Applying Variational Translation Theory on Selected Riddles from English into Arabic: a Case Study

Asst. Prof. Mohammed Kadhim Ghafil (PhD)*
Translation Department, College of Arts, Mustansiriyah University
mk.ghafil@uomustansiriyah.edu.iq

Abstract

A riddle is a discourse type of an associative dual textual structure. It is a form of humor which is found as a word game in any culture. The resolution of incongruous meaning and surprise on the semantic, cultural or grammatical level are its most important aspects that cause humor. This paper aims to discuss how to translate riddles from English into Arabic in order to see whether the equivalent riddle acts in Arabic as the same in English. The paper also tries to show how riddles under discussion are realized in Arabic under the above mentioned theory and whether their realization are effective as those of the SL texts. In addition, it is an attempt to give some remedies to the problems that may arise from translating these riddles into Arabic due to the differences that exist between Arabic and English on different levels. It is hypothesized that riddles are translatable in spite of any linguistic or cultural divergences between the SL and TL. It is also assumed under this new theory (VTT) that using communicative translation is more effective than using semantic translation in rendering riddles. It has been found that semantic translation succeeds in reproducing the humorous effect in

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* **Corresponding Author**: Asst. Prof. Mohammed Kadhim ,
E.Mail: mk.ghafil@uomustansiriyah.edu.iq , **Affiliation**: Mustansiriyah University - Baghdad -Iraq

the case where there is an accidental culture or linguistic systematic correspondence between the two languages.

<u>Keywords</u>: Culture, Equivalence, Variational, Communicative, Adpatation.

تطبيق نظرية الترجمة الانتقائية على ألغاز مختارة من الإنكليزية إلى اللغة العربية: دراسة حالة

ا.م.د. محمد كاظم غافل العسكري

الجامعة المستنصرية/ كلية الآداب / قسم الترجمة

المستخلص

اللغـز هو نوع تخاطبي من التركيب النصـي الثنائي التشـاركي إذ يعد شـكلا من أشـكال الفكاهة التي تعد كالتلاعب بالمفردة في أي ثقافة و ما يحمله اللغز من دقة المعنى المتناقض والدهشـــة على المســـتوى الدلالي والثقافي والنحوي في أغلب مظاهره المهمة التي تحدث الفكاهة وتهدف الورقة البحثية إلى مناقشـة كيف يُترجم الغز من الانكليزية إلى اللغة العربية لكي نرى فيما إذا أن اللغز المكافئ يعمل في اللغة العربية كمـا هو في الانكليزيـة وكذلك تحاول أن تبين كيف أن للألغاز قيد الدراسـة تتمثل في العربية في ظل نظرية التنوع و فيما إذا أن تمثيلها فعال كهؤلاء في نصـوص لغة الهدف ، إضـافة إلى ذلك فهي محاولة لإعطاء بعض الحلول للمشـاكل التي ربما تســــبب من ترجمة الإلغاز إلى العربية نتيجة للاختلافات التي توجد بين العربية والانكليزية على مســـتويات مختلفة وتفترض الدراســـة أن الألغاز قابلة للترجمة علة الرغم من الفوارق اللغوية والثقافية بين لغة الأصـل ولغة الهدف، و توصـلت الدراسـة إلى أن الترجمة الدلالية هي الترجمة الناجحة في إعادة إنتاج أثرا فكاهيا في حالة أن هناك ثقافة تصـــادفية تقابلية أو تطابق نظامي لغوي بين اللغتين.

<u>الكلمات الدالة:</u> ثقافة، تكافوء، تغيري، تواصلي، تكييف.

1. The Concept of Riddles

Riddles are forms of humor, which are found in different cultures. They are the oldest and the most widespread type of word games. Riddles are found at every period of history and in every part of the world. The Chinese and American Indians are the only peoples who they were long thought and to lack riddles; yet some facts have made this belief no longer true. Riddles are types of guessing games that are usually intended to test the wit or ingenuity of the riddles (i.e., listeners or readers). Riddles are mostly

stated concisely and usually intended to deceive the riddles about their meanings (Brunvands, 1986: 89).

Aristotle is the first to regard riddles as a phenomenon, which is attributed to man's nature. He states that; "riddles develop from the natural human tendency to create metaphors (i.e., seeing similarities between things and describing one thing as if it were another)" (Augarde, 1984: 1). Others agree with Aristotle and regard "semantic ambiguity" as the heart of riddles although so many riddles, especially modern ones, involve the use of "grammatical" or "cultural ambiguity" in setting the problems. Dienhart (1999: 98-99), for instance, explains Aristotle's view as he attributes the phenomenon of riddles to man's nature and consequently his nature. He states that making comparing one thing to another. Within few years after birth, we have established mental control over objects and concepts that are within our experience.

As a result, riddles have been taken as discourse types, which occur out of context or more accurately, occur in a special context and; therefore, they involve ambiguity in speech with the riddles. Jansen (1968: 231) defines the riddle in this sense as "a question, direct or indirect, complete or incomplete, in traditional form whereby the questioner challenges a listener to recognize and identify the accuracy, the unity, the truth; in a statement that usually seems implausible, or self- contradictory, but that is in its own peculiar light always true". Thus, one can conclude that the resolution of the ambiguity, whatever its kind, in riddles causes surprise and consequently humorous response on the part of the riddles as they usually discover the use of witty identifications of two incompatible ideas or frames of reference on the part of the riddles.

2. **The Problem of Translating Riddles**

No doubt, riddles constitute a form of humor, which is found in different cultures. Language reflects the culture of people and the chief means by which the members of a society communicate.

Therefore, a language is a component of culture and the central network through which the other cultural components are expressed. The use of riddles make use of different semantic, cultural or grammatical means in creating the incongruous ambiguity found in riddles. Thus, when it comes to translation, the cultural and linguistic differences become problematic. Some scholars draw attention to this question, Fadiman (1971: 194), for instance, points out that in translating humor one should expect to encounter a number of serious problems since forms of humor, most of the time, belong to a particular culture and make use of the language by which the particular culture is expressed. This means that dealing with cultures of different backgrounds and linguistic systems makes the translation of riddles more and more difficult.

As a result, the paper aims at to apply a synthetic approach to translating riddles through applying Dienhart's Model of (1999) and Variational Translation Theory (VTT) of Huang and Zhang (2020: 19) in order to show whether the equivalent riddles under discussion are realized in Arabic, and whether their realizations are effective as those

of the SL texts. We will try to propose rendering whenever there is unanimous failure on the parts of the subjects.

It is hypothesized that riddles can be translated successfully in spite of any linguistic or cultural divergences between the SL and the TL.

To achieve this purpose, we have chosen selected riddles from different English sources. Then, a questionnaire was made and given to three current M.A students in the Dept. of Translation, college of Arts, University of Mosul whom they were asked to translate into Arabic. Combining both models mentioned above can allow us to do the analysis of the SL and TL texts to show the merits and de merits of the different methods of translation adopted by the subjects of the study.

3. The Function of Riddles

Riddles have been generally regarded to serve somewhat restricted functions. Entertainment is almost unanimously regarded as their main function which is consciously recognized by people because riddles from the peoples' point of view are usually forms of entertainment or something to do. Other functions, by contrast, are not popularly recognized at all.

Beuchat (1965: 186) points out that riddles are like proverbs in the sense that they constitute an integral part of the people's culture and traditions, and unlike proverbs as they serve much more restricted and definite functions than proverbs. Their restricted functions are attributed to the fact that riddles, in contrast with proverbs, are often the concern of only one section of the community and in many communities their use have been often restricted by certain taboos or traditions.

Furthermore, Jansen (1968: 235) states five functions of riddles, they are:

1. The recreational function: it is the main function which is consciously recognized by people, since riddles are popularly regarded as a form of entertainment or something to do.

2. The educational function: it is usually associated with the recreational function to evoke the potentialities of intelligence among people, in general, and among children in particular.

3. The psychological function: it is regarded as a major function of riddles whenever and wherever they are told, as riddles usually strengthen the ego of the riddler, of his opponent, and of the audience present at any riddle content.

4. The religious function: this function is attributed to the various religious connotations that riddles have now or have had in the past in some cultures as an operative activity during the harvest, funerals and other rituals.

5. The social function: this function is attributed to the role riddles play in the enhancement of social relationships between people as an acceptable means of social communication.

4.1 Semantic Classification of Riddles

Beginning with Taylor's work of (1948 and 1951), a semantic classification of riddles is mostly based upon the semantic fit between the "descriptive segment" and the

"referential segment". Such relationships are regarded as basic strategies to create the sematic triggers. Schapera (1932) gives a semantic classification of riddles in terms of the content of the answer. His classification is somewhat more adequate and more applicable. In this classification, Schapera presents the following types of riddles:

1. Riddles whose answers refer to natural phenomena
2. Riddles whose answers refer to vegetable world
3. Riddles whose answers refer to animal world
4. Riddles whose answers refer to crops and other food.
5. Riddles whose answers refer to human body.
1. Riddles whose answers refer to utensils and other objects. (cited in Beuchat, 1965: 202).

4.2 Grammatical Classification of Riddles

A grammatical classification of riddles is based upon the surface grammatical ambiguity which constitutes the linguistic triggers that are mostly found in the sequent and rarely in the precedent. In other words, a grammatical classification of riddles if humour-bound.

Dienhart (1999) proposes the "similarity factor" which for him is useful in the classification of linguistic triggers that are found in riddles. The similarity factor refers to "the degree of similarity between paired forms of linguistic signs in a linguistic trigger". This degree of similarity ranges between "total identity" to "total dissimilarity". Thus in terms of the degree of similarity, Dienhart (1999: 108) proposes the following types and ranking of linguistic triggers that are found in riddles:

1.Polysemy

2.Homonymy

3.Paraphony

4.Homaphony.

In general, riddles usually is based on the types above so as to yield a sort of various imaginations on the part of the text recipient. Thus, riddles express unexpectedness and astonishment by means of the above-mentioned types. It is also a well-versed fact that if the text contains only nomalities, it will never ever show any kind of ineterestingness.

5. The Translation of Riddles

Translation is an operation that is performed on languages (two or more) in which the SL text is replaced by the TL text on the basis of translation equivalence between both texts in the sense that lexis and grammar of the SL text are replaced by equivalent lexis and grammar of the TL (Ilyas, 1989: 19). This can tell that translation is not impossible, though it is not a straightforward activity. Some texts are easy to translate, but others are so difficult that cannot be translated easily.

In this regard, the question which arises here is whether riddles as a form of humour are translatable or not? Some scholars like Leibod (1989: 109), for instance, points out that; translating humour is a stimulating challenge, since it requires an accurate decoding of the text in its original context taking into consideration that it will be translated into a different and disparate linguistic and cultural environment, and then

re-encoded in a new speech event which should successfully capture the intention of the original and evoke in the target language audience a comparable response. Such a view is somewhat true, since some scholars regard the translation of even ordinary texts as a problematic process.

Some scholars point out that it is possible to translate humour. Raphaelson- West (1989: 140) points out that it is possible to translate humour but the translation will not always be as humours as the origin. Arrowsmith (1961: 123) attributes translation problems to both cultural and linguistic differences between the SL and the TL. He refuses formal equivalence when he says that the translator has to translate with conventions, otherwise he has not translate at all, in the case of puns, for instance, the translator should aim at an analogus effect rather than analogus words or grammar.

Lurian (1989: 128) points out that it is possible to translate humour. A create translator can overcome the most difficult problems in translation. Slight changes could be made in order to have an equivalent response. She gives the following riddle to illustrate these assertions:

P: "What is grey, has four legs, a trunk and flies?"

S: "A dead elephant"

Here the humorous attempt depends on the double meaning of "flies": as "insects, vs, a form of locomotion". She translated the riddle into French by using the word "voler", that is, "to fly, vs, to steal" and changing the sequent into "a thief elephant".

5.1 Cultural Problems of Riddles

Cultural problems are still controversial in translation studies. They are generally attributed to the differences between the SL and TL cultures. Catford (1965: 99) attributes cultural problems to the case when a situational feature is functionally relevant to the SL text, but completely absent from the TL culture.

This can lead us to the concept of cultural stereotypes which are frequently found to constitute cultural triggers in riddles, as they successfully cause to make the bisociation between totally two different scripts. When the TL people share the same stereotype with the SL people there will be no translation problem. The word "Jews", for instance, universally represents cunning people and those who love money more than anything else. "Jews"; therefore, as a stereotype would not be problematic. The problem can be considered more serious when the TL people do not share the same stereotype with the SL people. The translator in such a case has to find the equivalent stereotype in the TL.

5.2 Linguistic Problems of Riddles

In translating riddles the majority of linguistic problems are attributed to the use of puns that are mostly language specific and found to constitute the triggers in riddles. The puns are found to do with: the dual meaning of an idiomatic expression; the dual meaning of a polysemic, homonymic, or synonymous words; the phonological identity; such as "tale, vs, tail".

6. Linguistic or Cultural Approaches to Translation?

Can translation be studied from a linguistic perspective or from a cultural one, or are they so interrelated in a way that the one of them suggests the other? Should the study

of translation be based on a linguistic theory or a cultural one? The answer to these questions is given by House (2009, p. 11) who thinks that

Translation is not only a linguistic act; it is also a cultural one, an act of communication across cultures. Translation always involves both language and culture simply because the two cannot really be separated. Language is culturally embedded: it both expresses and shapes cultural reality, and the meanings of linguistic items, be they words or larger segments of text, can only be understood when considered together with the cultural context in which these linguistic items are used.

This statement runs in line with Toury (1978, p. 200) who deems translation an activity which involves "at least, two languages and two cultures." This indicates an inseparable relationship between language and culture, and any attempt to separate language from culture is something similar to "the old debate about which came first – the chicken or the egg. Language is embedded in culture [...] for the two are inseparable" (Bassnett, 2007, p. 23).

7.The Translator as a Mediator

The translator's role, after being overlooked in the traditional approaches to translation which dealt with it as echo of the original author's voice (Liddicoat, 2015, p. 355), has attracted a great attention in modern TS by various translation scholars (cf. Steiner, 1975; Ivir, 1987; Baker, 1992\2004; Delisle & Woodsworth, 1995; Pym,1998; Hatim & Mason, 1990, 1997; Chesterman, 2001; Katan, 2004; Baker, 2006/2018, Munday, 2007; House, 2008; Liddicoat, 2015; House, 2018, Wang, 2019, 2022).

Accordingly, translators' neutrality was negatively labeled. Hermans (1996, p. 24) denies the existence of translator's neutrality and considers it just an illusion. Hardwick (2000, p.22) states that translators, when faced with a task of a cultural distance, they work as mediators by recreating the cultural context of the text in a manner by which translation becomes "the portal through which the past can be accessed" (Bassenet, as cited in Kuhiwczak & Littau, 2007, p.16). To achieve this goal, Baker (2005, p.11) criticizes translators' neutrality as being but an illusion since they cannot keep acting as "honest and detached brokers who operate largely in the 'spaces between' cultures", or "to act as honest brokers who are not embedded in either culture." It is clear that Baker (2005) refuses the neutral space. She, instead, calls translators to take their location at the heart of act of translation by being effective; i.e., mediators.

It is to be noted here that neutrality is a major ethical condition for translators by which they can deliver the original message to the TL, but translation "is not only a linguistic activity: we don't translate languages but texts, and these are an integral part of the world around us, invariably embedded in an extralinguistic situation and dependent on their specific social and cultural background" (Snell-Hornby, 1992, p.10-11). However, Wyke (as cited in Gambier & Doorslaer, 2010, p. 123) considers this ethical obligation from a different angle by arguing that to be ethical does not mean "declaring fidelity, but, instead, sorting through difficult decisions and taking responsibility for those

taken." As for Kadiu (2019, p. 60), she explains this ethical obligation by arguing that translation itself "compels the translator to transform the original text."

Accordingly, Liddicoat (2015) considers translation as a site for intercultural act in which mediation constitutes a fundamental part through which the translator as a mediator plays an essential role in the mediational act (Liddicoat, 2015, p. 356). Thus, a model with five basic elements, namely, the SL, reader of the SL, the translator as a mediator, the TL/TC and lastly the TL reader is suggested by Liddicoat (2015, p. 358). These five elements are presented in figure below.
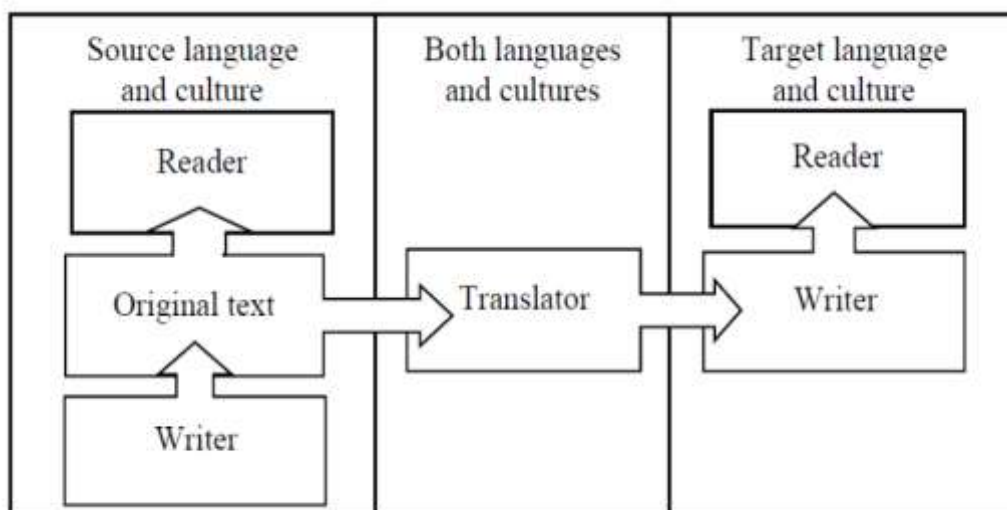
Translation as Intercultural Mediation

In the figure above, the left cell shows the status of the ST as a close link between language and culture; especially if values are taken into consideration. Such a text has a particular cultural status for the SL readers who share the writer his/her language and culture. In the right cell, the target reader approaches the intercultural space of the text by means of a mediator (Liddicoat, 2015, p.359). The mediator behaves as a 'link' between the SL reader and the writer on the one hand, and the TL reader on the other hand. So, s/he faces various constraints especially when there is a cultural distance between the SL and TL which necessities making a text written in a particular linguistic and cultural context be read as if it had originally been written for the target reader (Liddicoat, 2015, p.359).

Following from this, the mediator's task is deemed ethical by Berman (as cited in Kadiu, 2019, p. 131) because by virtue of it translators can be "aware of their own positioning in relation to the source text and culture." In this sense, translation as mediation acts as an intercultural understanding of the other's culture and value system. Mutual understanding is consequently created. Without such understanding neither sides can come to an agreement.

From Liddicoat's (2015, p.363) perspective, mediation occupies a significant position by behaving as a selective process as a translator cannot express every implicit message and cultural connotation in the text. Selectivity, therefore, appears an interpretative tool used by mediators in order to understand certain aspects in the text and then decide if the reader requires more interpretative additions to achieve the TT intelligibility. To mark out the role of a mediator from selectivity angel, it is possible to argue, as Farghal and Almanna (2015, p. 38), that "being both the ST receptor and the TT sender, the translator is involved in a number of tasks, such as reading, analyzing, interpreting, comprehending, transferring, restructuring, adapting, improving, evaluating." In other words, translator as a mediator will be assigned the role of a facilitator of the understanding of translated meanings.

As this 'selective process' requires taking decisions, the translator as a mediator's decisions will be of a communicative nature in order to build a connection between the ST and its target readers (Katan, 2009, p. 89). Translation as mediation, therefore, is a process of taking decisions and making choices (Doherty, 2006, p.xiv). This process of decision and making choices enjoys a significant place in modern TS (Wilss as cited in Shih, 2015, p. 70) to the extent that even the decision about "whether to mediate or not is in itself an act of mediation" (Liddicoat, 2015, p.364). Consequently, the selective process is also significant as it governs the process of mediation as a whole (Liddicoat, 2015, p.363).

Needless to say that selectivity is of great importance when dealing with values. As values are part of culture (Katan, 2004, p. 17), the cultural element is crucial for understanding the ST in order to translate it into the TC. The translator, therefore, acts as a 'cultural' or 'intercultural' mediator in accordance with the role s/he plays (on the left cell of figure 2.3) that shows his/her cultural identity and the foreign identity, on the right cell of the figure (Liddicoat, 2005, p. 25). The heart of the mediator's job, therefore, is not to translate texts, "but to translate cultures and help strangers give new texts welcome" (Katan, 2004, p. 241). In other words, it is not enough for a translator to act as "two skills in one skull" (Taft, 1981, p. 53) only, but also must be a bicultural. This aspect represents one level of mediation. Accordingly, the next section will be concerned with other levels of mediation.

8.Categories of Translation Elements
8.1. The linguistic component
Once the literary character of a translation has been decided, the critic may turn to a second category – the language style. This has to do with its linguistic features and their equivalents in the target language, namely, examining in detail how the translation process has represented the linguistic peculiarities of the source language in the target language.

Translation is basically possible only because there are parallels between languages on the level of langue (language as a system). The act of translating involves choosing the optimal equivalent from among the potential equivalents on the level of parole (language as actually spoken) (Kade, 1964, p. 137).

Every act of translating involves first recognizing the potential equivalents, and then selecting from among them the one best adapted to the particular context, also considering how well each element in the translation unit fits the overall context.

On the one hand this decision depends on the linguistic context, as Harald Weinrich (1966, p. 23) has observed: "A wide range of associations can be suggested by a word in isolation, but not by a word in a text. The context determines the meaning. Words qualify each other and are mutually limiting, and the more so if the context is complete."76 On the other hand, the extra-linguistic situation plays a critical role in determining the form in the target language. 77 Or in the words of Georges Mounin (1967, p. 61), "Translation is primarily and universally a linguistic operation," but yet "it is never solely and exclusively a linguistic operation." Consequently, while on the one hand the semantic, lexical, grammatical and stylistic (i.e., the linguistic) components of a text must be recognized, on the other hand the influence exercised by nonlinguistic factors78 on the semantic, lexical, grammatical and stylistic fields must also be taken into account.

The interaction of both these factors (the linguistic components and the non-linguistic determinants) and the way they are dealt with by the translator provide critics with two further categories of translation criticism: linguistic and pragmatic. These two categories are of the utmost importance for translation critics, because without them it is impossible to evaluate the quality of the equivalents chosen.

8.2. The semantic elements

Considering (or ignoring) the semantic component of a text is a critical factor in preserving the content and meaning of the original text. Failure to recognize polysemous words and homonyms, the lack of congruence between source and target language terms, misinterpretations and arbitrary additions or omissions are the greatest source of danger for the translator, and consequently offer the most inviting openings for the critic. To determine semantic equivalence the linguistic context must be examined, because this is where it can be seen most clearly what the author intends by what is said. And in the words of Erwin Koschmieder (1955, p. 121), it is absolutely necessary to understand "what is intended by the expression in the statement being translated" if one is to translate it at all. In these circumstances the linguistic context involves the microcontext as well as the macrocontext, neither of which has precisely definable borders . They vary by the linguistic and conceptual environment of what is being translated. And yet the microcontext usually embraces only the words in the immediate context, only rarely extending beyond the limits of a sentence, while the macrocontext can include not only the paragraph but the whole of the text. Both are critical for determining the optimal equivalent on the linguistic level.

But since we are concerned specifically with the evaluation of translation materials that are texts in a fixed written form, any judgment with regard to the effectiveness of the semantic component should also make allowance for the fact that many "meanings" are not represented explicitly in the text.

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8.3 The lexical elements

If full equivalence with the source text is the criterion by which the semantic components of the target text are to be judged, the standard for the lexical components must be adequacy. A kind of mirror-image literal accuracy (word for word translation) so often demanded in the target language cannot serve as an objective criterion because the vocabularies of any two languages (with their structural and conceptual differences) simply cannot coincide completely.81 Therefore the critic has to determine whether the components of the original text have been adequately carried over to the target language on the lexical level. This involves observing whether the translator has demonstrated competence in dealing with technical terminology and special idioms (Pelster, 1966, p. 63ff, esp. p. 78; Güttinger, 1963, p. 195ff), "false friends," homonyms, untranslatable words (Mounin, 1967, p. 62ff; Koschmieder, 1955) names82 and metaphors, plays on words, idiomatic usages and proverbs,83 etc. Naturally in any such investigation the respective requirements of the various types of text should also enter into consideration. The play on words represents another example of this problem. Word-play on the lexical level does not need to be imitated in texts that are content-focused unless they happen to find close parallels in both languages.86 In a form-focused text it should be represented by some parallel structure, in the same passage if possible, especially if there is some reference to it later in the same text. Otherwise a similar play on words could be introduced in some other passage more conveniently adapted to the target language.

8.4. The grammatical elements

The evaluation of a translation with regard to the grammatical components of a source text must be governed by the criterion of correctness, and this in two respects. Due to the fact that the differences between the grammatical systems of languages are frequently quite great, it is the morphology and syntax of the target language that clearly deserve priority unless there is some overriding factor either i n the nature of the text 87 or some special circumstance.88 Otherwise grammatical correctness is satisfied if the translation conforms to usage of the target language and if the relevant semantic and stylistic aspects of the grammatical structure of the source language have been understood and adequately rendered. "Adequately" does not mean simply a similarity of expressions, although in closely related languages among the Western cultures this is frequently the case. Stylistic considerations or the status of a grammatical element in popular usage may often permit a simple substitution (the literal adoption of a grammatical form) in the target language as a potential equivalent, the optimal equivalent will frequently require a transposition (a change of the formal grammatical and syntactical elements).

8.5. The stylistic elements

In the realm of stylistics the critic must decide whether the text in the target language exhibits complete correspondence. 90 Of primary interest here is whether the translation gives due consideration to the differences between colloquial and standard

or formal usage observed in the original (as with the other linguistic components, always contingent on the type of text), and whether the differences between the language levels in the two languages are actually comparable.91 It should be determined whether the translation takes into account the stylistic components of the source text with regard to standard, individual, and contemporary usage, and whether in particular stylistic aspects the author's creative expressions deviate from normal language usage. These last criteria gain especial significance when judging the translation of form-focused and appeal-focused texts. 93 The mixture or inconsistency of styles in the original text should at least be represented in the translation of these two types of text, whether the author intentionally uses them (perhaps demagogically) for an effect,94 or there is an actual error in the original text.

At this point we should discuss a translation problem which divides both translators and critics: whether an original text should be "improved." In deciding this question it is again relevant to consider the type of text. In a content-focused text it is always appropriate to eliminate obvious errors and compensate for stylistic defects.95 In a form-focused text, on the other hand, a translator's stylistic or other faults should not be ignored

9. The Concept of Variational Translation Theory (VTT)

With the development in technology nowadays that is related to every aspect in our life. We may see that we have an abundance of information everywhere. This issue might be related to the field of translation from one language into another. people nowadays are not necessarily need all the information from the source text in the translation process. Therefore, adaptation of the transferred information from the SL text into the TL one is a must in this regard. This theory is about "the rational cognition and knowledge system of nature, characteristics, and operational law of variational translation." Hang and Zhang (2020: 19). VVT can be the best answer to this huge amount information in our world. People, currently, are seeking for the easiness of getting the information without paying much attention on irrelevant information. This means that the method of this theory is very much important as an operational method in which we are able as translators can give us the permission to transfer the required meaning only for their specific audience in the TL language. Therefore, this theory is somehow related to a selected audience in order to transfer specific audience. This specify will be shown via the translation brief that can be provided to the translator before doing his task of rendering the required text. It is worth to mention in this regard that this theory is has many other techniques in addition to the concept of adaptation like condensing, deletion and omission. It should be noted in this regard that this theory does not mean that the content material of the SL text will be lost in the TL language. This will be not considered as a translation in this case. The basic concept of this theory is that there are certain people who do not need all the information in the SL text.

Therefore, as a translator I will translate what is related to their interest from the information they are desired to see.

There are many causes for the rise of this theory at this time. We may see that the time factor as mentioned previously became crucial in our daily life communication. Therefore, we don't have to read everything in order to reach the point that we want to get. We may condense the information in the translated version so as to suit my TL readers. The other cause that this theory arises from is the essence of the original work. This theory will focus much more on the content of the translated material and as a result, the value of the original work will be shown in the TL language.

From the previous discussion, it should be understood that the role of the translator in this regard should be clear from the very beginning of the translation process. The theory depends highly of the expertise of the translator in finding the most relevant information to his target user which as result can appreciate the role of the translator in this regard. The translator in this case will be familiar with his audience since he is well acquainted what specifically his special audience need from this text.

Therefore, as a translator I will translate what is related to their interest from the information they are desired to see.

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10. Data analysis

We will tackle selected riddles and their translations on the selected subjects in order to show how our model can be useful in this regard.

The SL text:

P: "what has teeth and cannot bite?"

S: "A comb"

(Georges & Dundes, 1963: 115)

Interpretation:

The SL text is a neutral riddle because it does not involve any cultural or linguistic translation problem. The source of humour depends on a semantic trigger which is created by a privational opposition between the two descriptive elements in the precedent. The second descriptive element is the trigger and the locus of the humorous attempt.

The TL texts:

1. ما الذي له اسنان ولا يستطيع ان يعض؟
2. المشط

<div dir="rtl">

3. مالذي له اسنان ولا يعض؟

4. المشط

5. مالذي له اسنان ولا يستطيع ان يعض؟

6. المشط

</div>

Discussion:

The subjects of the paper used semantic translation and gave formal equivalents. They succeeded because each of them gave the equivalent TL riddle with the same semantic trigger and humorous attempt. In addition to that, their translations do not contradict with the Arabic collocation since in Arabic "انسان" collocates with "طشم".

The SL text:

P: "what has legs, but cannot walk?"

S: "Chair"

(Georges & Dundes, 1963: 115)

Interpretation:

The SL text is a neutral riddle because it does not involve any cultural or linguistic translation problem. The source of humor depends on a semantic trigger which is created by a privational opposition between the two descriptive elements in the precedent. The second descriptive element is the trigger and the locus of the human attempt.

The TL texts:

<div dir="rtl">

١. ما الذي له ارجل ولا يستطيع المشي؟

الكرسي

٢. مالذي له ارجل ولا يمشي؟

الكرسي

٣. مالذي له ارجل ولا يقوى على المشي؟

الكرسي

</div>

Discussion:

The subjects of the paper gave semantic renderings. They succeeded because each of them gave the equivalent TL riddle with the same semantic trigger and humorous attempt. In addition to that, their translations are similarly not contradict with the Arabic collocation because in Arabic "رجل" collocates with "كرسي".

The SL text:

P: "what is the difference between an elephant and a flea?"

S: "an elephant can have fleas but a flea cannot have elephants"

(Augarde, 1984: 12)

Interpretation:

The SL text is a neutral riddle because it does not involve any cultural or linguistic translation problem. The sequent composes the linguistic trigger as it involves metathesis in which four words are interchanged. (elephant, elephants, fleas, flea) this metathesis links semantically the different referential meanings of "elephant": "the largest four-footed animal, now living, with curved ivory tusks and a long trunk" and "flea": "a small wingless jumping insect that feeds on blood of human beings and some

animals". The sequent is the trigger and the locus of the humorous attempt as it switches the receptor from one referential meaning to the other.

The TL texts:

١. ما الفرق بين الفيل والبرغوث؟

يمكن ان يحمل الفيل براغيث لكن لا يمكن للبرغوث ان يحمل فيلة

٢. ما الفرق بين الفيل والبرغوث؟

يمكن ان يحمل الفيل براغيث لكن لا يمكن للبرغوث ان يحمل فيلة.

٣. مالفرق بين الفيل والقملة؟

الفيل يقمل لكن القملة لا تفيل

Conclusions

The participants faced different problems on both the cultural and linguistic levels. In order to pass these difficulties and to reach the best equivalents, the participants adopted different translation methods that range between semantic translation and adaptation (i.e. to apply the concept of VTT). It can be noted that they translated the words as they are in spite of their different connotations; that it is to say, neglecting the role of the pun or a cultural term by rendering either of them semantically. In addition, they have also used the method of changing the whole riddle text depending on the personal creativity which is also an overriding component in VTT in order to recreate the same humorous effect.

It has been noted from the translation of the participants that when they did not adopt this theory. Their translation tended to be neutral ones since they represent the easiest to translate.

Finally, understanding a riddle text helps the translator to give a successful rendering. With regard to this manner, it has been found through the renderings of the subjects that that not much attention has been paid to the basic features and structural norms of the riddle act. As a result, their judgments are hampered by this lack of knowledge. In addition, as the riddle act depends mostly on culture or language specific elements; therefore, the cultural or linguistic system together with the translator's background define the translatability of riddles. Therefore, the ignorance of the basic features and structural norms of the riddle act together with the weak cultural and linguistic background on the part of the translator makes him unable to understand many SL riddles and consequently unable to provide successful humorous renderings.

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