Initial Blockages and Total Text Cohesiveness in English-Arabic Translation Training

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ABSTRACT

This work seeks to prove that one instance of text disconnect in English-Arabic translation is the outcome of the intervening gap between the translated text opening and its remaining parts. This, in turn, is attributed to the work of four interrelated factors: text structure, connectivity, word choice and sentential reordering. Accordingly, a linguistically inclusive and balanced approach has been designed to deal with this problem. In addition, it is undeniable that other components of the text jointly could help solve the problem in question. After having analyzed the data, the work discovered that Arabic translators pay no or less attention to the above quadrilateral combination.

1. Introduction

This paper is an attempt to show that when a translator fails to go over an initial obstacle in a source text while translating, the end- result will be a total incohesive and incoherent translation n (textual disconnect). This means it lacks the properties of the two concepts of cohesion and coherence which are contrasted by Hoey (1991) as follows;

"We assume that cohesion is a property of a text and coherence is a facet of the reader's evaluation of a text. In other words, cohesion is objective, capable in principle of automatic recognition, while coherence is subjective and judgement concerning it may vary from reader to reader."

This translation problem, in view of this work, may arise from total dependence on dictionary basic meanings of certain expressions coupled with disassociation from the text main topic and inability to determine connectivity types. This also may imply that the translator misunderstands and misuses his/her translation general visualization of the text structure when translation speed lowers his visibility range and confines it to the sentence or words borders. In other words, the translator's word or\and sentential attention is given precedence over contextual considerations.

In this work, student trainees are once routinely asked as part of their day work to translate into Arabic typical English texts with varied collateral instructor's guidelines. These translation versions are done based on types of instructor's interference throughout the translation process (with limited or no human and\or dictionary help). When the assignment finished, they were asked to compare their individual works with a model version of the translation. It turned out that the most of the individual translations are text disconnects obviously with varying degrees. Then when asked to justify their inappropriate works, the most common spontaneous response is speed, no or limited access to dictionaries, lack of practice and training and limited theoretical text linguistic knowledge.

As for the data we will make sure that the original text is written by an English native speaker, all the trainees are native speakers of Arabic, and the model version of the translation is made by highly professional Arab translators and checked by Arab linguists and bilinguals.

Apart from the introduction and conclusion, this work is presented on three related stages. Firstly, it will discuss the problem which leads the producer of translated text to convey mistakenly unintended message and makes the recipient at loss when the final product is checked. This can be proposedly solved by forging a theoretical approach for this study by covering some relative concepts. For

considerations of space and time, this theoretical framework account will not be exhaustive but exclusively relative.

Secondly, a description of the approach used in this work will be sufficiently detailed with some possible and plausible modifications.

The work will then provide relative details about the authenticity of the data, the spontaneity of their production, the nativity of their producer and the specialization of the assessors.

Thirdly, the work will conduct the analysis of the work and include some remarks about the analysis, the translation and the views of the assessors.

1.1 The problem of the text disconnect

This work is of the view that initial uncertainty in the process of the translation and the selection of the nearest probability may lead to total implicit or explicit translated text disconnect. Furthermore, translation blockage is believed to mean: inability to transcend a translation problem and \or the trial\attempt by the translator to consciously or unconsciously bend the interpretation by drawing on the nearest alternative for speed purposes.

To exemplify this, an advanced translation student was once given a booklet entitled Pregnancy & Work to translate into Arabic, it opens like this:

1-Pregnancy is a natural state not an illness.
2-A healthy pregnant woman can generally do most of the jobs she did before she became pregnant.
3-Nevertheless pregnancy places extra strain on the working women and steps must be taken to safeguard the unborn child (foetus)

The trainee Arabic translation was as follows

الحمل هو حالة من الحالات الطبيعية وليس مرضا من الامراض. حيث بإمكان المرأة الحامل السليمة عموما ممارسة الاعمال التي كانت تقوم بها قبل الحمل. ومع ذلك تزيد اماكن الحمل التوتر عند المرأة العاملة ويجب اتخاذ الخطوات لضمان سلامة الجنين

Retranslation:
1-Pregnancy is a state of natural states not an illness of illnesses.
2-A healthy pregnant woman can generally do most of the jobs she did before she became pregnant.
3-Nevertheless places of pregnancy increase the strain on the working women and steps must be taken to safeguard the unborn child (foetus)

The translation process of this time-pressured trainee was initially blocked by

the expression "places" and she captured the most probable choice and continued to produce a text- disconnect translation. In this example, the translator drawing on the dictionary primary meaning of the pluralized nominal expression" places" , she envisioned" it as the subject of the above sentence. She was further deceived by its non-past tense verb form "stress", which is without the "s" of the third person singular ; a syntactic requirement in this case.

A reader of the translated text, after having read the first paragraph of the booklet, expects to see details about the places mentioned in the concluding sentence of the first paragraph. However, unfortunately that was not the case. Different pregnancy information is mentioned in the following paragraph which doesn't meet any reader expectations and makes him or her feel that a mistranslation has been made earlier.

Initial blockage and the resultant translated text disconnect by the time pressured trainees is believed in this work to be engendered by lack of linguistic and extra-linguistic familiarity with source and target texts, coupled with premature or immature translation skills.

2. A Proposed Approach

As stated earlier the problem arises from mistranslating the opener of the text causing a text disconnect and flow blockages and sentential reordering. This work is of the belief that the problem arises from misunderstanding four interrelated linguistic factors: text structure, text connectivity, equivalent selectivity sentential reordering. Accordingly the approach to be used for the analysis of the text in question is a composite of closely related linguistic assumptions made by well-versed linguists in the field. This work draws on assumptions made by M. Hoey (1984) concerning text or discourse structure, N.N Alwarraki (1995), C. Holes (1983) on connectors in both English and Arabic, John Lyons (1977) on basic and no-basic meanings of lexemes. In addition, the proposed approach will include some assumptions on sentential reordering.

Hoey (1983) gives a detailed account of the English discourse structure and claims that his assumptions about the discourse structures in English could be universal when they meet some of the cultural environment requirements of achieving the set goals particularly persuasion . He presented at least three main types of discourse structures in English. For

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considerations of space and time as well as the need to avoid unneeded and unrelated information, this work   is confined its interest to one discourse structure:

Generalization ….. Example(s)….. evaluation (optional).

In simple terms, in this type of discourse, the producer gives a generalization of a certain situation, then supports his\her generalization with related examples and concludes with an evaluation of the situation.

Normally the generalization is not capsulated in the first sentence of the opening paragraph as some may assume but in the whole opening paragraph. So, any misinterpretation of the opener will cause a lot of unneeded blockage and ensuing text disconnect.

A number of Arabists, like   C. Holes (1983), Arab grammarians like   A. Aflaih (2001) and Arab bilinguals like   N.N Al warraki (1995) believe that connectivity in Arabic discourse is in general is conducted by few reiterative linguistically represented multifunctional radicals like the WAW and the Fa'a.

Holes as mentioned in M. Baker(1992) touches upon the following functions of the Waw:
1.   temporal sequence
2.   simultaneous action
3.   semantic contrast
4.   semantic equivalence

The multi-functionality of the Waw is also referred to by another Arab bilingual, A.S Mehdi Ali (2007), when he discussed connectivity in Arabic :(Arabic tends to use reiteratively the Waw as a connector especially at the beginning of the sentence.)

This is an example of the waw where it indicates semantic contrast:

قبلت شروطه ورفض توظيفي

Translation: I accepted his conditions and (but) he refused to recruit me.

Most of those who are interested in Arabic connectivity claim that what helps to interpret the contrast in the above sentence besides the waw is the anonymity of the verbs (accepted and refused) in the above example.

The fa'a, =فاء on the other hand, indicates sequence and used to indicate further details so is the multifunctional connector (haithu))(حيث.   As for the other connector   (ith=اذ), it indicates future sequence. Indicating a sequence means adding further information of what has been mentioned earlier in a stretch of language, i.e. giving details. The above three

connectors, therefore, by functioning as sequence particles indicating details. They are devoid of the contrastive function while the waw is all-inclusive.

The Arabic connector (Kama=كما), on the other hand, indicates Omni temporal accumulative details according to A. Aflaih (2001)

It should be mentioned here that the translator when translating into Arabic is required to depend more on the connector (Waw) merely because of its multifunctional uses. Equally he\she should be careful when using other connectors mentioned above

Semanticists, like J. Lyons (1977) claim that the majority of expressions in languages have one basic meaning and more than one non-basic meaning. M. Baker (1992) doesn't go farther than Lyons by claiming that: even when a particular form does have a ready equivalent in the target language , there may be a difference in the frequency with which it is used or   the purpose for which it is used as can be noticed in the word "light" :

Basic meaning= related to illumination (ضوء)

One non-basic meaning =related to weight(خفيف)

Or the word silence

Basic meaning related to total absence of human voice(صمت)

Non-basic = quiet (سكون)

Other semantic ideas need to be discussed here is of antonyms

Accord to the Chamber Dictionary (1993) an antonym: is a word opposite in meaning of another i.e.   a lexeme connotation denotes an idea opposite to a one   carried by another lexeme   like the word love

Love denotes something opposite to hate

As for the sentential reordering, , Vinay and Darbelnet (1958), besides their seven translation techniques, discussed the concepts of dilution\concentration and amplification\economy which were later further discussed by others like Malone (1988). He added other techniques or trajections as he called them. Reordering is one of these, which is usually employed by professional translators for two purposes: to study the finished translated texts and\or to help harmonize the translation.

As for Arab Bilinguals, A.S Mehdi Ali (2007) claims that Arab translators resort to reordering "when there are differences between the source and target languages in terms of style and system."

Another bilingual Arab linguist F. Mohammed (2015) assumed that the transitive verb to translate involves three senses. The first one is confined to interlingual communication   while the second one has something to do with intralingual communication which perhaps requires clarifying or paraphrasing. The third one, on the other hand, it is inclusive of both: interlingual and intralingual senses.

After this brief account of the components of the approach and the assumptions made by specialists and experts in the field, now what is coming next is to shed on the data used in the work.

The data of this work surely has to be selected to clearly underline the problem stated in the theoretical framework and has to meet a number of standard requirements in order to come up with plausible concluding remarks. The data in this work is an argumentative   text talking about fear and silence. Two translation versions of the Arabic student translations have been randomly selected. That is, as we mentioned earlier, for considerations of space, time and in order not to be exhaustive. These two translation versions are examined against a model translation made by this author, checked by an Arabic grammarian, an Arab, Arabist and Arab bilingual. As the parts of the English text other than the opening are supportive examples for the opener, the work focuses on the opener. In selecting the English text to be translate, the work observes the following considerations:

1-   The authenticity of the English source text
2-   The spontaneity of the students translations
3-   The verification of the nativity of the Arabic and English speakers
4-   The temporal validity of the English text
5-   The verification of the skillfulness and experience of the people involved in the translation

3. Data Analysis

In this part, first, three versions of translation opening paragraph will be examined: two random students' translations and one done by this work and checked by professional translators, bilinguals and Arab linguists. For ease of reference, each version will be labelled with capital (V) and a figure and fronted by the English opening paragraph. In the following two sentence openers, four requirements will be observed and the benchmark is three at least to be considered appropriate translation.   Also,

Henceforth the following abbreviations are used: the text structure (TSTR), opener components (Opco), connectivity (CON.), word choice (WC) and reordering (RE)

It is not only in our social life, however, that we dread   silence. We love noise more than we know, even no other human being is present.

نحن نخشى الصمت في كل الاحوال ليس فقط في حياتنا الاجتماعية (حيث) اننا نفضل الضوضاء اكثر مما نعلم حتى في حالة عدم وجود بشر معنا.

Table 1:

	Sentence Type	TSTR	Opco	CON.	WC	RE
1	Nominal	Not observed	Gen.Just Sent,1 Wrongly considered	Not needed (correct)	inappropriate	Not observed
2	Nominal	Not observed	Detail Wrongly considered	inappropriate	inappropriate	Not observed

Table 2:

2- نحن نكره السكون *في كل الاحوال* ليس فقط عندما نكون مع الاخرين . اذ اننا نحب الضجيج اكثر مما نعلم لو كنا لوحدنا و.................

	Sentence Type	TSTR	opco	CON.	WC	RE
1	Nominal	Not observed	Gen.Just Sent.1 Wrongly considered	Not required (correct)	appropriate	Not observed
2	Nominal	Not observed	Detail Wrongly considered	Inappropriate	appropriate	Not observed

Table 3:

3-إننا نحب الضجيج أكثر مما نعلم   -1 حتى في لو كنا لوحدنا و نكره السكون ونخافه بشدة ليس فقط في حياتنا الاجتماعية   بل   في كل الاحوال ف.............................

	Sentence Type	TSTR	Opco	CON.	WC	RE
1	Nominal	observed	Both 1+2	appropriate	appropriate	observed
2	Nominal	observed	Both1+2	Appropriate \contrastive	appropriate	observed

After having finished with analysis of the opener's translation, the work moves on to examine carefully the remaining three paragraphs. Paragraphs 2 and 3 also follow the text structure: generalization-examples. Unlike the contrastive generalization in the first paragraph which *is composed of two comparative sentences* , the generalization in each of these two (2 and 3) is composed of only   one   sentence   followed   by exemplifications.

Similarly paragraph (2) opener can be analyzed as follows

Noise   is   companionship   and   I remember that I, as a child like even the ticking of a clock in the bedroom

الضجيج *يلازمنا   كما يلازم الرفيق رفيقه*. حيث اني اتذكر   عندما كنت طفلا صغيرا كنت احب سماع اصوات عقارب الساعة في غرفة نومي

Table 4: Paragraph (2)

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	Sentence Type	TSTR	opco	CON.	WC	RE
1	Nominal	ok	Gen.Just Sent.1	appropriate	appropriate	unrequired
2	Nominal	ok	detail	appropriate	appropriate	unrequired

So is the case with paragraph (3) where the first sentence is a generalization and the remaining parts representing the details.

As for the last one of the text, it represents an evaluation part of the text.

Throughout the analysis one can readily notice the following:

- Whenever the first sentence of the 2-sentence first paragraph is viewed as the opener of the text, there is a confusion at the level of the connectivity

- This, in turn, will lead to a further confusion at the level of the lexical selectivity.

- If considered as a whole both kinds of confusion either dwindle or disappear

- If changes or modifications are made at the intersentential level, confusion may totally disappears

As for the three remaining paragraphs what is noticeable is in the second and third parts:

- The first part of the paragraph represents the generalization while the second and other remaining parts represent the details

- This eases the task of the translator (Melone) to select the appropriate connectors and the intended denotations of the source language lexemes

- All this will help define the function of the final paragraph where the text evaluates the whole its idea.

It has been clear from the above analysis that there is an intervening gap between the opener of the text and the remaining parts of it in both V1 and V2. The student mistakenly understood the first sentence of the text as an opener while the opener is, indeed, the comparison contained in the first and second sentences. This confusion in the mind of the student, in turn, leads him\her to select the inappropriate connecter. Furthermore what adds salt to injury is unsuccessful selection of Arabic equivalents for the English lexemes of the text. Therefore one can claim that four factors involved in creating that gap: text structure, connectors, equivalents selection and most likely opener components reordering as in V3.

Text openers are the key to cohesive, coherent and comprehensible translation. Whenever the translator stumbled at the beginning of the translation, definitely he\she will produce a text disconnect as it has been seen in the above translation. It is also evident that this factor is crucial and decisive and it is the first piece of the Domino Theory: whenever it is wrongly considered, its impact will go further. As for the word choice and reordering, they are less crucial for the following reasons:

- In the word choice the basic meaning is inclusive.

- In the reordering factor, the inversion is just for stylistic purposes.

This proves that in translation, text linguistics is highly required to be observed by translators and students of translation need to have some linguistic knowledge about text connectivity and text structures in order to produce comprehensible translated texts.

Needless to say that connectivity is not always explicit in most languages. i.e. -not linguistically represented between sentences and when implicit sometimes it is implied by linguistic entity or entities available e in the text. The mere presence of that entity and the failure to recognize its function poses almost always a blockage for trainees.   It hampers their comprehension by offering a range of interpretations and forcing trainees to opt for inappropriate choices.

Not only that, they need to have the knack to be semantically sensitive to select the proper equivalents in the target text. They need to be able to detect one equivalent meaning of the lexeme in the source (basic or non-basic). Antonyms can be indicative of comparison as used to so function in the sentences of the opener of the English text (like silence, noise, dread and favor). The English verb (dread) for instance has a non-basic meaning of strong hatred (يكره) and used with the noun (silence) which has a non-basic meaning (السكون). So is the verb (favor) which has a secondary meaning (يحب).

In this case of anonymity, the translator needs to depend on collocation mechanism in Arabic as in the following table:

Table 5: Lexemes matching

Word	Arabic basic meaning	Arabic non-basic meaning	collocation
Silence	الصمت	السكون=quiet	
Dread	يخشى=fear	يكره=strongly hate=يشدة	يكره السكون
Noise	ضوضاء=too much sounds	ضجيج=disquiet	
Favor	يفضل=prefer	يحب=love	يحب الضجيج

4. Concluding Remarks

- The intervening gap between the opener of the text to be translated and its remaining parts is the outcome of an inadequate consideration of four main factors: text structure, connectivity, word choice and (to lesser extent) sentential reordering.

- The text opener's main idea   is not contained just within the borders of its first sentence but transcends them to include the contents of other interrelated sentences in the opening part of the opener.

- The other parts of the text help clearly define the opener's main idea and remove any ambiguity that could be implied by its first sentence.

- Stereotyping about certain types of text openers are almost always misleading

Recommendations

Translation necessitates that translator is required to

a) Define the text structure of the text to be translated
b) Understand the opener of the text
c) Carefully select the connectors to be used
d) Observe that any misinterpreting of the text opener in particular will lead to a translated text disconnect at the levels of connectivity and lexeme selectivity
e) Don't stereotype findings about text openers
f) Avoid creating intervening gap or gaps between the text components further improve the translation version, it could be harmless to introduce sentential inversion\reordering .

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