The Translatability of Some Slogans Used in the Syrian Revolution During the so Called "The Arabic Spring"

Presented By

Wala' Mohammad AL-Dagamseh

B.A. (English Language and Literature)

Yarmouk University

2010

Thesis Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree of Master of Arts in Translation at Yarmouk University, Irbid, Jordan

Supervisor:

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Yarmouk University
Faculty of Arts
Department of Translation

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Examining Committee:
Prof. Mahmoud Kanakri Chairman
Dr. Ahmad Sakarna Member
Dr. Mohammad Al kur'an Member
Dedication

To my family
Acknowledgment

First and foremost, I would like to express my deepest and most sincere gratitude to prof. Mahmoud Kanakri, the supervisor of this thesis, for his guidance, care, and for his invaluable suggestions during the course of this study. I also thank him for his unlimited patience through reading this work. Actually, I was honored to work with him. I am also indebted to the examining committee members, Dr. Ahmad Sakarna and Dr. Mohammad AL-Kuraan, for their time, effort, and appreciable directions which have, indeed, contributed much to the value of this study. I wish to express my gratitude to my loving parents and the whole members of my family as well as my friends for their encouragement and support.
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The following tables include the phonetic symbols that will be used in this study to make letters readable even to non-specialists.

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Abstract

"The translatability of some slogans used in the Syrian revolution during the so called 'The Arabic Spring' "

By

Walaa Mohammad Ghazi Dagamseh

Supervised by:

Prof. Dr. Mahmoud Kanakri

This study highlights the linguistic, cultural, and political problems in translating slogans that were used in the Syrian revolution through the so called "The Arabic Spring". The researcher addresses this topic along two dimensions: the source of these problems that translators may face in translating slogans into English: such as cultural expressions, repetition, intertextuality, lexical choice.... The second dimension is the strategies adopted by translators is rendering some slogans into English, such as literal translation, omission, addition, functional translation, etc....

The corpus of this study includes 54 slogans. They were collected by the researcher through her search in T.V channels, websites, and radio bulletins. These slogans were translated by
students at the Translation department of Yarmouk University. The researcher concludes that the linguistic, cultural and political expressions are expressed in the revolutionary slogans. She believes that literal translation is not the best strategy for translating such expressions; rather she considered other strategies like functional and paraphrase strategies suitable for dealing with these expressions. Finally, the researcher concludes with some recommendations.
Chapter one

1.1 Introduction and Theoretical Background

Translation in general is a human product whose ultimate goal is communication and rendering all kinds of texts, if possible, readable and available to a wider readership. This is not an easy task for the translator to do as it is a process of reproduction of written or spoken texts in a different language while retaining the original meaning. Obeidat (2003:1) says that "translation is very vital for cross-cultural communication. It helps creating a better understanding between different communities through the transmission of mutual ideas and beliefs". Finding translation equivalence is a thorny issue. Yasin (1997:1) states "the term equivalent is clearly a key term and the major problem of translation practice is the finding of target language translation equivalent". Therefore, the translator should be aware of both languages, SLT and TLT, in order to be able to find the suitable equivalence. Al-Zou'bi (2002:1) says that the translator should be familiar with some political, cultural, and social concepts in the SLT as well as TLT. He adds that "the duty of the
translator is to know how to reconstruct the meaning of the SLT and how to convey it to the readers". Most scholars agree that the burden of translation falls mainly on the translator's shoulders. Shunnaq (1998:33) states that" the translator's duty is restricted to the writer's ideas". Therefore his\her job is more complicated than the writer's as the produced text should be creative, genuine, equivalent, and has SL-cultural flavor. He adds "the translator is obliged to convey the ideas of the SLT into the TLT giving utmost care to the linguistic and cultural norms of the TL as well as its naturalness" (ibid: 34).

A series of problems, therefore, may appear in the sight of the translator while performing the process of translation. Problems of translation vary according to the text that the translator deals with. AL-Natour (2001:1) states that" the bulk of problems may arise from the fact that the SL and the TL are linguistically and\or culturally remote from each other, as is the case of Arabic and English". Translating Slogans, which are strategic elements in elections, campaigns, and revolutions, constitute a dilemma when they are translated from SLT to TLT as slogans are texts full of emotions such as fear, strength, hope, wishes,
anger, sadness, and above all, the need for change. By using slogans, people try to impose their images, ideas, and emotions that stimulate, persuade, or attract the audience attention to achieve a certain goal. A slogan, therefore, should deliver a vital message and should have the concentrated information of the election, campaign, or revolution as well as highlight one's main goal of addressing such slogan. Hosu and Pavelea (2009:22) believe that slogans have a crucial role in elections which make a candidate win or lose a campaign." A successful slogan will motivate the electors and will influence them in directing their vote towards a certain candidate". Using slogans is not limited to one community or one culture, people all over the world use slogans either to win a campaign, or to influence the public opinion towards a certain event, or to market a particular brand. Hussein (2011:2) comments on slogans as "the phenomenon of using slogans is not haphazardly made. Rather, it is a linguistic phenomenon which digs deep into the values and norms of human societies."

Furthermore, if slogans are perfectly and carefully structured, they will absolutely have a profound effect and may therefore reflect the