Translatability of Arabic Emphatic Structures: Examples from Naguib Mahfouz's Novels

by

Lubna Tariq Al-Siba'ee
B. A. English Language and Literature, Yarmouk University 2004

A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Arts in Translation, Department of English Language and Literature, Yarmouk University, Irbid, Jordan

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Prof. Hussein Abdul-Fattah ------------------------ Chairman

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ABSTRACT


The translation of Arabic emphatic structure is expected to constitute an obstacle for translators; therefore, this study purports to investigate the translatability of Arabic emphatic structures and devices into English from semantic and pragmatic perspectives. It draws upon an examination of a number of translations of these emphatic devices and structures into English. Specifically, it draws upon the translation of Naguib Mahfouz’s novels: The Thief and The Dogs by Trevor Le Gassick and M.M Badawi (2001), and Al-Harafish by Catherine Cobham (1994). The study highlights the erroneous strategies adopted by the translators of these two novels and suggests more suitable alternative translations.

The presentation proceeds along two main lines; namely, verbal emphasis and meaning emphasis, which are also divided into other relevant subcategories.
The study demonstrates that, somehow, most Arabic emphatic structures and devices are translatable into English. Furthermore, the study recommends that the translators should opt for formal equivalence in many cases and the functional one in other cases when they have correspondents in the two languages as in verbal repetition, synonyms and reflexives. The same thing can be applied in the case of asymmetries that the can also opt for both functional and formal equivalence when they intend to render structures which have no formal correspondents in the two languages as in rendering Arabic emphatic particles, the cognate accusative and the pronoun of separation. The study concludes with a number of relevant recommendations.

**Key Words:** emphasis, repetition, restriction, thematization, semantic emphasis, syntactic emphasis, the pronoun of separation and emphatic particles.