments of religiosity that shape that experience.

3. Methodology

In this current study, the researcher used mixed methods qualitative, quantitative and descriptive analyses in translating Islamic idioms and expression from Arabic into English. The study sample which includes males and females was selected randomly. It consisted of (30) senior students of the Department of English Language and Literature at the University of Jordan/

Aqaba in the academic year of 2017-2018, during the second semester. The data was collected by means of a test given to students who were asked to translate Islamic idioms and expression from Arabic into English. The researcher will attempt to find out the pragmatic shifts that senior students of the Department of English language and literature may commit in translating Islamic idioms and expression from Arabic into English. This test was designed for several purposes such as finding out whether students use pragmatic shifts in translation or not and determining the effects of these shifts on the quality of translation. Students were asked to translate (9) Islamic idioms and expressions. The results of the test were analyzed in order to find out the shifts and the effects of these shifts on the TL text. Moreover, students were asked to translate Islamic idioms and expressions from Arabic into English. The SPSS program was used to classify the shifts in the test.

4. Discussion and Analysis

In this section, elicited data will be analyzed. The analysis of the data views the participants' performance in translating Islamic idioms and expressions from Arabic into English. The participants will be asked to translate (10) expressions and the researcher will find out the pragmatic shifts in the translations.

Example (1) "الموت على الأبواب, عودوا إلى الله تعالى"

- Twelve students (40%) translated this Islamic expression as “ where is the translation” while fourteen students (46.6%) translated it as" you should obey Allah". Only four students (13.4%) translated the expression incorrectly as “people should cooperate with each other”. This translation is irrelevant and does not convey the intended message.
- None of the students translated the aforementioned expression correctly thus not giving the right idiomatic equivalent of its meaning. The gloss here is a kind of warning to people to repent to Allah because they are too old or because they overstate in impiety or committing sins.
- The students committed pragmatic shifts in their translation and they translated the religious expression according to their understanding thus did not convey the intended meaning. This expression has presupposed meaning that refers to what is suggested or strictly implied without saying it explicitly. Students did not get the implicit meaning, so they made a presupposition shift in the translation.

Example (2) "لا تفعل المعصية مره أخرى, فإنها حسرة وندامة"

- Eight students (26. 8%) translated this expression as " do not do this sin, you will regret", and thirteen students (43.2%) translated it like " if you do the sin, you will regret", and eight students(26.7%) translated it " any one do good things will not regret"
- Students translated the expression in different ways, but one of them translated it according to its implicit meaning which entails an advice to people to avoid wrongdoings and committing sins.
- One students (3.3) translated the expression correctly "Don't commit the sin again because you will regret it if you do it again".

- The words "مرة أخرى" were not translated by almost all students except for one student. Students tended to ignore them in the translation because they deemed them unnecessary in conveying the intended meaning.
- Ignoring the words "مرة أخرى" led to pragmatic shifts. This word implies that the sin is committed many times, and the addressee is advised to avoid committing it again.

Example (3) "ازرع الخير في الدنيا وستجني المحصول هناك"

- Twenty three students (76.6) translated this expression as " do the good in the life, and you will get the reap there."
- Ten students (33, 4) translated the expression as " you reap what you sow" and justifying their translation on the assumption that the expression has an equivalence in Arabic. This kind of translation is acceptable in English.
- The first group of students relied on pragmatic shifts in translating the idiomatic expression. Moreover, the word "هناك" has a deictic function since it refers to Doomsday. However, some students did not understand what the demonstrative pronoun refers to.

Example (4) "وجب على الإنسان مراقبة الله أولا"

- Twenty five students (83.3%) translated the expression as " a man must fear Allah and his control"; and five students (15.7%) translated the expression as " firstly, human being should feel the control of Allah"
- The implicative word "اولا" indicates that there are many things a man should fear or observe. Omitting the implicative word led to the loss of the presupposition.

Example (5) "اصبر فان الصبر مفتاح الفرج"

- Twenty seven students (90%) translated the expression as " you should be patient for patience brings calm", only three(10%) students translated it as " After a storm, comes calm"
- The majority of the students added words in their translation such as "calm" which caused the loss of the implied meaning.
- Three students found an equivalent idiomatic expression to convey the intended meaning.

Example (6) "صلوا على الرجل صلاة لا ركوع فيها"

- Twenty two students (73.3%) translated the Arabic sentence as " they prayed on the man without Rqou'a"
- Eight students (26.7) translated the expression as " they pray with the man without Rqou'a"
- None of the students understand the implicit meaning in the translation, they did not indicate that the man died and people will pray on his corpse in a mosque.
- The translation of the idiomatic expression from the source language into the target language is ambiguous, not clear for English speakers. The translation was literal rather than functional, ideational, or idiomatic for it did not reveal the intended meaning which is the man died and people are requested to pray on his corpse in the mosque.

Example (7) "تصدق بالمال فانك سوف تجده"

- Thirty students (100%) translated the Arabic expression " pay Sadakat your money, and you will find it"
- The presupposed meaning here if you give Sadaka (alms) to the poor, you will be awarded and may Allah reward your charity.

Example (8) " لم يغفل الصلاة المكتوبة بعد تلك اللحظة "

- Fifteen students (50%) translated the expression as " he did not ignore the prayers"
- Seven students (23.3%) translated the expression as " he always does the pray"
- Only eight students (26.7) conveyed the intended meaning in their translation which is since that day, the man has never ignored the prescribed prayers.

Example (9) " غابت شمس ذلك اليوم من رمضان "

- Twenty one (70 students%) did not translate this expression correctly and made pragmatic shifts in their translation " the sun of that Ramadan day disappeared "
- Nine students translated the expression irrelevantly such as " pray daily"
- Some students did not understand the intended meaning and they did not use "ذلك" in their English translation.

The following table shows shifts types in students' translation; students who made pragmatic shift in their translation, and the percentage of shifts in their translation:

Shifts Type	Number of students who used shifts	Percentage of shifts in students' translation
1.presupposition	30	100%
2.presupposition	29	96.7%
3.deixis	10	76.6
4.presupposition	25	83.3
5.presupposition	27	90%
6.presupposition	30	100%
7.deixis & presupposition	30	100%

8. deixis	22	73.3%
9. deixis	30	100%

Figure 1 Shifts Types

Figure (1) shows the types of shifts in students' translation. It also refers to the number of students who have used shifts in the translation of Islamic expressions.

5. Conclusion

The current study concluded that using pragmatic shifts during translation changes and sometimes distorts the intended meaning and could lead to losing the original meaning completely. The study shows that shifts are committed by students when they are asked to translate Islamic expressions. Such a practice results from relying on wrong translation strategies such as translation by omission, subtracting, addition, substitution or even weakening and strengthening the meaning in the TT (Target Text). Furthermore, the study presented the main causes that make students of translation resort to using pragmatic shifts in their translation. It is worth noting that students in this study were males and females who were randomly selected (thirty students). They were asked to translate nine Islamic expressions from Arabic into English so that the researcher would find out their use of pragmatic shifts in the translation.

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