

Quality of Translation and Challenges of the New Millennium: Facts and Ethics

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Resumen

En nuestra época, marcada por la globalización y por los cambios drásticos que se han producido en todos los aspectos de la vida, la traducción *de y hacia* las lenguas internacionales se ha convertido en un reto diario al que se enfrentan los traductores del mundo entero. Estos retos dependen del tipo de traducción, de la lengua de llegada y de la lengua de partida así como del productor del texto y del receptor. Durante la primera guerra del Golfo, la mayoría de la gente se informaba leyendo la prensa y viendo ciertas cadenas de televisión, como por ejemplo la ABC (American Broadcasting Company), CBC (Canadian Broadcasting Corporation), NBC (National Broadcasting Commission) y la CNN (Cable News Network). Durante la tercera guerra del Golfo, surgieron nuevas fuentes de información. Gracias a Internet, que nació un año después de la segunda guerra del Golfo (1991), el acceso a la información se hizo más fácil y rápido. Las noticias empezaron a obtenerse mediante la televisión, la radio y el ordenador. Todo ello coincidió con un enorme impulso de la demanda de traducciones del árabe al inglés y viceversa. Al Yazira, con sede en Qatar, y Al Arabiya, con sede en Dubai, emitieron varios informes que sirvieron de apoyo a la prensa occidental. La traducción del inglés al árabe fue un reto que estas estaciones superaron con éxito al captar la atención tanto de telespectadores árabes como no árabes. En tiempos de guerra, se hace muy necesaria la traducción de discursos políticos orales y escritos. Este estudio versa sobre la calidad de la traducción durante las tres guerras del Golfo (1990-2003) y plantea las siguientes preguntas: 1) ¿A qué problemas se enfrentan los traductores de discursos políticos en tiempos de guerra al convertirlos del árabe al inglés y viceversa? 2) ¿Qué papel desempeña la tecnología de la información en el proceso de traducción? 3) ¿Cómo mejorar la calidad de la traducción de textos políticos para que las partes implicadas en el conflicto se entiendan mejor?

Introduction

War has been a permanent and familiar feature in history. Conventional war relied basically on military confrontation

between conflicting parties. The revolution in communication and technology, however, has brought forward the importance of propaganda in a world of growing complex inter-relationships. Political propaganda has gained significance in pursuance of foreign policy objectives exploiting radio, satellites, internet etc. Consequently, new concepts of war have appeared and handling war news became the core of successful propaganda. In the three Gulf wars that took place in 1991, 1998, and 2003, the challenges of translation from Arabic into English and vice versa had tremendously increased. Since propaganda played a great role in these wars and was implemented by both parties to gain public opinion's blessing. Reporters and media people became completely dependent on translators and interpreters who had to cope with quick war tempo and the critical nature of translated materials. Ethical decisions have come into question from what appears to be an overzealous effort on the part of the news media to cover Gulf Wars. Translators and interpreters alike found themselves on the horn of a dilemma trying to balance their responsibility towards the public right to understand what is happening with the need to protect human life. At the top of the list of translator's responsibilities during war are accuracy and fairness. People must have access to the facts. What kind of ethical considerations should translators make? For whom should their loyalty go?

Translators should be well-prepared and culturally well-informed to deal with a complicated aspect of human behavior, namely, language that is used in a way that reflects world view and experience. They should be able to deduce and transfer pragmatic value of translated material. Hatim and Mason (1990:223) maintain that:

"a translator stands as a mediator between the producer of a source text and whoever are its TL receivers. Translators mediate between two cultures not merely

languages (including ideologies, moral systems and socio-political structures.)"

The same view is adopted by House (1977:103) who refers to the translator as a:

"Bilingual mediating agent between monolingual communication participants in two different language communities, i.e., the translator decodes messages transmitted in one language and re-encodes them in another."

"A good translator is one who has access to five distinct kinds of knowledge, target language(TL) knowledge, text type knowledge, source language (SL) knowledge, real world knowledge and contrastive knowledge (Johnson and Whitelock, 1987:131)."

Translation is usually viewed as a process of converting one language into another. Bell (1993:13) refers to translation as a process that involves the activity of translation, a product of the process of translating and the abstract concept that encompasses both the process of translating and the product of that process. He assumes that the process of translating is a type of human information processing that aims at reproducing as accurately as possible all grammatical and lexical features of the source language.

Darwish (2003:63) defines translation as:

"a dichotomous cumulative and iterative process that musters a host of cognitive activities relating to language, rhetoric, linguistics, communication and culture."

This process operates on primary, operative and interpretive levels. The primary level involves literal and lexical meaning while the operative level involves functional content and the interpretive level is related to the informative intention of the source text (p.82).

Hatim and Mason (1990:16) classify translation according to the orientation of the translator into author-centered translation, text-centered, and reader-centered. Yaghi (1994:5) provides three categories: written, consecutive and simultaneous interpreting.

In terms of equivalence, Nida (1974) distinguishes two types. The formal equivalence translation emphasizes parallelism with SL features while the dynamic one stresses target language style and its effects on the target language text receiver. Hartman and Strok (1973) distinguish two types of translation in terms of subject matter. The literary translation which involves translation of poetry, drama and other literary works where the emphasis is on emotive connotations and stylistic features. The second type is the pragmatic translation where the emphasis is on conveying factual information such as translation of technical, commercial or other materials. Translation could also be classified in terms of the means of communication into oral and written.

Good translation should have basic requirements. Nida (1964:164) states that a good translation is that which makes sense, conveys the spirit and manner of the original, and has a natural and easy form of expression, producing similar responses. Hatim and Mason (1990:93) provide two principles for effectiveness, maximum transmission of relevant content, and efficiency in achieving translation in the most economical way.

In the new millennium, the era of globalization, cultures have come into close contact with one another. The need for mutual understanding between these cultures increased significantly. Iser (2004) states that "the notion of translatability emerges as a counter-concept to a mutual superimposing of cultures aiming at

comprehension”.

The communication and information revolution made the intimidating interaction among cultures unavoidable. Translation is a means of establishing cultural and international communication that gains significance during war time. There is an urgent need to translate news, reports, speeches, articles and press conferences.

Translation of spoken and written political texts is a highly demanding process especially at wartime. The present study deals with problems and the quality of translation during the three Gulf wars from 1990-2003. It addresses the following questions:

1. What are the problems encountered by political text translators at war time when translating speeches from Arabic into English and vice versa?
2. What role does information technology play in the translation process?
3. How can the quality of political texts translation be improved so that a better understanding between conflicting parties could be achieved?

In recent decades problematic issues in translation have been widely dealt with by linguistics and theories of translation a like. Several types and areas of translation were tackled. Ghazala (2002) dealt with problems related to translation of cultural and cross cultural links between Arabic and English. Though he acknowledges the problems of translating culture, he argues for strong ties among global cultures giving examples from Arabic and English. Ideological shifts in cross-cultural translation were dealt with by Aziz (1999), who postulates that the shifts are greater when the gap between the source culture and target culture is

wide. He analyzed translations of six of Shakespeare's plays into modern standard Arabic and grouped ideological shifts into religious, political, and social.

Shunnaq, (1993) dealt with lexical incongruence in Arabic-English translation due to emotiveness in Arabic. He classified the main sources of emotive expressions into figures of speech and cultural expressions. Darwish (2004) tackled the problems of translating English idioms into Arabic that result from literal translation. Very few studies tackled problems translators encounter in translating political texts. Shunnaq (2000) dealt with repetitive and emotive expression in Gamal Abdul Nasser's political speeches. He stressed the importance of translator's awareness of the functions of repetition and emotiveness in Arabic spoken discourse. Abdel-Hafiz (2002) investigated the problems of translating English journalistic texts into Arabic. He attributed these problems to inappropriate selection of the equivalent target language words and inability to preserve syntactic and stylistic differences between source language and target language.

The researcher collected a random sample of speeches given by Iraqi and American political leaders during the three Gulf Wars. Samples included written and simultaneous translations that were carried out from English into Arabic and vice versa. Established world news agencies such as BBC and Associated Press, and Al-jazira were consulted. Nord's (1991:150) definition of translation problems was adopted. She defines translation problems as: "Those points which prove a challenge for all translators in a particular language combination".

Problems are to be differentiated from difficulties that are encountered by an individual translator and might be attributed to

his educational or cultural background and experience.

The questions of the study were forwarded to some professional translators and some who were engaged in translation during Gulf Wars.

Problems of war speech translation as perceived by translators

Political translation is highly demanding and is time consuming due to the critical importance of texts, author of the source text and the audience of the target text. These texts are full of political concepts that might be challenging for translators. Newmark (1996:149) classifies political concepts into partly culture bound, value-laden political terms, historically conditioned and abstract. At wartime, political translation constitutes a real test for translators' abilities and skills. Translators have to deal with news and speeches that employ a set of terminology. In the Gulf war translators had to work under the pressure of attacking forces and censorships of the attacked government. Translators had to deal with so many contradictory views. Much work meant much translation bearing in mind competition between satellites and news agencies. In the first Gulf war there were very few sources of information. Only CNN prevailed.

Hatim and Mason (1990:21) classify problems encountered by translators into: comprehension of source text problems, transfer of meaning and assessment of target text, arguing that a "translator has to handle intended meaning, implied meaning and presupposed meaning" (p.331).

The researcher forwarded the questions of the study to some

translators who gave the following remarks on problems encountered in political text translation at wartime.

Ali Darwish, a professional translator and a technical communication consultant attributed problems of translation of news and speeches to the following reasons. First, newness of information, new and unfamiliar technical terms, coined words and phrases, metaphor, rhetorical techniques in the source language, idiomatic expressions, unfamiliarity with political technical terms and jargon, failure to understand the pragmatic aspect of the text and over-reliance on bilingual dictionary-based definition, especially Al-mawrid.

Mu'ayyad A-Nasralla, an Iraqi translator and a colleague of Saddam's translators, attributed most of problems faced by political simultaneous translators to the following. First, verbosity, of Saddam's speeches, his insistence on using Tikritee Iraqi Arabic, his digressions, the mood he passed through when the American military operations were about to start, his confusion and its effect on translators. The outline of Saddam's character also affected the translator.

Husein Nabri', an economic consultant and a freelance translator, mentioned problems related to the intricacies of new terms and new war terminology, diversity of news sources, news dissemination that is part of the war itself, diversity of languages.

Al-Idrisi discussed problems of translating idioms and syntactic structures maintaining that most problems are due to literal translation that does not take cultural differences into consideration.

Al-Ghannami, an executive translator at UN, Geneva, stressed the importance of translating culture taking into consideration the cultural background of the target language receiver following a well established methodology that is based on specialization and cooperation.

1. Problems of translating Arabic political speeches into English

Problems encountered by translators of political speeches (TPS) from Arabic into English could be classified into lexical, cultural pragmatic.

1.1 Lexical problems

These are the problems related to finding the appropriate translation equivalent. Some terms in Arabic do not have identical equivalents in English. This might be due to the fact that Arabic political texts are highly emotive. Stevenson (1963:21) postulates that:

"The emotive meaning of the word is a tendency of a word, arising from the history of its usage, to produce (result from) effective responses in people. It is the immediate aura of feelings which hover about a word."

Emotive meaning is related to the emotional associations which are suggested by a given lexical item. What is highly emotive in Arabic could not be so in English. Translators should attempt to convey the same emotiveness to create a similar effect in the target language receivers.

The following excerpts are taken from the speech given by Saddam three hours after the United States launched a war to overthrow him.

"أذن للذين يقاتلون بأنهم ظلموا،
وأن الله على نصرهم لقدير"

(1.1.1.) uđina lilađina yuqataluna bin'anahum Dulimu

wa'ina 'llah ala naSrihim laqadir

To those against whom war is made,
 permission is given to fight because
 they are wronged, and verily, God
 is most powerful for their aid. (Koranic ayah).

The above Quranic ayah was not translated in the translations made by the Associated Press and the CNN. Saddam's choice of this ayah is strategic for two main reasons. First, it gives Iraqi soldiers the justification to fight, simply: they are wronged, and promises them victory. Second, it conveys the message to all peace supporters that war is not the first option in Islam and that only when Muslims are fought they are given permission to fight back. Therefore the above translation is inaccurate. The word (wronged) is not the best equivalent for the word /Dulemu/ since this word involves more than treating someone wrongly which is not enough motivation for war. It involves being treated unjustly, or being tyrannized. It is highly emotive in Arabic which is full of literature warning people against treating others, Muslims or non Muslims, unjustly. Among one of the well-established beliefs among Muslims is that Allah never turns down a prayer of a person treated unjustly even if this person does not believe in him. The translator of this text faced a comprehension problem due to insufficient access to the specialized religious knowledge. This inaccurate translation results from a faulty understanding of the original source language text rather than mastery of the target language.

Another lexical problem associated with translation of emotive meaning is related to figures of speech such as metaphor, simile, personification. Newmark (1981:133) maintains that a translator

should sometimes give priority to the emotive and effective elements over the informative or content element. Shunnaq (1993:38) adopts a similar view urging translators to take the connotative meaning into consideration and not to concentrate on the denotative meaning. Saddam's speech on the first day after the first attack was launched included a poem. Here translators of this political text are faced with the challenge of translating a literary text of a superior significance of this very crucial moment. Another problem arises, that is, the problem of intertextuality, the dependence of Saddam's speech on these lines of poetry that refer to another text. In this case, a translator had to move from usage to signification which underlies use. In Hatim and Mason's terms such a text is best be viewed in terms of its semiotic system of signification in which intertextual links are strong in activating knowledge and a belief system beyond the text itself (1990:123) The poem perplexed translators who finally adopted Iraqi News Agency translation. The poem, as a poetic piece is full of figures of speech and derives its emotive effect from the connotations that each line if not word carries. The following lines from the poem illustrate this point

اسرج لها الخيل ولتطلق أعتتها

(1.1.1.2) Asrej laha alxaila waltutleq a^cinntaha

Prepare your horses and give them

كما تشاء ففي اعرافها الأمل

Kama tashau fafi ^crafiha '1'malu

free reins because they bring hope

The above translation does not convey the connotative meaning conveyed by the Arabic lines. Horses in Arabic literature are usually introduced to create an image of bravery, courage and

sacrifice. They have always been associated with victory, not mere hope.

Lakoff and Johnson (1980) consider metaphors as building blocks of our conceptual structures and a means through which we create an image of the world via learning and ordering a mass of information. Consider the translation of the following lines:

دع الصواعق تدوي في الدجى حمما ا

(1.1.3)daʕi aSuaʕqa tudawwi fi iduja ħimaman

Let lightening brighten the dark skies until the

حتى بيان الهدى والظلم ينخزل

ħata yabanā alhuda wa ð ulmu yanxdilu

the true path is revealed and oppression is wiped out.

The phrase **(brighten the dark skies)** does not convey the connotative meaning of the metaphor of the target text in which a visual as well as an auditory image are created by the use of the words/tudawwi/ (thunder), /alduja) (darkness) and ħimamn(lava). Therefore an accurate translation would be:

Thunder the nights (darkness) lighten it with lava. These lines were taken by some to be an order for the Iraqis to burn oil wells.

Other lexical problems might result from Arabic syntactic structure. Arabic political discourse is usually characterized by use of repetition and parallel structures which also create emotive effect. Saddam concludes his speech with:

والله اكبر

(1.1.4)wallahu akbar

God is great

الله اكبر

allahu akbar

God is great

وعاش العراق وفلسطين

W^casha al^ciraq wafilastin

Long Live Iraq and Palestine

الله اكبر

allahu akbar

God is great

الله اكبر

allahu akbar

God is great

وعاشت امتنا المجيدة

W^casht umatuna almajida

Long live our glorious nation

وعاشت الأخوة الإنسانية

W^casht aluxuwwa al'nsaniyya

human brother hood

والله اكبر

Wallahu akbar

God is great

Notice that the translator tried to avoid redundancy and did not translate /^cashat/ (lived) another time with human brother hood.

The repetition of the word /^ʕasha/ with its derivation can be considered as an example of rhetorical redundancy. It is defined by Fiske(1990:10) as "that which is predictable or conventional in a message. Translators might face a problem trying to avoid redundancy and at the same time creating a similar effect of the source language text. This applies to the following extract:

وعاشت العراق

(1.1.5)Wa^ʕasht al^ʕiraq

Long live Iraq

وعاشت العراق

Wa^ʕasht al^ʕiraq

Long live Iraq

عاش الجهاد

^ʕash aljihad

Long live Jihad

وعاشت فلسطين

Wa^ʕasht filastin

And Palestine

The translator tried to avoid redundancy so the final word /^ʕasht/ is not translated. In Arabic, repetition of the verb involves that Palestine is protected and regained by jihad. Saddam tries here to appeal for all Arab nations to help him protect Iraq, Jihad and as a result Palestine.

Darwish (2003:45) mentions a form of semantic redundancy known as hediadys which involves the use of two or more words with an overlapping meaning to complete the overall meaning

such as /alqada' walqadar/ fate and destiny. Each word is redundant, as Darwish states:

"Since the communication value of their constituents is not always equal, it is not always immediately apparent which constituent is primary and which is secondary. The translator has to decide on the primary word."

The following examples from Saddam's speech illustrate this point:

استحقاقكم في المجد والظفر

(1.1.6) isti ĥ qaqikum fi almajd walDafr

This is what you deserve in terms of glory and victory

(و)حق الشعوب في الحرية

(1.1.7) wa ĥ aqi `ashu^cub fil ĥ urriyya

على أساس العدل والأنصاف

1.1.8))^cala `asasi `l^cadli wal'nSaf

The right of people to achieve freedom and justice

The translator in the above examples kept both constituents considering both of them to be primary except for the final phrase (al^cadl walinSaf) for which the word justice was used, while the word freedom refers to a previous discourse.

The Associated Press translation shows a tendency towards selecting a primary constituent and translating it. So the phrase /almajd walDafr/ was rendered by the word (glory) and the phrase /al^cadl walinSaf/ by the word justice.

Other lexical problems might be related to some words that could be incongruent in English. These lexical items might be related to

swearing and scorning such as /ليخسأ الخاسئون/ /liyaxsa'a alxasi'un/ which was translated as **(may the lowly ones be accursed)** which is almost a literal translation as in the BBC translation while it was not found in the Associated Press translation.

In a translation of a later speech by Saddam the same phrase was translated as **(shame on the criminal infidels)** and in a later speech as **(let the accursed be cursed)**. This phrase could be part of Saddam's idiolect or idiosyncratic way of using the language. It was his favourite expression and he made conscious use of it to create a provocative effect. Though this expression has its root in standard Arabic, more associations could be drawn from its colloquial connotations. Saddam also over used "long live" structures. His use of the words /nashama/ in the first part of his speech the first day of war is a signal of geographical variation that has ideological and political implication. It is a word that is used by Arab Beduins fairly frequently denoting a noble manner of sacrifice to save others encompassing courage, bravery and taking the initiative. Another word that collocates with /nashama/ is /intaxa/ which was translated as pledged. The gerund, /Naxwa/, is a virtue that Arabs have been always trying to preserve. It is related to the Arab's readiness to offer all possible help.

1.2 Cultural problems

Translators do not only deal with two languages. They are translating culture as well. Texts generated within the source language culture have to be transferred to a different language and a different culture. Arabic and English belong to two cultural systems of beliefs, thoughts and morals. Since culture is the container as well as the manifestation of peculiar features of any

nation, different cultures allow different combinations. Hatim and Mason (1990:7) state that there is a hierarchical relationship between text, discourse, and genre for "translator stands as a mediator between the producer of the source text and who ever are its TL receivers". Translators mediate between two cultures not merely languages including ideologies, moral systems and socio-political structures (p.223). Translators have to be well acquainted with the cultures of SL and TL. Since cultures have different value system what might be appropriate in one culture might be less significant or even trivial in the other culture. Translators have then to take into consideration the different value system of SL and TL conveying not only what is said but also what is implied. They have to be careful of imposing one concept of SL on TL because by doing so they are creating a third language. Duff (1981) states that such translators are no longer moving freely from one world to another but instead creating a third world and a third language. A sentence based approach by translators leads to inaccurate translation of war speeches that have their own peculiarities that have to be taken into consideration.

Political terms constitute an area of cultural differences. Some political terms in Arabic do not have identical equivalents in English. Shunnaq (2002) refers to modern political Arabic coinage which often takes the form of compounding two or more words and some times have a figurative meaning. In the first Gulf war Saddam refers to /Sawarix alḥ usein/ **missiles of al-Hussein** and /sawrix al^cabbas/ (**missiles of Al-^cabbas**/ According to Shunna these terms are cultural specific referring to the first generation of Iraqi made missiles. Al-^cabbas and Al-husain are figures which have historical and religious significance for Iraqi people. Shunak (1998:44) maintains that translators should bear in mind that they should exchange ideas and messages and not

merely words.

Culture specific terms involve items related to proverbs, religious reference, mythology and folklore. Since Arabic is the language of the Quran, Moslim's holy book, it is full of culturally bound terms that gained social significance by virtue of their religious connotations. They became part of the Muslim epistemological frame of reference. Saddam started his fourth speech after (2003) war, with the following ayah from the Holy Qur'an:

"وَأَلْقِ مَا فِي يَمِينِكَ تَلْقَفْ مَا صَنَعُوا

(1.2.1)Wa'lqi ma fi yaminika talqafu ma

إنما صنعوا كيد ساحر

san^u, inma san^u kaydu sa ħ rin

"ولا يفلح الساحر حيث أتى"

wala yufleħu asa ħ eru ħ ay ? u `ata

throw that which is in thy right hand:
quickly will it swallow up that which
they have faked, what they have faked
is but a magician's trick, and the magician
thrives not, (no matter) where he goes.

This ayah includes a direct reference to Moses' story with the magicians at Phorah's time. By making this reference, Saddam tries to encourage Iraqi soldiers telling them they are going to be as strong as Moses preaching that a miracle similar to the one Moses had will happen.

Translators also faced some problems with former Iraqi information Minister Mohammed Saeed al-Sahaf whose defense of Iraq against the U.S. invasion won him cult status. He had his own

dictionary in which the word/^ᶜuluj/ was the most frequently uttered by him in almost every speech.

He was even interviewed by the BBC and asked what he exactly meant by that word to that he replied saying that this word has so many meanings but he used it to refer to a kind of leech that sucks blood from the body. This word was used by him to refer to the coalition troops. This word was translated as infidels, and blood-sucking bastards, wild donkeys, children of pigs. Soldiers were referred to by the term/^murtzaqa/ which was translated as mercenaries. Another word of Sahhaf's idiosyncrasies was the word/^tartir/ an adjective he used to describe Americans and British. It is an Iraqi slang word, the singular is (tartoor) a guy full of farts. Al-Sahhaf called Bush /za^ᶜim ^ᶜisabt alawghad aldawlyyen (**The leader of the international gang of bastards**). The use of the word / ^ᶜābahnahum/ (we slaughtered them) is used figuratively. Arabic favours overstatement so it should not be translated literally.

Some other culturally bound items are related to the ecological features of Iraq. A country that has desert and rivers. Deserts have always been a source of unknown danger. The image of snake is coined to refer to evil and danger penetrating through this desert of war. Hence al-Sahhaf refers to the coalition troops and Americans more than once using the metaphor of a snake building on all of its associations. The snake also exists in mythology with myths of cutting its parts. Al-Sahhaf says:

هذه الحية سنمدها اطول

(1.2.2)haḏi al ḥayya sanamuduha aTwal

ليكون تقطيعها اسهل

liyakuna taqiti^ᶜuha `shal

This is the boa snake.

We will extend it further
and cut it the appropriate way.

The word (boa) is added by the translator. Culturally speaking (af^{ca}/ (snake) in Arabic does not need an attributive to establish its connotative meaning. al-Sahaf also says

هم كالأفعى وسنقطعها أجزاء

(1.1.3)hum kal'f^{ca} wasanuqati^{ca}ha ila ajza'

They are like a snake and we are going to cut it in piece.

Al-Sahhaf's conscious use of colloquialism creates a challenging tone that had to be translated in a way that creates the same response. This represented a challenge to translators at first. Once these became distinctive features of his speech things became easier for translators. Some of the terms he used are actually archaic. They were even difficult to Arabic native speakers. Culturally specific terms such as social expressions, proverbs, folkloric expressions, and religious expressions were problematic to the translators of Gulf war speeches.

Ironically enough, the most challenging speeches for translators turned out to be the funniest jokes of 2003 presented on <http://www.welovetheIraqiinformationminister.com/>.

1.3 Pragmatic problems

The pragmatic dimension of translation is related to intentionality, speech act sequence, implicature and inference according to Hatim and Mason (1990:169). The emphasis is on the intended meaning. The translator works on arriving at the speaker's implied meaning which is not attached to the linguistic form but is rather deduced

from the social context in which the utterance is made. Hatim and Mason (1990:331) argue that a translator has to handle intended meaning, implied meaning and presupposed meaning. According to speech act theory, the meaning of an utterance combines both sense and force which should be taken into consideration in translation. This is problematic because a universal speech act might be realized differently among languages. Pragmatic meaning is closely associated with culture. Aziz (1998: 129) states that: The translator has to decide, he should either translate the meaning (find an equivalent) or transfer it. Arabic exploits overstatement, e.g., It is burning here. English, on the other hand, favors understatement, e.g., Rome was not built in a day. What decision should a translator make when translating some culturally bound idioms or jokes that have pragmatic values?

Mateo (1995:172) maintains that the process of humor translation has a complex nature because it includes speaker's intention, background knowledge of speaker and listener, the assumptions and presuppositions implicit in the text and the connotations of each word. This applies to the following extracts of Al-Sahaf.

بوش وبلير ورامسفيلد الثلاثي المضحك

(1.3.3) Bawsh wablair waramzfi:ld al ? ula ? i almudhik

Bush, Blair and Rumsfeld. They are the funny trio.

In Arabic this could be funnier because funny trio refers to three famous Arab comedians.

بوش لا يعرف اذا اسبانيا جمهورية ام مملكة، كيف يتبعوا هذا الرجل؟

(1.3.3) Bawsh la ya^crif i ð a ispanya jimhuriyya

am mamlaka kaif yitba^cu ha ð a alrajul/

Bush does not even know if Spain is a republic

or a kingdom, how can they follow this man?

Translations convey a speaker's intended meaning which is blaming Spain for joining coalition forces to help someone who shows no interest in them. He does not even know basic facts about a country sacrificing its youth to help him.

هم ليسوا في النجف

(1.3.3) hum laysu fi alnajaf,

They are not in Najaf.

هم على القمر

hum ʿala alqamar

They are on the moon.

وافاعي في الصحراء

wa'faʿi fi alsahra'

They are snakes in the desert.

The pragmatic meaning of the phrase **(they are on the moon)** involves that they are dreaming, irrational, and will never reach Najaf.

Hatim and Mason (1990:88) stress the importance of "including not only the immediate speech situation but also the social institution within which communication takes place.

A very important question arises here which is how do translators meet the need to reflect the intended meaning? Consider the following extract from one of the speeches Saddam was supposed to have made in May, 2003.

عاشت فلسطين حرة

(1.3.4) ʿashat filastin ħurra

Long live free Palestine

عربية من البحر الى النهر

abiyya mina alnhri ila albaħr

Arab from the sea to the river.

وليخسأ الخاسئون

walyaxsa' alxasiuin

Let the accursed be cursed.

The target text reader might not be well acquainted with the pragmatic reference made to sea and river, hence they should be clarified. Palestine's western border is the Mediterranean Sea while the River Jordan is the eastern border. Here Saddam emphasizes the liberation of all parts of Palestine. In other words, he does not acknowledge any Israeli existence in Palestine. Fairclough (1985) notes that lexical selections reflect social role and status and "alternative lexicalisations may emerge from different ideological positions".

2. Problems of translating English political speeches into Arabic

Translation from English into Arabic might be less problematic to Arab translators who are expected to have good mastery of their mother tongue. Despite this they might face some problems that could be attributed to literal translation of some idioms as shown by the following examples taken from Darwish (2004):

2.1 الشيطان يكمن في التفاصيل 2.1

Literally translated from the devil lies in details . According to Darwish the above translation has two problems. First, it contradicts Arabic culture that does not impose devil on its every day expressions. Second, the equivalent of devil is (عفريت) /^cifrit/. Other problems mentioned by Darwish deal with translating an idiom out of its natural context such as

يضع العربىة أما الحصان

2.2 To put the cart before the horse

يضرب حصانا ميتا

2.3 Flog a dead horse

The following extracts are taken from the speech given by Bush, in which he gave Saddam an ultimatum to leave Iraq within (48) hours or face war.

(2.4) Weapon inspectors have been threatened by Iraqi officials, electronically bugged, and systematically deceived.

Was translated as

تم التنصت على المفتشين الكترونىا وخذاعهم بشكل منهجى

This translation has two problems. The first one is syntactic. Arabic favours active rather than passive structure so it should be translated in active. Second, there is a lexical problem involved in translating the word /systematically/ as /bishakl' nmanhaji/ which is a literal translation.

We are not dealing with peaceful men. Men (plural) was translated

as /rajul/singular. Idiomatic expressions are problematic for translators as shown by the following example:

(2.5) Instead of drifting toward tragedy, we will set a course towards safety

This was literally translated as:

بدلاً من الانجراف نحو المأساة سنسلك الطريق نحو بر الأمان

There are other Arabic idiomatic expressions that could have been used.

(2.6) Before the day of horror can come was also literally translated as

وقبل ان تحل الفظاعة

which could hardly be Arabic. The word /faDa^ca/ is not used in this context. Other words could be /alru^cb/

(2.7) In recent days, some governments in the Middle East have been doing their part

في الأيام الأخيرة كانت بعض حكومات الشرق الأوسط تقوم بالجزء العائد عليها

The above translation imposes English syntactic structure on Arabic which rarely starts a sentence with a prepositional phrase. The phrase *الجزء العائد عليها* is an inaccurate translation for (doing their part), which means *(القيام بدورها)* and not the above translation which means in Arabic the part it will get benefit from

2.8 We will tear down the apparatus of terror سنقضي على آلة التهيب . A better translation could be سنمزق أجهزة الإرهاب deadly foe was literally translated as (عدو ميت) though it is better to say (عدو لدود)

3. Simultaneous translation at war time

That was a common problem for both translators from Arabic into English and from English into Arabic. One of the reasons might be attributed to the quick tempo of the third Gulf war and the impossibility of prior preparation. What is said can not be unsaid and the speaker reaches the point of no return; here the translator has to decide on what Kade and Cartellier (1971) call the "ideal moment of translation". Simultaneous translation requires perfect knowledge of source language and target language, broad socio-economic and political cultural background, excellent memory, well-modulated voice, diction, quick reaction since there is no time to review.

At war time, these proprieties gain difficulty. Fatigue and stress of war time affect the quality of translation. Time manipulating is another problem. The interpreter has to make a compromise between the percentage of the message content to be transferred from SL to TL and the amount of time available for him to do so. Another problem is related to the increase of distractors at war time, bombs, explosions, air raids, etc. At war time most simultaneous interpreting takes place at formal meetings such as diplomatic, ministerial, presidential conferences or interviews and press conferences. In such contexts translators have to be more accurate in their wording because of the serious consequences of any misinterpretation that might occur. So at war time the

responsibility of political interpreters is enormous.

Simultaneous translation is highly demanding and in war it becomes highly problematic. The medium by which language is transmitted is phonic, perception could be difficult and translators might have no control of audio material, translators sometimes face problems of dialect, idiolect and field of discourse.

Greven (1974) attributed problems in simultaneous translation to the fact that Simultaneous listening and speaking impair recall because you listen in one language and recall in the other. At war time translators and interpreter can not build up an expectation of the utterances they are going to hear. They need to have incredible language skills as well as technical skills and real experience in war terminology. Balupuri (1996:34) provides qualities of specialists in simultaneous interpretation that include perfect knowledge, background knowledge of country or countries where the language is spoken, technical qualifications, good short-term memory, ability to perceive, conceptualize and anticipate and ability to listen and talk simultaneously.

4. Information technology and translation

The second question the present study tackled was the role of information technology in the translation process. Technology enhanced productivity of translators and helped them work under the pressure of war. It accelerates their work. Our society in the new millennium is characterized by scientific development and social interaction. Technology and machine translation play a great role with the global communication need for fast translation. Computers help translators handle and retrieve information quickly and efficiently. Translators make use of all forms of

technology from simple "live" word processing to the use of computer aided translation tools that involve on-line dictionaries, glossaries, spelling, and grammar checkers. During the Gulf war computers were used to input texts live.

Use of machine translation systems, and thus the number of machine translation software produced for translating web pages increased during the third Gulf war. This use had a strong impact on translation quality. The software with customized dictionary and the large collections of idiomatic expressions proved to be productive tools for translators. Internet helped translators to choose the best equivalent depending on frequency of use and word combination through rich statistics provided by the internet. It proved itself a loyal, effective, efficient assist for translators during the Gulf war.

5. Improving translation quality

Though there has been no empirical evidence to prove it, bad translation is a contributing factor to poor understanding or sometimes misunderstanding between conflicting parts. Darwish in his answers to the questions of the study suggests reforming the question to address how improved translations can improve communication rather than understanding. He provides the following factors that development of translation of political texts depends on:

- Computer based training.
- Structural methodologies, strategies and techniques that enable the translator to make informed decisions.
- Mining the Internet.
- Training in terminology formulation techniques and

methods.

Since translation involves understanding and conveying, it is vital that translators' understanding of cultural differences is improved so that they become bi-cultural. Al-Ghanami, in his answer to the question of improving the quality of translation suggested a methodology that should govern a translator's performance.

This methodology involves translating culture not words, taking the culture of the audience into consideration. He also calls for specialization since translators can not cope with all branches of knowledge. Finally, he recommends team work and cooperation between translators of different cultures and languages.

A multicultural appreciation of human diversity as well as sensitivity to cultural differences should always be sought to improve translation quality. Culture lives in and through its language which establishes reality. Though cultural differences exist, yet cultures do still have many things in common. After all we are all descendants of Adam and Eve, we belong to the human race. A Humanistic discourse should be developed to share visions of other cultures.

Another solution for translation problems could be implementing quality assurance in translation (TQM), translation quality management. Iser (1994:30) proposes translatability as implying translation of otherness without subsuming it under preconceived notions. He calls for establishing a cross cultural discourse in which space between cultures opens up the experience of otherness. In his own words "encouraging the other awakens awareness of duality which results in an experience of difference recognizing the other as primordial which generates a call for

responsibility prior to any responsible knowledge of the other, and may produce ethics based on imponderable commitment."

Translators should be competent. Bell (1993) provides three types of competence, bilingual, communicative competence and strategic competence to compensate for insufficient competence in one or more other components of communicative competence. Shunnaq (1998) recommends that Arab translators should be trained to be able to render fully and efficiently the relevant features of monitoring and managing. Translators should not become involved. They should only monitor.

Translation of metaphor could be facilitated by adopting the following steps provided by Newmark (1981:85).

1. Reproducing the same image in target language.
2. Replacing the image in source language with a standard target language image.
3. Translating metaphor by simile.
4. Converting metaphor to sense
5. Combining the same metaphor with sense.

Conclusion

The study revealed that translators of political speeches at war time faced problems on the lexical, pragmatic and cultural levels in translating from Arabic into English and vice versa. Simultaneous interpreting was found to be the most problematic at war time due to the demanding requirements of this kind of translation and the high pressure war imposes on simultaneous interpreters. Information technology with the use of computers and internet facilitated the job of the translator and saved them

time and effort. Finally, a call for humanistic discourse that stresses understanding and acknowledges diversity is called for.

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