On The Principles Regulating Translational Acts

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Abstract

This paper tries to refine the translator's work by evoking some reliable and handy pragmatic values, most of which have been enunciated by Grice. As it is, the producer of the translated text often fuses new, old and implicit elements to convey the communicative intention of the producer of the S T (source text). One of the principles that regulates the balance already mentioned is **effectiveness.** Through it, the producer of the translated text transmits relevant content or fulfils his/her communicative endeavour. Another regulating principle is **efficiency** through which we achieve things in the most economical manner. It also, in a sense, entails less processing effort. The principle of **relevance** which governs that which is left out and that which is unnecessarily repeated (i.e **ellipsis** and **redundancy)** means that the translator, as a producer of a text, has to pay attention only to relevant information. **Quality** as a regulating principle requires that one's production must be supported by evidence. **Quantity,** an operative principle, pragmatically demands that one's contribution be as *informative* as possible. Other operative principles regulating translation, in my opinion, are *the strategy of the SL and/or the TL and the avoidance of a literal production.*

This paper intends to explore these regulating principles of the translated text and to show that they are quite important in producing a translation of substance.

Keywords: effectiveness, efficiency, relevance, ellipsis ,redundancy, Quality.

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Thematic Burden:

Certain principles elegantly regulate the translator's endeavours to produce a readable   text. Among the most important ones are effectiveness*, efficiency, quantity, relevance, quality, the strategy of the SL. and /or TL., and literal versus non_ literal renderings.*

1. Effectiveness

If a text producer encounters in the cognitive environment of the ST(source text) items Like *Charles Dickens,* he/she may transmit in the TT (target text) some relevant piece of content to meet the requirement demanded.

The explanatory addition would be something like

Charles Dickens, *a British novelist.*

On a narrative level, we see Trevor Le Gassick, the translator of Naguib Mahfouz's **Midag Alley** suggestively adds some lexical items to make the version of the TT more effective as shown by the italicized words in the English version.

The Arabic ST:

"ومع ان هذا الزقاق يكاد يعيش في شبه عزلة عما يحدق به من مسارب الدنيا الا أنه على رغم ذلك يضج بحياته الخاصة, حياة تتصل في أعماقها بجذور الحياة الشاملة, وتحتفظ الى ذلك يقدر من اسرار العالم " [1]

The English TT:

" Although Midag Alley lives in almost complete isolation from all
surrounding activity,it clamors with a *distinctive* and personal life of its own. *Fundamentally*, and *basically*, its roots connect with life as a whole and yet, at the sametime, it retains a number of the secrets of a world now past".[2]

However, what makes the following narrative piece from **Season of Migration to the North** by Tayeb Salih more effective is the text producer's attempt to adroitly handle the ST in a way that softens its metaphorical bent through more realistic rendering of materials. Here is an example that illustrates this inclination:

"وأرخيت اذني للريح. ذاك لعمري صوت أعرفه, له في بلدنا وشوشة مرحة."[3]

The English TT

"I listened intently to the wind: that indeed was a sound well-known to me, a sound which in our village possessed a merry whispering."[4]

One can easily note that the translator of the ST piece seems to be keen enough to fulfill the communicative goal by making the piece more familiar to the native speaker of English.

2. Efficiency

Efficiency is realized by doing things economically. Let us take up the example already mentioned : *Charles Dickens, a British novelist.* If this TT version is enlarged into

Charles Dickens is a British novelist whose work reveals a sense of justice and personal wrongs "but he does not seem to believe that matters can be improved loy legislation or movements" [5]

Such additions would give us more knowledge about *Charles Dickens* and his work but it would violate the principle of **economy** and realize a negatively operative *law*, that of *diminishing return*. The knowledge which is not required entails extra effort, on the part of the translator, to process a text. The additional information is not required and it violates a well_ established maxim, that of **efficiency**

3. Quantity

Quantity is another principle that can be applied to regulate translation. The pragmatic principle demands that one's contribution should be "as informative as … required" [6]

In **Midag Alley** and **Season of Migration to The North**, translated respectively by Trevor Le Gassick and Johnson _ Davies, the maxim of *quantity* is quite operative in the TT versions.

The TT version of <u>Midag Alley</u>(occurring towards the end of the book).

> The morning light filled the alley and rays from the sun fell on the upper walls of Alwan's office and the barber's shop. Sanker, the young coffee house waiter, appeared and filled a bucket with water which he sprinkled on the ground. The alley was turning another of the pages of its monotonous life, its inhabitants greeting the morning with their usual cries. [7]

Here is the ST of the TT version:

اضاء الصباح بجنبات الزقاق. وألقت الشمس شعاعاً من اشعتهاعلى اعلى جدران الوكالة ودكان الحلاق. وغداآسنقرصبي القهوة فملأ الدلو ورش الارض. وكان المدق يقلب صفحة من صفحات حياته الرتيبة,واهله يستقبلون الصباح بهتافاتهم المحفوظة [8].

Note that the only changes that the producer of the TT has effected is 'alwan's office' instead of "The Agency" and "usual" instead of "memorized". The first change is justified by the fact that the agency is now being known by the reader. The second change is dictated by that which is more familiar in the TL, English in this case.

The translated piece which also occurs towards the end of **Season of Migration to the North** also adheres to the principle of **quantity**.

The TT Version

> **The moments of ecstasy were in fact rare;**
> **the rest of the time we spent in murderous**
> **war in which no quarter was given. The**
> **war invariably ended in my defeat. (9)**

The ST Version

وقد كانت لحظات النشوة نادرة بالفعل, وبقية الوقت نقضيه في حرب ضروس لاهوادة فيها ولا رحمة .
لحرب تنتهي بهزيمتي دائما (10)

It is obvious that the piece is realized by the interior monologue. Note how Davies renders لاهوادة فيها ولا رحمة into "in which no quarter was given", thus evading the literal translation of the equivalent phrase

in the ST. The phrase reveals an element of redundancy since هوادة and

are synonymous. The adverbial "invariably" means   . In the TT, the adverbial occurs as "   ", a thing which does not violate the **quantity principle**.

4. Relevance

Relevance, as a regulating principle of the T.T, operates, among other things, (in terms of) *ellipsis* and *redundancy*. It is also realized as one of Grice's maxims ie   the maxim of **relation** ("be relevant"). This principle is pivotal in governing interpretation. Serber and Wilson suggests the importance of relevance for human communication :

> **To communicate is to claim an individual's attention;**
> **hence, to communicate is to imply that the information**
> **communicated is relevant. (11)**

The following example reaveals how the message is misunderstood when the speaker's and the listener's enunciations seem to clash:

1.   There's going to be trouble when John finds out.
2.   Why ? what is going on?
1.   It's a nice day, isn't it ?
2.   Oh, come off it.

It is obvious that A, the speaker, tries to initiate a conversation with B, the listener, about the weather ("a nice day") but B infers that A is preying on him. It seems that A is violating the principle of relevance. This act of inferring the unexpressed content involves *implicature***.**

The process of translation may involve a decision to reduce or/and omit some portions of the ST . Sager talks of *selective reductions*, suggesting that the information that lacks sufficient relevance may be omitted.[12]

5. Quality

 Quality is also a principle that regulates the translational act:

The principle demands that we do not say that which is false or that for which we lack evidence.[13]

 Thus, the pragmatic dimensions of context has to say something about **quality**. The principle of quality could be dimmed by *irony* or *comedy*, which are rhetorical devices, a thing which seems, for some people, to impede a straightforward rendering of the ST's meaning. What makes things more difficult for the translator is how to capture the *ironic* or *comic* texture of a certain piece. A measure for the translator's success is to convey these nuances… . Here is an example from Austin:

Be not alarmed, madam, on receiving this letter by
 the apprehension of its containing any repetition of
  those offers, which were last night so disgusting to
   you. [14]

It is obvious that the *formality* of the piece is high. Another feature is the artificiality of the language. The *ironic tone* of the piece also asserts itself. The translator has to respond to these details. A suggested translation of the piece could be something like:

لا تنزعجي (يا) مدام حين تتسلمي هذه الرسالة بادراكك انها تحوي اي تكرار للعواطف تلك او لتجديد تلك
".

The passage seems to vitiate the principle of *quality*. In away, an informative critic may feel that M.Collins's outpourings are too long to be suitable for proposing to Elisabith (the whole passage occupies almost two pages). However, it succeeds in doing "its full comic job [15]. The translator has to capture this comic(or ironic) texture of the passage. If the translator manages to convey to the reader this delicate texture, then this is a measure for his/her success.

Booth suggests that "it is the author's" job to make the words carry the irony, not simply tell the reader that a word is packed with irony." [16]

6.The Strategy of the SL and/or the TL.

On a formal level, Arabic does not allow abstract words to be pluralized. Thus, we have the lexical *success* in Arabic and not *successes*, victory and not *victories*. Hence, we do welly by translating the following sentences into Arabic as shown down below.

a- The government achieved *successes*.

b-The Iraqi army won *victories.*

حققت (انجزت) الحكومة نجاحاً (كثيراً)

احرز الجيش العراقي نصراً (كبيرا)

Some translators violate this strategy of Arabic by giving the following translation:

حرز الجيش العراقي

English pluralizes abstract nouns because it draws on capitalism, a political theory that likes to enumerate things. Arabic which draws on the moral essences of things does not do so.

7. literal versus Non- literal renderings

Translators often vitiate things by trying to render things *literally*. The result would be obvious. The addressee will find it difficult to understand things. The following Arabic sentence

طلب ابوهم ابريق ماء ليتوضىء به

may be translated as

Their father called for a pitcher of water to use for his ablutions. This *literal* translation makes it difficult for a non_ Arab to understand exactly what the sentence means.

A better version that native speakers of English may understand easily would be something like:

Their father called for a jug of water in order to wash himself before praying. [17]

The Quran provides us with **revelatiens**) (آيات that have to be translated non_literal ly.
The following constructions in the revelatiens

<div dir="rtl">

ونخل طلعها هضيم

عذاب يوم الظلة

ورزق كريم

لابارد ولا كريم

</div>

could be non_literally translated thus:
….. and palm – trees (=date palms) laden with fine fruit
….the punishment of the day of the black cloud
…..generous provision (or sustenance)
….neither refreshing, nor pleasant
or
…..neither cool, nor honourable
  The meaning of the following **revelation**

could be non-literally translated into:
And what will make thee realize what the Sure Reality is? [18]
The same **revelation** could be translated as
 And nay, you cannot realize what the certain calamity (plight) is!
The *structural* difference between the two versions is that the first one regards the heavenly revelation as a *question*, the second one as an *exclamatory* realization. *Reality* in the first version becomes *calamity* in the second. Both versions seem to be acceptable because they are non-literal.

8. Conclusion

  All the previous pragmatic details are important for a translator who deals with the text as a dynamic **discoursal** reality. We have seen how the principles of *effectiveness*, *efficiency*, *relevance*, *quantity*, *quality*, and others work together to prodace some successful translational acts. A serious problem that encounters a translator is the tendency to render a translational piece *literally*. Such a tendency often results from the fear of distancing oneself from the original text and, thus, exposing oneself to redicule or responsibility. But a translator has to rely on his/her commonsense to produce a valid target text.

Notes
1.   5   1988
2.   Mahfoud, 1975,p.10
3.   6 5   , 2006,
4.   Salih, p.1
5.   Wilson,p.240
6.   Hatim and Mason,p.62 (The reference here and elsewhere is to Grice's 1975, 1978 maxims)
7.   Mahfoud,p.242
8.   283   ,
9.   Salih, p.160
10.   163   ,
11.   Serber and Wilson, 1986, p. vii
12.   Sager, p. 122
13.   Hatim and Mason, p.98
14.   Austin, p. 168
15.   Booth, 201
16.   Booth, 199
17.   Hatim and Mason, P.69
18.   Ali, p. 1596

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3.*Ali,* Aldullah Yousif, The Holly Qur'an, **Text Translation and Commentary**(That Essalasil, Kuwait, 1989).
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5.*Booth*, Wayne c., **A Rhetoric of irony**, (The University of Chicago Press, Chicago and London, 1974).
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7.*Mahfous*, Naguib, **Midaq Alley**, translated by Trevor Le Gassick (Heinemann, London, Nairobi, I badan and Lasaka,1975)

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10. *Serber*, D. and D. Wilson, **Relevance** : **Communcation and Cognition** (Basil Blackwell, oxford, 1986).

11. *Wilson*, John Burgess, **English Literature**; **A Survey for Students** (Longmans, Green and Coltd, London, 1958).

في ما يخص المبادئ التي تخص الترجمة

.د.عزيز يوسف المطلبي*

يحاول هذا البحث ان يصقل عمل المترجم بأن يستدعي قيماً معتمد عليها وملائمة وعملية. وكما هو الأمر، فكثيراً ما يدمج منتج النص المترجم عناصر جديدة وقديمة ومتضمنة يظهر القصد الأتصالي لمنتج النص الأصلي بوصفه واحدً من المبادئ التي تنظم التوازن الذي   ألا هو <u>التأثير</u>. فبواسطته فأن منتج النص المترجم يبث المحتوى ذا الصلة او يحقق محاولته التواصلية . ومبدأ منظم آخر هو   _____ التي تحقق بواسطتها اشاء ، على نحو، اكثر اقتصاداً. وهو يتطلب، في معنى من المعاني، اقل جهد في التعامل معه.(اما)مبدأ   ____ الذي يتحكم بذالك الذي تُرك وبذالك الذي يتكرر على نحو غير مطلوب فيعني أن على المترجم ،بوصفه منتجاً للنص ، أن لا يولي اهتمامه بحسن ألأطلاع. ( ) <u>الخصيصة</u> وهي مبدأ فاعل ، فهي تتطلب، عملياً، ان اسهام المرء يجب أن يكون متسماً بحسن ألأطلاع. وعلى رأيي، فأن المبادئ العاملة الأخرى التي تنظم الترجمة هي ستراتيجية النص ألأصلي و/ أو النص المستهدف (الـُ   )   .

ينو   هذا البحث أن يستكشف هذه المبادئ المنظمة للنص المترجم وان يظهر انها مهمة، تماماً، في انتاج ترجمة ذات قيمة.

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