Images in Translation: News Stories from Zaatari Refugee Camp: A Case Study

By

Alaa Mohammad Salem Khshashneh
B.A. English Language and Literature
Yarmouk University, 2010

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Examined by:

Prof. Abdullah Al-Shunnaq................................Chairman

Prof. Lutfi Abulhaija .......................................................... Member

Dr. Mohammad Al-Quraan ....................................................... Member

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Abstract

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Supervisor
Prof. Abdullah Al-Shunnaq

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This study is intended to achieve three main purposes. First, it highlights the interaction between words and images in multimodal texts and invites translation producers to take this interaction into account while transferring such texts from one language into another. Second, this study seeks to draw the readers’ attention to a problem observed in translation practices, which is that the source text (ST) images and their captions are sometimes omitted, changed or replaced. Thirdly, this study seeks to make a connection between social semiotics and the translation of multimodal texts. On the other hand, it employs Fillmore’s (2006) “scenes-and-frames semantics” model in interpreting and categorizing (mis)translations of such texts. The data used for the study consist of three internet news pieces reporting on the situation of the Syrian women in Zaatari Refugee Camp in Jordan with some of their published (mis)translations. The implementation of the model depends on the
“possibilities” or “techniques” for translating frames and scenes as discussed by Kussmaul (2000). The analysis reveals that a multimodal text is like a domino set; any change occurring to images or to their captions affects the meaning of the entire multimodal ensemble. The study concludes that in order to achieve the maximum level of equivalence, translators should include images in the translating activity. They should preserve the ST image(s) as it is. The study also concludes that understanding the multimodal text as a net of scenes and frames elucidates the processes of reading and translating it.

Keywords: translation, multimodality, images in translation, social semiotics, media discourse, internet news pieces, Zaatari Refugee Camp, scenes and frames.