Some Pragmatic Aspects of Arabic/English Translation of Literary Texts

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Abstract

The present paper aims to show the relevance of pragmatic theories for the actual work of translators. Based on a selective body of authentic translation examples, the study demonstrates how implicit meaning is encapsulated in several pragmatic phenomena including presuppositions, speech acts, conversational implicatures, and politeness can seriously affect the quality of the translation product. It argues for a pragmatically-oriented process of translation where the main goal of the translator is to strike a balance between what is said and what is meant in human communication. In many cases, this balance should work in favor of what is meant in order to avoid communication breakdowns.

Keywords: translation, presuppositions, speech acts, conversational implicatures, politeness.

1. Introduction

In contrast with semantics, the study of the relationship between linguistic properties and entities in the real world, pragmatics is often defined as the study of language use, i.e. “the study of purposes for which [such linguistic forms] are used” (Saito 1973: 38). In its narrower sense, pragmatics deals with how linguistic elements and contextual factors work side by side in the interpretation of an utterance, enabling the hearer/reader to grasp the right meaning intended by the speaker/writer rather than just adhering to the referential meaning of an utterance. Emery (2004:150), adapting Blum-Kulka’s (1986/2000) views, writes “we have to negotiate a text’s coherence in a dynamic, interactive operation in which the covert potential meaning relationship among parts of a text is made overt by the reader/listener through processes of interpretation.” Several studies on pragmatic problems (Levinson 1983; Leech 1983; Farghal and Shakir 1994; Farghal and Borini 1996,1997; Emery 2004; Hall 2008; Farghal 2012) have shown that speech acts, addressing terms, conversational implicature and politeness strategies are the main areas that put extra efforts on translators, requiring them to make every effort “to encode and decode contextually based implicit information” (Farghal: 2012:132).
To begin with, speech acts (Austin 1962) such as requesting, ordering, threatening, warning, suggesting, permitting and the like are universal. However, each language has its own conventionalised ways to express such speech acts, hence their non-universal cross-cultural application (cf. Benthall and Davies 1989; Farghal and Borini 1996, 1997; Al-Zoubi and Al-Hassnawi 2001; Abdel-Haliz 2003; Hall 2008; Farghal 2012). For instance, while English customarily employs conventionalised indirect speech acts to express orders or requests, Arabic tends to utilise “formulas containing religious references for greeting and thanking, e.g. فَضْرُكَ اللَّهُ ﺧَيْبٌ (lit. ‘blessing of God upon you’)” as indirect speech acts (Al-Zoubi and Al-Hassnawi 2001: 22).

In general, language is normally used by people for a certain purpose. This purpose, however, may manifest itself at two different levels: the surface level, which is employed to state something, for example ‘It is hot in here’, and the other indirect, yet signifying doing something, for instance ‘Could you please open the window?’ At times, the underlying meaning of an utterance overrides the superficial one, thereby relaying “added effects such as those associated with, say, a request or admonishment” (Haim and Mason 1990: 179). Added to this, when stating something and having in their minds a function of doing something, people do not create an utterance “without intending it to have an effect” (Ibid). The picture that has been conjured up here is that there is a message that has three dimensions. Austin (1962) labels these three dimensions as location (What is said), illocution (What is intended) and perlocution (What follows in terms of physical and psychological consequences), respectively.

The literature on linguistic pragmatics deals mainly with issues that go beyond the reach of a purely semantic account. These usually include presuppositions (Kempson 1975; Levinson 1983; Kadmon 2001), speech acts (Austin 1962; Searle 1969, 1976), conversational implicatures (Grice 1975) and politeness (Brown and Levinson 1978, 1987; Leech 1983). Reviews of these pragmatic theories can be found in several publications (e.g. Levinson 1983; Thomas 1995). In terms of translation, there have appeared a few publications that look at translation activity from a pragmatic perspective which basically distinguishes between ‘direct’ or ‘stimulus-mode’ translation and ‘indirect’ or ‘interpretation-mode’ translation (Gutt 1991, 1996; Hickey 1998; Almazan-Garcia 2001). Regardless of the theoretical basis of pragmatic accounts, the focus is on how to explain indirectness in human communication, or how to explain how a language user can mean more than what s/he says. When it comes to translation, the key issue is how to capture indirectness in human communication and how to invest the resources available in both languages when rendering it. The following subsections will give a small taste of the significance of different levels of indirectness and the kind of challenges they present to translators.

2. Presuppositions

Wikipedia defines a pragmatic presupposition as “an implicit assumption about the world or background belief relating to an utterance whose truth is taken for granted in discourse”. Because presuppositions are background assumptions that are pegged to certain lexical items or structures which are called presupposition-triggers (e.g. definite expression, iteratives, cleft structures, etc.), one would assume that they can be captured quite easily in translation. This is not always the case, however.
Consider the two excerpts below, the first translated from English and the second from Arabic into English:

(1) وفي هذا المجال يقول ب. رولين: "قد كانت لدينا فكرة سليمة موسعة أن بالإمكان وضع خيالاً عاملياً في طبق اختراع تلوم نتائجه، وأن هذ (2) "You're right". Aisha laughed to relieve her tension and continued: "There's a big difference between the death of the boy in the street and this story". (Palace Walk, p. 124)

The reader of the Arabic excerpt will understand that the author is referring to an existing project, which is presupposed by the definite expression هذه المشروع. Similarly, the reader of the English excerpt will take it that there was a boy who died in the street, which is presupposed by the definite expression 'the death of the boy in the street'. What is surprising, however, is that neither of the presuppositions exists in the STs, as can be observed below:

(3) "He had a naive idea that you could put muscle cells in a petri dish and they would just grow.
and if you put money into a project, you'd have meat in a couple of years", says Bernard Roelen.
(Scientific American 304 (6), p. 66)

(4) "الدم الممزوج ضاربًا للمحاجة من عادلة اخلاقية: اختراق موت عظمي في الطريق ضاءًا، أما هذه الحكاية فهي نظر". (بين التواريخ، ص 120).

While the English text in (3) does not presuppose the existence of a project but rather refers generically to any project involving the production of meat in the laboratory, the Arabic text in (4) presupposes 'the making up of the death of a boy in the street' rather than 'the death of a boy in the street'. As a matter of fact, there is no existing project, nor is there a boy who died in the street insofar as the STs are concerned.

Surprisingly also, presuppositions arising from iteratives like 'again' may escape some translators, as can be shown in the following example:

(5) فهيئة: م - ما الذي عاد بك إلى هنا؟ بين التواريخ، ص 118.

(6) She shouted at him. "What are you doing here?" (Palace Walk, p. 123)

As can be seen, the translators (Hutchins and Kenny 1990) have missed the presupposition in the example above, viz. the utterance presupposes that 'the addressee had been there before' but this presupposition cannot be retrieved from the English translation, which should read something like "What brought you here again?"
Let us now look at one more area of presuppositions, namely clefing, which involves more subtlety than definite expressions and iteratives. English clefs exhibit a structural strategy which brings one constituent in the sentence to contrastive focus. Consider the example below:

(7) "It was noon when I hooked him," he said. (The Old Man and the Sea)

(8) لادَ أَكْثَرُهَا الشَّمْسَ عَدَّ الْأَزْهَرِ. (الكُعْتُبَيْي 1985)

On the one hand, the adverbial 'noon' is brought to focus by clefing in the English sentence, thus giving rise to the presupposition that 'The speaker hooked him at some time, and the clef is meant to contrastively specify the time of hooking the fish. On the other hand, the translator has opted for an unmarked word order in Arabic; hence the presupposition and the contrastive focus are lost. To capture the focus, one would offer a rendition like:

(9) لَقدَ كانَ الْوَقْتُ عَظِيمًا عِندَ أَطْمَتُهَا الشَّمْسِ.

Despite the fact that pragmatic presuppositions are clearly linked to certain lexical items and structures, translators need to detect and capture them in order to relay relevant propositional content as well as stylistic nuances. The examples discussed in this section show that the damage caused by failing to capture presuppositions may range between presenting completely different states of affairs in the translation and missing stylistic techniques that involve emphasis and focusing phenomena. Consequently, translators need to be alerted to this type of pragmatic inference in order to make sure that the background assumptions are incorporated into their translations.

3. Speech Acts

Speech acts (Austin 1962) refer to the intended meaning (the illocutionary force) rather than the literal meaning (the locutionary force) of utterances in communication. While it is true that language users can mean exactly what they say in their utterances, it is also true that they can have their utterances mean much more than what they say. For example, the interrogative form in English and Arabic is used to ask questions in terms of location and illocution; yet, while maintaining the same location, it can be familiarly employed in both languages to perform many other illocutions including requesting, suggesting, rebuking, wishing, approval, disapproval, complaining, etc. Such illocutions are usually retrieved from the context in which they are produced, as can be illustrated in the examples below:

(10) وكانَ إسْمَاعِيلُ يُثْبَتُ عَلَى هَيَأْتِهِ. (الكُعْتُبَيْي 1985)

- أيَّ حُسِنَ لِيُجَلِدَهَا هَذَا الْمَاسِرُ؟ (صَصٍّ العِصْرَةِ، ص. 362)

(11) Ismail, who was watching him closely, smiled and said, "If only Hasayn were here to witness this." (Palace of desire, p. 351)

(12) وصَلَحَتْ خَلَالَةُ في سَفَرِهَا;

- تَرَكَفَ دُونَ الرَّأيَةِ عَلَى هَيَأْتِهَا... وَمَا تَعِنَّ أَلَّا تَلْبِّيَ عَلَى نَامِسَكَ. (الكُعْتُبَيْي 1985، ص. 57)

(13) Khadija yelled sarcastically, "You want to get a job before you're fourteen! What will you do
if you wet your pants at work?" (Palace Walk, p. 57)

In both of the Arabic examples, the interrogative form performs illocutions other than 'questioning', namely, the illocution of wishing and the illocution of disapproval, respectively. The translators (Hutchins and Kenny 1990) have done well by capturing these intended illocutions. In the first example, they have opted for the wishing conventionalized form in English (if only ...) which conveys the illocutionary force in the ST. Yet, they also could have used the same interrogative form to perform the wishing illocution in English, viz. "Where's Ilusyn to witness this??" In the second example, the translators have maintained the same interrogative form to perform the illocution of disapproval.

Below are two examples where the same translator (P. Stewart 1981) generally succeeds in conveying a similar illocution though not reflecting the semantics of the Arabic formula, while he seriously fails in the second (15): (Children of Gebelawi, 1981 and 1959)

(14) (14) والابن الكأب من نسيته صوت عابد، يقول:
- القهوة يا محامي قاسم
إلى فتى ورد في ورائها فرآه عابد: "أحب فالنت، فمثله فناً.
- لم تستعن؟
فتى: تعب راحة يا سيد

(15) A sweet voice roused him: "Coffe Mr. Qassem".
He turned and saw Badria holding out the cup to him. He took it and said: "Why the trouble.
don't bother yourself for me".
Badria: "Don't mention it, sir!"

(16) وصباح فرحات ومن المنام:
- نمارس ما بيدها ونظر كيف يبعث الغامرون بالرحمة على أخرين
فإنك عدة جرعة، وحدها الله والمسلم كريم

(17) Farhat shouted to the crowds:
"Come and hear what people are saying, and see the latest game that's being played with the
honour of Gebel's people".
Abda shouted wretchedly: "Believe in the One God".

As can be observed, Stewart has managed to render the illocution of the Arabic formulaic
expression تعب راحة into an English formulaic expression 'Don't mention it', which falls within the same
area of conventionalized responses. A semantic rendering like 'Your tiring is a relief for me' would make
little sense in English. Thus, the search for a similar, conventionalized speech act in the TT is a workable
solution in cases of this sort. However, the translator could have captured more of the semantics of the
Arabic formula by offering something like 'It's a pleasure to serve you, sir' or 'I'm never tired of serving
you, sir'. By contrast, Stewart has settled for a semantic rendering 'Believe in the One God' of the Arabic
formulaic expression \( \text{يحدثنا الله} \) whose illocution is to urge the addressees to 'calm down' rather than to 'simply testify to the oneness of God' the way it is when uttered by the Imam addressing Muslims during prayers. It would be so difficult for the target reader to deduce the intended illocution based on the semantic rendering above. Hence, a translation like 'Calm down, for God's sake!' would be more acceptable as it conveys the intended meaning as well as maintain the religious tinge. One should note that the translator has opted for omitting the second part of the formula \( \text{وفلوم حضه كريم} \). Although this does not affect the flow of discourse, it falls short of bringing out a cultural element. Therefore, the addition of something like 'God urges us to forgive and forget' would provide a fuller picture of the SL cultural features.

Sometimes, the translator captures the intended illocution of a speech act but betrays the level of indirectness in that speech act. The following excerpts from \( \text{ابراءة حزينة} \) and \( \text{Children of Gebelawi} \) illustrate this:

(18) فهنداء جبل في نبرة جمو (وهو يذكر في طابل يد يبدع من البليسطي) ثم قال بابنهاج:
- يا سامح، جبل يطلب العربة منك.

(19) Gebel said with an impetuousness while he was thinking of Sayyeda, Balkit’s daughter:

"I want to marry your daughter".

Although Stewart’s translation of the Arabic speech act relays the intended illocutionary force, the high degree of directness it exhibits is unmotivated. Gebel employs a formulaic speech act جبل يطلب القرب منك (lit: Gebel wants to be close to you) which implicitly performs the 'marriage proposal'. The translator, however, has opted for unpacking this illocution in his rendering, something that is not congruent with Gebel’s state of hesitation and tension accompanying the performance of that speech act indirectly. Had the translator taken this into consideration, he would have offered a rendition like ‘I would like to ask for your daughter’s hand’. Such a rendering embodies a level of indirectness and formulacity comparable to that in the SL speech act.

Sometimes, the translator’s decision to omit formulaic speech acts that are meant to enhance the phatic/interpersonal function would produce flat translations that betray the author’s emotive style. Consider the following examples: (Al-Sanusi, The Echo of Kuwaiti Stories (bilingual), 2006)

(20) "ما بأس الله ... إن حسناتك أجمل من ضعفي. كما أن getResult cling to the first, you'll see that I’m not on fire..."

(21) "Your blood pressure is lower than mine and the initial analysis shows a strong heart".

(22) "صبرك مثمر للأحوال فقد نعمك الشيء كثيرا، ولا تترك الكرة في أعلاه جديته تقتله الله ليس على فرح...
(الوهابي: في المنهاجي, 2006, ص 13).

(23) "He looked very different and if the scar on the top of his forehead hadn't been there I wouldn't
have known that it was actually Ali Faraji*.

The two omitted formulaic speech acts مُبِدِّل مُغِير الأحوال and ما شاء الله express reassurance and amazement respectively. One wonders why the translator has chosen to delete them despite the fact that they provide the utterances with an important spiritual, emotive tone. It should be noted that there are several options in English that would render the illocutions of the two speech acts naturally. The first lends itself to formulaic speech acts such as "Thank God!". "Good news!". "Touch wood!". etc. and the second can be translated into formulaic speech acts like "Goodness!". "How amazing!". "I can't believe it", etc. The rendition of interpersonal speech acts like these preserves the emotive tone of discourse and renders the discourse more coherent.

This section has shown that the appropriate management of speech acts between Arabic and English is an important aspect of translation activity. First, translators need to grasp the illocution of the speech act in the ST. Then, they need to examine the similar speech acts in the TL in order to choose one that performs the same illocution. In particular, utmost attention should be given to the choice between a semantic and a pragmatic rendering of a speech act. In this regard, the context of the speech act plays a key role in the translator's choice. Therefore, if the semantic translation is not supported enough by the context, it needs to be abandoned in favor of a pragmatic one. While a semantic treatment of speech acts requires creative solutions to ensure adequacy and potential acceptability in the TL, e.g., مُبِدِّل مُغِير الأحوال may semantically be relayed as 'May you live long', a pragmatic approach needs a good knowledge of conventionalized speech acts in the TL to ensure acceptability, e.g., وَخَذْوا اللّه مُعَمَّرَا used to induce 'calm' may be rendered as 'Calm down, for God's sake' rather than semantically as 'Testify to the oneness of God' or 'Say God is one'. The point here is that conventionalized speech acts may converge or diverge between languages. When they diverge, they may lend themselves to both a semantic and a pragmatic treatment depending on potential transparency and acceptability in the TL.

4. Conversational Implicatures

In his seminal article "Logic and Conversation" (1975), Grice shows that rationality and reasoning enable humans in a cooperative way to both produce and interpret successfully messages that are conveyed via conversational implicatures. While language users generally observe the maxims of conversation in terms of quality (speaking the truth), quantity (employing the right amount of language), manner (expressing things clearly and unambiguously), and relation (to be relevant), on several occasions they may choose to flout a conversational maxim for a communicative purpose, i.e. to communicate a message indirectly. Flouting or exploiting a maxim fits quite well within the assumption of cooperation in human interaction. That is to say, the speaker is well aware of two things: first, the fact he is flouting a maxim of conversation and, second, the assumption that the hearer can figure out the conversational implicature in his utterance. For example, the speaker saying 'That's great!' addressing the interlocutor who has just spilled coffee on his shirt cannot be interpreted at face value; rather, it is taken to mean 'That's terrible' by the interlocutor and would require an apology. Hence the process of communication
continues uninterrupted, thanks to human rationality and reasoning, which is based on the cooperative principle between producer and receiver in communication.

While both speech acts and conversational implicatures deal with indirectness in human communication, they have different perspectives. Speech acts (section 3 above) mainly concentrate on conventional forms which are used to express different illocutions in language and the fact that each conventionalized form can perform various illocutions in different contexts. Conversational implicatures, by contrast, focus on our ability to diverge from conventionality and still mean much more than what we say. For example, the response 'It's raining' in the two question/answer pairs below conversationally implicate different messages:

(24) A) Shall we go for a walk?
B) It's raining.

(25) A) What do you think of Bin Laden?
B) It's raining.

In this way, the ability to cope with implicated messages depends on the assumption that the speaker is cooperative and invites the hearer to use contextual features to arrive at the intended conversational implicatures. Or, according to Sperber and Wilson (1986), this ability derives from the general assumption that whatever is produced in the course of human communication is relevant to one degree or another, hence the hearer exerts every effort to process utterances in light of contextual features and, as a result, deems them relevant. If the relevance of an utterance is too low, the hearer will ask for an explication/clarification such as 'I can't get you here' or 'Will you spell out what you exactly mean here?'..

In terms of translation, translators need to give utmost care to flowings whereby implicit messages are conveyed by way of conversational implicature. Other things being equal, what is conversationally implicated in the ST should remain conversationally implicated in the TT. Below are two contexts relating to marriage where an Arabic metaphor 'falta al-farār' to miss the train' is employed:

(27) Hurry up. Otherwise, you'll miss the train. (Sugar Street, p. 288)

(28) لم أذكر أنناك بالزواج. ناقشت الفكرة، مجهودًا، مع والدينا فالنهاية إلى نتيجة مرضية وشريكة في أن القطار لم بق بعده.

(Al Fara’i, خارج الأحذية)

(29) Although at that time I did not think about marriage, I did discuss the idea quietly, with my mother reaching the happy and optimistic conclusion that it was not too late for me. (Husni and Newman,


As can be seen, both Arabic texts flow the maxim of quality by referring to marriage by way of metaphor, thus conversationally implicating the marriage interpretation. The translators (Hutchins and Kenny; Husni and Newman, respectively) have employed different strategies. While the first translation maintains the conversational implicature by using the same metaphor, the second one reduces the
metaphor to its communicative import, thus changing an implicit message to an explicit one. The second translation would have been more effective if it had maintained the conversational implicature by investing the same metaphor in English.

In the natural practice of communication, the original writer sometimes expresses just a part of the message, leaving the reader/translator, after having accessed “the network of conceptual relations which underlie the surface text” (Baker 1992: 218) and depending on his/her world knowledge and experience, to complete the missing part of the message. Following Blakemore’s (2002: 71) view, it is held here that the pragmatic function, i.e. conversational implicature, is only reflected when translators “go further than [what is explicitly written], and metarepresent the [ST author’s] thoughts about what he would think [is] relevant enough”. By way of illustration, let us consider the following example quoted from Mahfouz’s novel ‘Midaq Alley’ (1947: 105) and translated by Le Gassick (1975: 108):

(30) قالت مصافحة وكتبت من أمل كلامها للآدم:

ahkan في عيني الوصل عليك!

(31) She assured him, as if she was certain of possessing him forever, with me you are very safe.

Here, the speaker in the original extract flouts the maxim of quality, i.e. to speak the truth, by opting for a metaphorical expression. "ahkan في عيني الوصل عليك!" is an example of adding a metaphorical expression to the message, thereby giving rise to a conversational implicature, that is, 'you are so dear and will be mine forever'. This conversational implicature derives from interpreting the application of kahh in this context as 'locking the gate of an prison'. Having detected the metaphorical implicature and its intended meaning, and probably having failed to find a functional equivalent, i.e. an equivalent that follows "the TL linguistic and cultural norms" without jeopardising the communicative import of the original text (Farghal 2012: 46), the translator has opted for what seemed to him an ideational equivalent, i.e. an equivalent that focuses on "the idea of the SL text independently of the form or function", thereby observing the quality maxim (ibid: 47; emphasis his), albeit it does not reflect the same implicature. To explain, the implicature conveying 'dearness' and 'possession' is inadvertently changed into one of 'safety'. Apart from this problem, the translation is far less creative and aesthetic than the original. It would be much more effective to find an English metaphorical expression that embodies a similar implicature such as 'I'll put you in my heart and lock you up there forever'. Such a rendering would satisfy TL norms as well as maintain the conversational implicature.

Problems relating to conversational implicature could be more serious in translation, as can be illustrated in the English translation of the Arabic excerpt below:

(32) "للموفق عين رجل على إحدى إبناتي" ... مبارك يا ست أمنية. (ibid: 151)

(33) "No man has ever seen either of my daughters ..." Congratulations, Mrs. Amina.

Congratulations”. (Palace Walk, p. 157)
Faragl and Almanna

The problem in this translation is double-fold. First, the translators (Hutchins and Kenny) could not cope with the illocution in the formulaic Arabic speech act ... which has to do with 'men showing interest in his daughters for the purpose of potential marriage' rather than 'the physical act of seeing them by men', which is far-fetched (Can one imagine a girl/woman who has never been sighted by a man!). Secondly, this serious mishap in interpreting the intended illocution has blurred the irony in the congratulating act which floats the maxim of quality (by saying something but meaning exactly the opposite). As a matter of fact, AlSayed (the husband) is reproaching his wife (Amina) for failing to improvise circumstances conducive to having men show interest in their daughters, with the result that they would remain unmarried. In a good translation, irony usually takes care of itself. Witness how the irony comes off naturally in the suggested translation below:

(34) "No man has ever shown interest in either of my daughters ... Congratulations, Mrs. Amina. Congratulations!"

Equally important is the translator's alertness to the floating of the maxim of quantity whereby the text is intentionally designed to be underinformative or overinformative for a communicative purpose. Consider, for example, how the Quranic verse below condemns 'homosexuality' implicitly by floating the maxim of quantity in order to maintain the sanctity of the text and how Quran translators endeavor to preserve a similar degree of implicitness for the same purpose:

(35) إنكم لاتكونون الرجال شهداء من دون النساء بل أنتان قوم مprmون. (سورة الأعراف، 8)

(36) Lo! ye come with lust unto men instead of women. Nay, but ye are wanton folk. (Pickthall, 1930/2006)

(37) For ye practice your lusts on men in preference to women: ye are indeed a people transgressing beyond bounds. (Ali, 1934/2006)

(38) See, you approach men lustfully instead of women: no, you are a people that do exceed". (Arberry, 1955/1996)

Sometimes, the floating of the quantity maxim (by formal repetition) is so subtle and intriguing that the translator, inadvertently, may sense for literalness that may miss the conversational implicature in the TL. The excerpt below involves two anonymous characters engaging in a somewhat strained exchange which is overheard by the main antagonist Saeed Mahran, who subsequently projects its content, albeit he does not understand it clearly, on his own situation.

(39) - الشامخة الحنظلة هي أن عونا هو صحبتي في الوقت نفسه ...
   - أبدا الساحة المفتوحة هي أن صديقا هو عونا ...
   - بل أنا جدلي، لم لا أعرف بهذا؟
   - وما ولكن كيف تأتي إذا الشجاعة في هذا المصير؟ ...
   - الشجاعة هي الشجاعة ...
   - والموت هو الموت ...
   - والعلم والقدرة هي هذا كلها (معطوف النص والكلامات، 1973)

In his translation (The Thief and the Dogs. 1987), Elyas should have paid special attention to the adjacent tautological expressions والموت هو المولد والشجاعة هي الشجاعة (for more on tautologies, see Grice 102
1975; Wierzbicka 1987; Farqhal 1992), because they are intended to give rise to competing conversational implicatures the way they are employed by the two interactants. The translator, however, renders them into what seems to be English tolerance tautologies, viz. *Courage is courage* and *Death is death*, respectively. A careful examination of the above exchange reveals that the translator's interpretation is far-fetched as neither of the characters is calling for the tolerance of adverse, natural consequences of the referents in question. One should note that the two Arabic tautologies refer to the standards of two human attributes, i.e. *courage* and *death*, each in its own way. To explain, the producer of the first tautology wants to communicate the implicature that 'Courage has been the same all along, i.e. there are familiar standards set throughout the ages'. Similarly, the speaker of the second tautology asserts that 'Death is subject to a similar set of standards', but he conversationally implicates that 'Death is too dear a price to pay in return for genuine courage'. This profound philosophical polemic is achieved subtly and effectively by means of conversational implicature, which is part and parcel of human interaction. In light of this analysis, the two tautologies should be regarded as *obligation* rather than *tolerance* tautologies, and consequently be rendered as:

(40) • Courage means courage.
   • And death means death.

These renditions conversationally improvise two rival discourses that coherently correspond to their counterparts in the Arabic text.

For its part, flouting the maxim of *manner* can be the most challenging in translation because hardly can we find cases where wordplay and/or ambiguity in the manner of expressing a message would coincide between languages, especially in genealogically unrelated languages like English and Arabic. Just imagine how a translator or an interpreter can relay the conversational implicature in the following excerpt without unpacking the implicit message (British MP Glenda Jackson was making reference to the desire expressed by John Major on becoming Prime Minister to make Britain 'a classless society', 30 Sept. 1991): (cited in Thomas 1995)

(41) They call it a "classless society". And it is classless. There are no classes for the children turned away for the lack of a qualified teacher. There are no classes for 200,000 children denied nursery places. And there is certainly no class in a government that for the last decade has sold our children and our future short.

It would be impossible to relay the message in the above text by investing the wordplay on classless/class. The translator will have to render the message independently of the flouting of the maxim of manner adopted by the speaker to heighten the impact of her discourse. Sometimes, in their attempt to capture the flouting of the manner maxim, translators fall victim to incoherent literalness. Consider the following example from *Hamlet*:

(42) Polonious: (Aside) Though this be madness, yet there is
Hamlet: Into my grave?
Polonius: Indeed, that's out of the air...

In this translation, Jabra (1960) opted for literalness in relaying Polonius’ witty use of wordplay on the lexical item 'air'. However, Jabra’s rendition does not make sense to the Arab reader; there is no way to invest the same lexical resource in Arabic. If the translator wants to capture the floating of the maxim of manner here, s/he needs to search for wordplay in Arabic that would come close to the intended wordplay in English, which is a taxing task. Let us consider the suggested translation below, which offers coherent wordplay, albeit not identical to that in the ST.

As can be seen, the wordplay works coherently in Arabic, thus investing the same pragmatic resource, i.e. floating the maxim of manner for a communicative purpose (viz. looking at going into one's grave as an entertaining act and a terminal act at the same time).

Finally, we come to the floating of the maxim of relation whereby the text producer offers something that does not address what is being discussed directly and consequently may, at face value, be deemed irrelevant. However, thanks to human reasoning, what is offered will be judged relevant in terms of communicative purpose and will be interpreted accordingly. By way of illustration, consider the following responses in (B) to the question in (A): (adapted from Renkema 2004)

(45) A: Where's my box of chocolates?
B: a) It's nice weather for this time of year, isn't it?
 b) Where are the snows of yesteryear?
 c) I was feeling hungry.
 d) I've got a train to catch.
 e) Where's your diet sheet?
 f) The children were in your room this morning?

All the responses in (B) float the maxim of relation as none of them directly addresses the question in (A). However, we consider all of them as relevant answers to the question and, as a result, smoothly
arrive at the intended conversational implicatures. Below is an Arabic translation of the above example, which would make sense in Arabic as much as it does in English:

(46) أر: أي عملة الشوكولا، التي تفضحت؟
ب: (1) الجو جيد في مثل هذا الوقت من السنة، آيس كنت؟
(2) الباvat الدبادب بعود بواس؟
(3) كنت أشر بالموع.
(4) ينفعي على أورك الشار.
(5) سأنا عن حفظك تخفض الوزن؟
(6) لقد كان الأعمال في عهودك هذا الصباح.

Following is an authentic extract taken from Pritchett's novel *Mr Belshune* (1951, cited in Thomas 1995):

(47) (Father to son, urging him to look for a job)

Father: How old are you, George?
George: I'm eighteen, Father.
Father: I know how old you are, you fool.

The father's question flouts the maxim of relation; it conversationally implicates that his son is old enough to get a job. Given the genre of the novel (satirical and comical), the son's answer, for its turn, flouts the maxim of relation by interpreting the question literally, thus generating situational humor. Hadn't it been interpreted apart from humor, it would have been something like 'I'm sorry, Father. I'll start looking for a job right away' or 'What can I do, Father? There are no jobs available'. Given a comparable context, an Arabic translation will convey similar conversational implicatures by way of flouting the maxim of relation, as can observed below:

(47) الأب: كم عمرك، يا جورج؟
جورج: أنا في الثامنة عشر، يا أبي.
الأب: إلى أعرف كم تبلغ من العمر، أبوا الأختم.

Now consider this extract from *Othello* in which Iago conveys several conversational implicatures by intentionally not addressing Othello's questions directly; hence flouting the maxim of relation: (Act III, Scene iii)

(48) Iago: My noble lord -

Oth: What dost thou say, Iago?
Iago: Did Michael Cassio, when you woul'd my lady, know of your love?
Oth: He did, from first to last. Why dost thou ask?
Iago: But for the satisfaction of my thought; No further harm.
Oth: Why of thy thought, Iago?
Iago: I did not think he had been acquainted with her.
Oth: O, yes, and went between us very oft.
Iago: Indeed?
Oth: Indeed? Ay, Indeed! Discern'st thou aught in that? Is he not honest?
Iago: Honest, my lord?
Oth: Honest? Ay, honest.
Iago: My lord, for aught I know.
Oth: What dost thou think?
Iago: Think, my lord?
Oth: Think, my lord? by heaven, he echoes me. ...

The translator of the above conversation into Arabic needs to give utmost attention to the conversational implicatures Iago is communicating. Any mishap in the wording of the utterances encapsulating these implicatures could do serious damage to the subtlety and coherence of this text. Below is a suggested Arabic translation where the subtleties are maintained:

(49) لا يليغ: يا مدح الدليل.
دليل: بل كان يعرفها ودخل بيننا كثيراً.
لا يليغ: حقاً?
دليل: حقاً، أجل، حالف؟ هل تستفتي من ذلك أي شيء؟ كان يمزغ الشرف؟ لا يليغ: الشرف، يا مدح؟ دليل: الشرف؟ أجل، الشرف.
لا يليغ: يا مدح، كلما اعرفه.
دليل: ما هو رأيك؟ لا يليغ: رأيك، يا مدح؟ دليل: رأيك، يا مدح، يا مدح...

To conclude this section, translators need to be aware of what is conveyed between the lines in non-conventional, rationally-based uses of language where conversational implicatures are communicated. In order to maintain the creativity and aesthetics of the ST, it is not enough to relay the implicatures explicitly whereby a flouting is changed into an observance of a conversational maxim. In this regard, one should distinguish between implicit information and implicit meaning (Larson 1984/1998). Whereas it is acceptable and natural to spell out implicit information, e.g., rendering "Harvard" in 'Dr Johnson studied at Harvard in the seventies' as درس الدكتور جونسون في جامعة هارفارد في الثمانينيات, it is not a wise decision to do the same kind of thing to implicit meaning, as it is part and parcel of human
reasoning in general and the intentionality of the author in particular. Hence, the translator needs to exert every effort possible to preserve conversational implicatures in his/her translation.

6. Politeness

The pragmatic issue of politeness might also place extra pressure on translators. The concept of politeness in this respect does not refer to being polite or impolite; it is linked to Goffman's original work (1955) on the sociological notion of 'face'. To understand the relevance of politeness to linguistic expressions, we have to first become acquainted with the notion of 'face'. Face is defined by Brown and Levinson (1987: 61) as a "public self-image that every member wants to claim for himself". To put this differently, face refers to the 'emotional and social sense of self that everyone has and expects everyone else to recognize' (Yule 1996: 60). There are two types of face: positive face and negative face. Positive face is the person's desire to be liked, or, at least, accepted, and treated by others without social barriers. Negative face, for its turn, is the person's desire to be independent, not be imposed on by others and so on. Accordingly, politeness can be defined as 'a means' utilised by participants to show their 'awareness' of the other's face, whether negative or positive (Yule 1996: 60). Showing awareness of the public self-image of another person who is not socially distant is described in terms of 'friendliness', whereas showing awareness of the face of another person who is socially distant is often described in terms of 'respect' (Ibid: 60).

Although politeness involves a "universal characteristic across cultures that speakers should respect each other's expectations regarding self-image, take account of their feelings, and avoid face threatening acts" (Cutting 2002: 45), the way that people behave in showing their awareness of others' faces when interacting with each other is different from one culture to another. Thus, what is considered acceptable and polite in one culture cannot be taken for granted in another. The degree of severity of the face-threatening mode of action achieved by imperative forms is more forceful in English than that in Arabic, hence the need for 'mitigating devices', such as 'Please', 'Could you ...?' 'Would you ...?', etc. to soften such severity (Yule 1996: 63). In the following example quoted from Mahfouz's (1961: 122) novel The Thief and the Dogs and translated by Le Gassick and Badawi (1984: 135), the speaker (Sa'id) in the original text uses a direct speech act in addressing his lover (Nur) i.e. he opts for a 'bald on-record' strategy in which a negative imperative form, which is "the most face-threatening mode of action", is used (Cutting 2002: 64). However, the translators have inserted a mitigating device, viz. 'please', to soften the severity of the face-threatening mode of action achieved by the imperative form:

(50) فافاف مث평가:
- نور لا تزودني عطاءا أنا في عاية الكدر.
"Nur", he pleaded. "Please don’t torture me. I'm terribly depressed".

Closely related to politeness strategies is the issue of address terms and their different pragmatic functions. In the following example quoted from Mahfouz's story (translated by and printed
in Husni and Newmark (2008), the translators have opted for different local strategies in dealing with the term عمه (lit. uncle):

(51) وهوٌ عمه إلى الساحة الشرفية الوثيقة فوقُتَ أمامَ عم محسن محاضرةً حتى كتب الرجل حائض الطفْ.

ربنا بلطف هذا ماما ورجة ،

هيمنت بعد تردد.

مطلق عمه ياعم محسن. (ص 111)

(52) She hurried to the luxurious east wing of the clinic to look for Mohsen. When he saw the anxious look on the midwife’s face, he murmured in a worried tone: “May God have Mercy on us! What’s happened?” She hesitated, and whispered: “It’s a strange creature.

Mr Mohsen”. (p.110)

In the first occurrence, the reference term is used in a narrative language in which the author just describes the movement of the nurse and her standing in front of Mohsen, while in the second occurrence, the same term is utilised in a dialogue as an address form between two characters in the story, hence the differences in its pragmatic function in the two occurrences. Taking into account the norms of politeness in the TL, regardless of the politeness strategy itself, whether negative or positive, and whether an honorific is used or not, the translators have opted for the deletion of the term in the first occurrence, which affects the degree of respect to the referent. They could have used ‘Mr Mohsen’ instead of the fist name alone to capture the degree of respect of the referential form. However, their option for ‘Mr’ in the second occurrence changes the degree of intimacy between the nurse and Mohsen from intimate into formal, thus distorting the pragmatic function associated with the use of the term عمه, i.e. ‘Uncle’. In this regard, Harim and Mason (1990: 65) stress that the solution to such a pragmatic difficulty “requires more than knowing the lexical meanings”. They distinguish between two types of honorifics: that which involves special status and that without such a status. This being the case, what is the solution? One should note that the deletion strategy (see example below) would not work here, that is, it would be very face threatening to address Mohsen by his first name without a social honorific. The only way to solve this problem is to preserve the social honorific ‘uncle’ in translation. Apparently, the use of this address term by the midwife is indicative of an age difference between speaker (being relatively young) and addressee (being elderly), thus motivating the employment of such an intimate term. Otherwise, the midwife would have used the distance-oriented ياسيه محسن ‘Mr Mohsen’. Notably, the relational use of the social honorific ‘uncle’, which is very familiar in Arabic, is not alien to ‘young-elderly’ interaction in English (for more details on social honorifics, see Farghal and Shakir 1994).

In the following example, which is quoted from Malibouz’s (1961: 13) novel The Thief and the Dogs and translated by Le Gassick and Badawi (1984: 20), the translators, due to the cultural-pragmatic constraints imposed on them by the use of such an address term, have taken into account the pragmatic function of the term in such a context as well as the TL norms, thus approximating the utterance by deleting the address term completely:

(53) بالحق نطقته يا حضرت المخبر.
(54) You're quite right, officer.

Alternatively, they could have offered 'You're quite right, sir', thus capturing the status difference without referring to the job of the interlocutor, i.e. 'officer', which can be recovered from the context. Given what is at stake, therefore, the translators' task is not confined to just determining the referential meaning, i.e. the locutionary act. Rather, it covers the detection of the implicit meaning behind the face-value interpretation of the locutionary act, i.e. the illocutionary force as well as its effect on the receptors, i.e. the perlocutionary effect (cf. Hatim and Mason 1990; Emery 2004).

Politeness maxims (Leech 1984) may differ in the frequency of adherence to them from one culture to another. For example, while Japanese people tend to downgrade the complimented item, thus adhering to the modesty maxim (minimize praise to self), Arabs and Anglo-Americans tend to accept compliments at face value, thus giving more weight to the agreement maxim (maximize agreement with other). Likewise, some conventionalized responses to compliments may differ between cultures within the bounds of the same maxim. For example, it is customary in Arabic to offer the complimented item or 'compliment the eyes of the complimenter' in return. However, normative compliment responses such as 'It's all yours' for عيونك نجيبة or 'Your eyes are beautiful' for عيونك نجيبة are not usually available in English (for more on this, see Farghal and Al-Khatib 2001; Farghal and Haggan 2006). In this regard, translators need to detect conventionalized politeness formulas and relay their illocutions apart from their locutions in most cases. Consider the examples below (Stewart's translation Children of Gebelawi 1981 of Mahfouz's novel لرائد خاتمًا 1959):

(55) واسله فكري الناظر: هل من جديد عن زوجتك؟
فاجاب عزة وهو يبتعد سلمًا إلى جانبه: عيدا كافٍ، ولي يحفظ مقتامك.

(56) Kadri (the Chief) asked Arafa: "Any news about your wife?"
Arafa answered as he sat down beside him:
"Stubborn as a mule. excuse me!"

(57) دخل حورق فسر لائحة الفممة وهو يقول: "يا سكر" ... 

(58) Qassem went into Qamar's courtyard to collect the cwc, calling out: "Anybody there?"

(59) وعاقت (سكينة) بلاغة فاستندها إليها وهي تقول:
- قطرة، بلقينا والشفا.

(60) Sekina came back with a package which she gave to the guest saying: "A pancake, I hope you'll enjoy it".

As can be seen, Stewart has done well by relaying the illocutions of the politeness formulas following the conventionalized norms of the TL. It would have been unacceptable to render them into 'may God protect your status', 'O veiler' and 'with happiness and health', respectively. Such renderings
would deviate from TL norms and, consequently, mar the translation in terms of acceptability rather than adequacy. Adequacy, it should be noted, is usually given a back seat in the context of conventionalized forms, whereas it occupies a front seat in the context of implicit meaning, which creatively and subtly sails away from conventionalized forms.

To conclude this section, one should note that politeness and indirectness are usually interrelated. However, there are three variables governing their relationship: power, distance, and rate of imposition. Sometimes, therefore, an utterance that may formally appear to be so polite may turn out to be a marker of heightened tension. For example, an utterance like ‘Would you be kind enough to open the window?’ would be highly polite where the situation is marked by a wide distance between requester and requestee, whereas it would be a marker of discontent in husband-wife interaction where a narrow distance is assumed. Consequently, the fact that politeness is an attribute of utterances rather than forms places more pressure on translators to detect what exactly lies behind a politeness form. By way of illustration, let us look at the return Arabic politeness formula ‘Peace be upon you’ (Stewart’s translation *Children of Gebelawi* 1981 of Mahfouz’s novel 1959):

(61) فَلا تأبَّنِي عَلَى أَفرُضَةٍ أَصْدَقْتُ هَزَمْتُ بِبَيْنَيَّ فَاحْتَقَقَ مِن الْهَارَة.

(62) Said: “Rifa’a has friends. They attacked Batikha, and he disappeared from view”

Yasmine frowned and said:

“Batikha is not Bayyumi. If you defy Bayyumi, you’ll be defeated”.

Stewart has recognized the hidden illocution of the Arabic polite form and rendered it accordingly, albeit somewhat flatly. A more congruent rendering would be ‘You won’t get much peace’, which is more formulaic and effective.

7. Conclusion

The present study has shown through discussion of authentic translation examples the importance of pragmatic meanings in human communication. The pragmatics of translation basically involves capturing indirectness in discourse, which mainly includes pragmatic phenomena like presuppositions, speech acts, conversational implicatures, and politeness. It has been shown that such phenomena, whether they derive from the contextually-based interpretation of conventionalized forms or from purely human reasoning, present challenging tasks to translators. Therefore, there is a dire need to alert both translation practitioners as well as translation trainees to the various aspects of pragmatic meanings and the available strategies to deal with them. Only then will a translator be able to offer a product that strikes a balance between acceptability and adequacy in terms of what is meant rather than in terms of what is said alone.
الجوانب التدابيرية في الترجمة بين العربية والإنجليزية

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المختصر
تهدف هذه الدراسة إلى تبيان علاقة نظريات التدابيرية اللغوية بما يقوم به الترجمون أثناء عملية الترجمة. وتوضح الدراسة من خلال نماذج مختارة من نصوص ترجمة الآثر الكبير الذي يتركهمعنى الفضني كمساندن يتجلى في ظواهر تدابيرية كالإفتراضات السينائية والأفعال اللغوية والتعريض والتأدب على سوية العمل المترجم. فهي تتعامل في منهج تدابري في الترجمة ينصب جهد المترجم فيه على خلق نوع من التوازن بين المعنى الحرفي والمممي المقصود للكلمة. وفي العديد من الحالات، ترجم الكاتب في ذلك التوازن لصالح المعنى المقصود لتجنب الوقوع في مفهومات تواصلية.
References


