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Intensifiers of Negation in Arabic with Reference to Translation into English

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Abstract: The present study tackles the problems which translators encounter through the process of translation of the Arabic texts that contain intensifiers of negation. This study tries to help translators to utilize different techniques to differentiate between the source text with a certain intensifier of negation and the target text which does not contain any intensifier of negation. In other words, the study aims at attracting translators' attention to make them able to convey the intended sense of the intensifiers in Arabic to English .It is also to be noted that Arabic has more intensifiers of negation than English , which may lead to greater difficulty in rendering . This study has verified that intensifiers of negation are widely used in the Glorious Quran as well as in the other standard modern texts of Arabic .

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مؤكدات النفي في اللغة العربية و ترجمتها إلى اللغة الإنكليزية

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المستخلص: هذا البحث يعالج المشكلات التي تواجه المترجمين أثناء عملية ترجمة النصوص العربية التي تحتوي على مؤكداً نفي وهي محاولة بغية إعانة المترجمين كي يستخدموا تقنيات ترجمة مميزة ليفرقوا من خلال ترجماتهم بين النص الذي يحتوي على مؤكّد نفي وبين الآخر غير المحتوي على أي نوع من أنواع مؤكداً النفي ، و بعبارة أخرى فإن البحث يهدف إلى لفت انتباه المترجمين ليعطوا ترجمة أكثر توكيداً للنص الذي يحتوي على مؤكّد أو أكثر من ذلك الذي لا يحتوي لكي يتمكنوا من نقل معنى التوكيد في تلك النصوص ، وتجدر الإشارة إلى أنّ أغلب مواطن الصعوبة تكمن في أن اللغة العربية حافلة بمؤكدات النفي وافتقار اللغة الإنكليزية إلى هذا الحجم من المؤكدات مما زاد الأمر صعوبة و تعقيداً ، و أثبتت الدراسة أنّ هذا الموضوع واسع الانتشار في القرآن الكريم و غيره من نصوص و لا سيما في أغلب النصوص العربية الأدبية و غيرها من نصوص حديثة .

Introduction

1. Statement of the Problem:

Since Arabic has far more intensifiers of negation , it is a very hard task to bring some light to the effect of such intensifiers on the English texts through the process of translation .This study also points out that translators must give the text with a certain sort of intensifier of negation more emphatic rendering than the text which contains no any intensifier of negation . Consider the following texts which will help to sum up the problem of this study:

(1) 38 (مَا فَرَطْنَا فِي الْكِتَابِ مِنْ شَيْءٍ) (الأنعام) :

Ibn Hisham (2010 , Vol. 1 : 354) states that the preposition (مِنْ) in the above text (1) can be termed an intensifier of negation because it is preceded by the negative particle (مَا) and followed by the indefinite noun (شَيْءٍ) .

Depending on what Ibn Hisham states above ,it is inappropriate and incorrect to give the above underlined Quranic word (شَيْءٍ) which is preceded by the intensifier of negation (مِنْ) the same rendering as if the word (شَيْءٍ) is not preceded by any intensifier of negation ,i.e. the meaning of the text becomes inappropriately (مَا فَرَطْنَا فِي الْكِتَابِ ----- شَيْئاً) without any intensifier of

negation in the text . The word (شَيْءٍ) which is intensified by the preposition (مِنْ) and the other word (شَيْئاً) which is not intensified by the preposition (مِنْ) must not be viewed as being on the same scale of intensification of negation .

Al-Sammara'i (2010 , Vol. 3 : 70) tells the huge difference between the following sentences :

2. ما جاءني مِنْ رجلٍ

3. ما جاءني --- رجلٌ

Sentence (2) shows that ' No man at all visited me ' , but sentence (3) conveys the sense that ' No one man visited me ' , but it could give the meaning that two men or more visited me . The intensifier of negation (مِنْ) indicates the negation of the indefinite noun (رجل) absolutely .

The suggested translation of the texts (2 and 3) can be the following :

Text (2) : No man at all visited me .

Text (3) : No man visited me .

2.Aims of the Study :

The present study aims at :

- 1.Studying the syntactic and semantic aspects of the intensifiers of negation (with brief reference to some intensifiers of negation used in the Glorious Quran .)
- 2.Analyzing the SL texts to identify the difference between the text with a certain intensifier of negation and that with no intensifier of negation .
- 3.Proposing alternative renderings for the SL texts under investigation.

3.Hypothesis :

- 1.Most translators may make too many big mistakes in rendering such texts .
- 2.There is no one –to one correspondence between intensifiers of negation in Arabic and their counterparts in English .

3.Semantic translation is the most suitable one in order to render the texts containing intensifiers of negation .

4.Procedure and Data Collection :

The procedure followed in this study consists of the following steps :

1.Some works concerning the intensifiers of negation in Arabic and English are consulted in order to arrive at the deepest understanding of the impact of the intensifier on the text .

2.Analyses of the source language (SL) texts and their renderings are provided concerning their form , function with respect of the Arabic intensifiers of negation

5.Scope of the study :

This study is restricted to the syntactic and semantic aspects of intensifiers of negation .The researcher has tried to be highly selective concerning the texts to be investigated to cover as many forms of intensifiers of negation in Arabic as possible.

6. Model of the Study :

The model adopted in the present study is the Formal Equivalence by Munday (2012 : 74) which is related to the form and aesthetics of the text and includes wordplays and the individual stylistic features of the ST . It is referred to by others as ' expressive equivalence ' .

7.Value of the Study :

The current research will surely be effective in presenting for the students of both translation and English language much more striking ideas about the intensifiers of negation in Arabic and enhance their skills in translating an English text and analyzing the translation . In addition to that , this research will also be as an important reference in the field of translation . It is expected to make translators capable of rendering far better.

8.Negation in Arabic :

There is a huge difference between Arabic and English concerning negation . In Arabic , negation depends heavily on certain negative particles which they could alter any positive sentence into negative one . In English , negation is mainly realized by the operator which can change any positive sentence into a negative one .

Aziz (1990 : 83) states that negation in English can be intensified by means of utilizing some adverbs or adjectivals :

Not a single one; not at all; absolutely none

Such above adverbs can be rendered into Arabic by using so many intensifiers of negation in Arabic , for example , the preposition (مِنْ) which is as follows :

4- ليس لهذه المشكلة من حل

There is absolutely no solution for this problem .

5 - ليس من اللباقة أن تفعل هذ

It is not proper at all to do this .

6- ليس من بشر في هذا المكان

There is not a single soul here .

English positive and negative sentences :

Sentences are either positive or negative . If an auxiliary verb is present , we can usually change a positive sentence into a negative sentence by inserting not or n't after the auxiliary . In the following examples , the auxiliaries are *has , is and can* :

Positive : Nancy has been working here for over a year .

Negative : Nancy has not been working here for over a year .

Positive : Dan is paying for the meal .

Negative : Dan is not paying for the meal .

Positive : I can tell the difference .

Negative : I can not tell the difference .

A sentence may be negative because of some other negative word , apart from not :

She never had a secretary .

Nobody talked to us .

This is no ordinary painting . (Greenbaun and Nelson , 2009 : 109)

10.Data Analysis :

The following SL texts with intensifiers of negation will be analyzed and discussed briefly to tell the great difference between the text with intensifier of negation and that with no any intensifier . Suggested renderings will be given to each text .

10.1 The SL intensifier of negation (الباء):

SL Text (1) : (ما أخوك بحاضر)

SL Text Analysis:

On closer inspection , one can note that the SL preposition (الباء) could function as a redundant preposition for emphasis of negation (حرفُ جرٍّ زائدٌ لتوكيد النفي) when it is utilized in the context of negation in the complements of (لَيْسَ) and (ما) so as to intensify the negation . (Al –Sammara'i , 2010 ,Vol. 3 : 26)

Discussion :

It is quite clear that the above SL text needs enough attention on the part of the translator in order to avoid any loss of meaning through the process of the rendering , especially the loss of the sense of the intensification of negation . If the translator aims at achieving accuracy in translation , a certain technique such as any suitable intensifier in English must be used to convey the sense of the intensification of the negation which the SL preposition (الباء) contains . If the above SL text is rendered into : (Your brother is not present .) , the meaning of the intensification of the preposition (الباء) will be lost.

The suggested rendering is the following : (Your brother , certainly , present .)

SL Text (2) 36 : (أليسَ اللهُ بكافٍ عبده) الزمر : 36

SL Text Analysis :

It is obvious that the above SL Aya contains the SL preposition (الباء) functioning as the intensifier of negation since it is utilized in the complement of the SL negative verb (ليس) , (Al-Sammarrai , 2010 , vol.3 , 26)

Discussion :

It is to be noted that the sense of emphasis which is conveyed by the preposition (الباء) in the word (كافٍ) must be taken into consideration by the translator who intends to give accurate translation to the above mentioned Aya . Look at the inaccurate rendering :(Will not Allah suffice His bondman ?) (Ghali , 2002 : 462) . Such rendering is not accurate , since one can not find out the intensification of negation in the TT . It is appropriate to utilize a certain technique to convey the sense of the intensification which is found in the ST . Consider the following suggested rendering :(Will not Allah suffice in the best way His bondman .) . The researcher used the prepositional phrase to convey the sense of intensification of negation in the SL preposition (الباء) .

10. 2 The SL intensifier of negation (مِنْ) :

SL Text (3) : ما جاءني من أحدٍ

SL Texts Analysis :

The SL above preposition (مِنْ) in all the above SL texts can function as a redundant preposition to intensify negation when it meets the following conditions :

It must be : (1) followed by an indefinite noun and (2) preceded by negation . (Al-Sammarai (2010 , Vol. 3 : 70 - 71)

Discussion :

a. negation : ما جاءني من رجلٍ . It is not acceptable to render this sentence as if the preposition (مِنْ) is not used in it , i.e. (No man visited me .) .

The proposed rendering could be as follows : (Absolutely , no man visited me .)

10 . 3 The SL intensifier of negation (إِنَّ) :

SL Text (4) : ما إِنَّ أَخوكَ معنا :

SL text Analysis :

AL-Sammarra'i (2010 , Vol. 4 : 198) states that the above SL particle (إِنَّ) can function as a redundant particle to intensify the negation of the text when it is preceded by the negative particle (ما) .

Discussion :

One can view that the particle (إِنَّ) cannot convey any sense . On the contrary, it intensifies the negation of the sentence . If this sentence is rendered into: (Your brother is not with us.) . The meaning of the rendering will become free from any sort of intensification of negation .

The suggested rendering could be as follows :

(Your brother , certainly , is not with us .)

10. 4 The SL intensifier of negation (لا) :

SL Text : (5) : لا رَجُلٌ موجودٌ في الدار و لا امرأةٌ :

SL Text Analysis :

In the above text , (لا) is termed (لا النافية للجنس التي تفيد تأكيد النفي) to indicate the absolute negation when it is followed by an indefinite noun in the accusative case , consider the following :

لا رَجُلٌ موجودٌ في الدار و لا امرأةٌ

(Certainly , there is no any man in the house nor woman .)

Note : (لا) could also be termed (لا نافية مهيمنة) when it is followed by a definite or indefinite noun in the nominative case . This (لا) merely indicates the negation of the text without any intensification . (Ibn Shuaib , 2008 : 200) .

Discussion :

It is of crucial importance for translators to take proper care of the case of the noun which follows (لا) Consider : لا رَجُلٌ موجودٌ في الدار و لا امرأةٌ

(Certainly , there is not any man in the house nor woman .) . In such case , there could not be any man in the house . If the noun (رجلٌ) takes the nominative case , there is no any sort of intensification in the text . The sentence could be , without using any TT intensifier , rendered into : (There is no man nor woman in the house .)

10. 5 The SL intensifier of negation (قَطُّ) :

SL Text (6) :

SL Text Analysis : لم أقل هذا قَطُّ

It is to be noted that Aziz (1990 : 83) states that the above SL intensifier of negation (قَطُّ) could be used to intensify and encompass the whole negation of the past .

Discussion :

In the above SL text , translators must utilize an English appropriate equivalent to the intensifier (قَطُّ) . In addition , they are advised to know the time which the adverb (قَطُّ) refers to .

10. 6 The SL intensifier of negation (أبداً) :

SL Text (7) : لن أغفر لك هذا أبداً

SL Text Analysis :

It is to be noted that the above SL intensifier of negation of future could be used only with the negative particles which indicate the future time , like (لن) . In standard Arabic, (لن) is considered an adverb of future time used to intensify and encompass the negation of future .

Aziz (1990 : 83) points out that , in English , the adverb of negation (never) could be rendered into Arabic into (أبداً) indicating the future time , or into (قَطُّ) indicating past time .

10 . 7 The SL intensifier of negation (لام الجحود) :

SL Text (8) : وما كان الله ليعذبهم وأنتَ فيهم (الأنفال:33)

SL Text Analysis :

In the above SL text , the intensifier of negation (لام الجحود) is used to intensify the negation .It must satisfy certain conditions : (1) it must be preceded by a negative form (كون منفي) , i.e. أداة نفي ... (2) it must be followed by an imperfect verb in the complement of (كان). (Al-Sinjari , 2005 : 25)

Discussion :

It is of great significance for translators to take the intensifier (اللام) which is used before the imperfect verb (يعذبهم) into consideration . Doing this , they will be capable of giving an appropriate rendering and reduce the loss of translation as possible as they can .If the translator renders the SL text into : (Allah would not torment them , while you are among them) , the effect of the intensifier of negation (اللام) will be vibrated .

The proposed rendering is the following :

There is no doubt that Allah would not torment them , while you are among them .

10 . 8 The SL intensifier of negation (عَوْضَ) :

SL Text (9) : لا أفعله عَوْضَ العائِضِينَ

SL Text Analysis :

Ibn Hisham (2010 , vol. 1 , : 172) states that the adverb of future time (عَوْضَ) is similar to (أبداً) . It is only used in the context of negation and encompasses the whole future time .

Discussion :

It must be noticed how the intensifier (عَوْضَ) functions in the text . It should be taken in its intended meaning , i.e. concerning the time and intensification so as to give an appropriate rendering . The word (العائِضِينَ) is used to intensify the intensifier of negation (عَوْضَ) . Translator is advised to use ' ever ' as a suitable equivalent of (العائِضِينَ) in order to intensify the intensifier (عَوْضَ) .

The suggested rendering can be as follows :

I will never ever do that .

Conclusion

The present study comes to the following conclusions:

1. Translators must not tackle the text with intensifier of negation the same as that with no any sort of intensifiers .
2. Appropriate intensifiers of negation in English such as : not a single , not at all , absolutely none , and others , are advised to be focused on so as to reduce the loss through the process of translation .
3. Some intensifiers of negation in Arabic can only be used with negation such as (فَطُّ) which is used only with the negation in the past and (أَبَدًا) which is used only in future , but their equivalent in English (never) could be utilized with both negative and affirmative .

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