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Al-Tadhaad 'One Word with Two Opposite Meanings' as a Lexical Challenge in Arabic-English Translation

A B S T R A C T

The current paper addresses itself to scrutinize the phenomenon of Al-Tadhaad 'one word with two opposite meanings' with reference to Arabic-English translation. It goes undeniable that Al-Tadhaad is based on the investigation of the opposite meanings of one word. Furthermore, in Arabic, Al-Tadhaad is dramatically different from antonymy and polysemy in English. Antonymy is mainly concerned with the oppositeness of two independent words such as big/ small, fast/ slow, etc. As for polysemy, it is restricted to the different and related meanings of one word. So, English lacks even the convenient terminology for such phenomenon. This study verifies that the phenomenon of Al-Tadhaad is widely utilized in the Glorious Quran and generally in the Arabic books.

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تعزير التنمية الشاملة والتباين من خلال التحقيق في مجموعة واسعة من الثقافات العالمية

عبد الستار محمود محمد عبد الله/ المديرية العامة للتربية في محافظة صلاح الدين

الخلاصة:

تتناول الورقة البحثية الحالية ظاهرة التضاد بين معاني الكلمة الواحدة في اللغة العربية و ليست بين معاني كلمتين مستقلتين أو أكثر مثل: كبير/صغير ،سريع/بطيء إلخ لأن ذلك تم بحثه في دراسات سابقة كثيرة، و ممّا يستدعي مزيداً من الاهتمام أنّ التضاد ظاهرة انفردت بها اللغة العربية عن سائر اللغات، ففي اللغة العربية يُطلق التضاد ويُراد به التضاد بين معاني الكلمة الواحدة و يُطلق ويراد به التضاد بين معاني كلمتين أو أكثر، والذي تسلط عليه الدراسة الضوء هو التضاد بين معاني الكلمة الواحدة مثل كلمة (وراء) قد تكون بمعناها الأصلي (وراء) وقد تكون بمعنى التضاد (أمام) وهذا ما تقتقر إليه اللغة الإنكليزية فلا يوجد كتاب في الدلالة في اللغة الإنكليزية يتناول هذه الظاهرة، لذا يجب أن لا يُتوهم أن التضاد بين معاني الكلمة الواحدة هو ذاته التضاد (antonymy) في اللغة الإنكليزية لأن

التضاد (antonymy) في اللغة الإنكليزية لا يتناول إلا التضاد بين معاني كلمتين مختلفتين مستقلتين. وأثبتت الدراسة أن التضاد هو ظاهرة واسعة الانتشار في القرآن الكريم وفي كتب اللغة العربية على وجه العموم.

الكلمات الرئيسية: متبادر، تعاكس، ترجمة، تعددية الدلالة، معنى

Introduction

It is essential, right now, to state that the paper under investigation is an in-depth consideration of the phenomenon of Al-Tadhaad, i.e. one word with two opposite meanings. It is also to be noted that the current paper investigates approximately all the terminologies in English which are utilized in the books of semantics, but, unluckily it does not come across a convenient term. Some translators believe that there is no huge difference between Al-Tadhaad in Arabic and antonymy or even polysemy in English. So, they both can be adjusted to denote the same phenomenon. As a matter of fact, Al-Tadhaad is totally different from both antonymy and polysemy. The study is an attempt to raise translators' awareness when they tackle the phenomenon of Al-Tadhaad. The current paper also tends to lay great focus on the fact that English lacks the phenomenon of Al-Tadhaad.

1. Al-Tadhaad and Antonymy

It is proper to dispel the likelihood of confusion which may take place between Al-Tadhaad and any other sense lexical relations. Consequently, it is far better to draw a distinction between Al-Tadhaad and antonymy since it is wrongly believed that there is a sort of similarity between them. "Although no theory of word meaning is complete, we know that speakers have considerable knowledge about the meaning relationships among different words in their mental lexicons, and any theory must take that knowledge into account"(Fromkin et al. 2013:155-6).

"In Arabic, Al-Tadhaad is one the main lexical sense relationships. It is mainly concerned with one word with two opposite meanings. In other words, Al-Tadhaad represents the highest degree of oppositeness between the meanings of a one word. For example, the word(الجَوْن) in Arabic denotes colours. It could

contain two opposite meanings such as "الأبيض" (*white*) and "الأسود" (*black*) (Ali, 2011:350). "Two expressions are called antonyms if they denote two opposite extremes out of a range of possibilities. The examples are pairs of:

- (1) adjectives such as old/young, old/ new, big/ small, thick/ thin, etc.
- (2) nouns such as war/ peace, love/ hate, etc.
- (3) verbs such as love/ hate, encourage/ discourage, etc.
- (4) adverbs as in: always/ never, often/ seldom (Lobner, 2002:89-90).

"Antonymy is sometimes called a relation of minimal difference in each member of the antonym pair shares most of its semantic properties with the other member of the pair, except for one that causes the two words to be semantically incompatible. So, for example, "down" and "up" are similar in that they both describe vertical directions, but they are different in terms of the particular direction they indicate" (Murphy and Koskela, 2010:16).

One can view that both Al-Tadhaad and antonymy touch the point of oppositeness, but Al-Tadhaad is restricted itself to the investigation of oppositeness of a one word meaning, whereas antonymy is mainly confined to the meanings of two independent words.

2. Al-Tadhaad and Polysemy

Polysemy deals with multiple senses of the phonological word, and it is invoked if the senses are judged to be related. For example, various senses of "hook" are treated as polysemy and therefore listed under one lexical entry:

Hook/ huk/n.

1. a piece of material, 2. short for fish-hook 3. a trap or snare

(Saeed, 2013: 64).

"Taking the most general view, there is a unique sense relation of some sort holding between any two words chosen randomly, say, "dog" and "banana". We can even give this one a name, say, "dogbanana". However, it would not be a very interesting and significant relation. We, therefore, need to consider what makes a sense relation significant" (Cruse, 2000: 145).

3. Absolute Oppositeness

Actually, Al-Tadhaad expresses the absolute oppositeness in the meanings of the word. It is of crucial significance to state that there is a huge difference between the systems of Arabic and English. "Gradable antonyms are terms in which the degree of opposition is said to be 'gradable': for example, wide and narrow, old and young, tall and short. In each of these pairs, the opposition is not absolute. There are degrees of width, age and height, so that it is better to say a road is not narrow doesn't mean it's wide" (Finch, 2006: 151).

4. Default Meaning

In all the coming tables, the concept of default meaning will be inserted, it is really useful to define it in a more proper way. "The default meaning of a polysemous word is the meaning which is intuitively given in the absence of any context. For instance, the default meaning of the verb 'see' is 'to have a visual experience(of)', though in particular contexts it can have other meanings, for instance

(1) I see what you mean.

(2) See what you can do.

(3) I think you should see a doctor (Cruse, 2006: 42).

Discussion

Thus, it is significant to remark that the verb "see" in the above examples is polysemous. In example (1), it indicates the meaning of "identify", so, the sentence becomes "I identify what you mean". In example (2), it refers to the meaning of "think", thus, the sentence turns into "Think of what you can do". Whereas, in example (3), it points out to the meaning of "visit", the sentence becomes "I think you should visit a doctor".

1. The SL Word (وراء)

NO.	SL Word	Default Meaning	Secondary Meaning
1.	وراء	وراء	أمام

Interpretation

There is a sort of underlying oppositeness in the meaning of the same word, i.e. "وراء" (*beyond* or *behind*). The word "وراء" can convey two opposite

meanings. It clearly refers to its original meaning, i.e. "وراء". At the same time, it can mean "أمام" (*before*), as in the aya below: (وَكَانَ وِرَاءَهُمْ مَلِكٌ يَأْخُذُ كُلَّ سَفِينَةٍ غَصْبًا) (قال تعالى (الكهف: ٧٩ (...and beyond them was a king who was taking away every ship by force) (Ghali,2005:302). So, one can view that the underlined word "وراء" implies the meaning of the word "وراء" "*behind*" (Al-Samarra'i,2007:78). Even one can notice such usage in Arabic everyday conversation, e.g. when father gives his son some advice concerning his own coming exam to read more and more. So, father utters "وراءك امتحان". In a wrong way, some of those who are interested in Arabic claim that such style is somewhat colloquial, but, actually, it is the most standard one, since it is utilized in the Quranic discourse. If one takes the word "وراء" literally, the message is definitely distorted. In fact, such style is borrowed from the highest standard Arabic.

2.The SL Word (مسجور)

NO.	SL Word	Default Meaning	Secondary Meaning
2.	مسجور	مملوء	فارغ

Interpretation

It is worth noting that the adjective (مسجور) could denote two opposite senses. Thus, translators must be fully aware when they try to render the text which contains such a word. It is more enlightening to point out that the word "مسجور" may mean either ' مملوء ' (*full*) or "فارغ" (*empty*) (Al-Lughawi and Al-Halabi,2012:153). To illustrate further, let us take the following aya: (وَالْبَحْرِ الْمَسْجُورِ) (الطور: ٦ (...and by the sea seething) (Ghali,2005:523). In this aya, an oath by Allah can be directed either to the full or to empty sea.

Proposed Renderings

- (a) By the full sea.
- (b) By the empty sea.

3.The SL Word (القاسط)

NO.	SL Word	Default Meaning	Secondary Meaning
3.	القاسط	العادل	الظالم

Interpretation

The SL word (القاسط) may indicate two opposite meanings. It can mean "العاذل" (*the just one*), as in the following aya:

٩: (وَأَقْسِطُوا إِنَّ اللَّهَ يُحِبُّ الْمُقْسِطِينَ) (الْحُجُرَات: ٩) (... and be equitable. Surely Allah loves the equitable(ones) (Ghali, 2005:516). In addition to that, it can mean "الظالم" (*the unjust one*). Consider this aya:

١٥: (وَأَمَّا الْقَاسِطُونَ فَكَانُوا لِجَهَنَّمَ حَطَبًا) (الجن: ١٥) (And as for the inequitable, then they are firewood for Hell) (Ghali,2005:573). If one expects that the word "القاسطون", in the above-mentioned aya, indicates the meaning of "العاذلون", there will be a kind of semantic clash with the word "جَهَنَّمَ" (*Hell*). So, one can infer from the linguistic context that the word "القاسطون" should refer to "الظالمون" (*the unjust ones*) to make sense in the aya above (Al-Lughawi and Al-Halabi, 2012:234).

4.The SL Word (ظن)

NO.	SL Word	Default Meaning	Secondary Meaning
4.	ظن	ظن	تيقن

Interpretation

If one carefully investigates the intended unrelated meanings of the above-mentioned SL verb "ظَنَّ", it will be inferred that the verb (ظَنَّ) can imply either the primary meaning of "ظَنَّ" (*thought doubtedly*) or the secondary one "تَيَقَّنَ" (*believed*). The following ayas might illustrate this phenomenon in some detail.

قال تعالى (الَّذِينَ يَظُنُّونَ أَنَّهُمْ مُلْقُوا اللَّهَ) البقرة: ٢٤٩

(...the ones who expect that they will be meeting Allah) (Ghali,2005:41). As for Ghali's rendition, the present verb "يَظُنُّونَ" has been rendered in a wrong way, since it implies the meaning of "يستيقنون" (*make sure*); therefore; Allah praises them. Furthermore, Allah does not praise the ones who cast doubt in meeting Him (Al-Lughawi and Al-Halabi,2012: 189). Thus, the proposed rendering of the whole above aya can be as in:

"The ones who make sure that they will meet Allah".

قال تعالى (مَا نَدْرِي مَا السَّاعَةُ إِنْ نُنظِنُ إِلَّا ظَنًّا) الجاثية: ٣٢

(In no way do we realize what the Hour is; decidedly we surmise about it (just a surmise) (Ghali, 2005: 329).

It is proper to highlight the intended meaning of the underlined verb "ظَنَّ". In the above aya, the verb "ظَنَّ" encodes the meaning of "شكُّ" (*thought*) (Al-Lugawi and Al-Halabi, 2012:189).

5.The SL Word (شرى)

NO.	SL Word	Default Meaning	Secondary Meaning
5.	شرى	اشترى	باع

Interpretation

It is extremely significant to signal that the SL verb (اشترى) refers to the pure oppositeness. So, this verb could give the sense of "اشترى" (*bought*) and, at the same time, it may indicate the meaning of "باع" (*sold*). Consider the following aya: ٢٠ (وشروه بئمن بحس) يوسف: ٢٠. Here, the context of situation points out that Yousouf's brothers sold him. On the contrary, the verb (اشترى) may convey the same of its original meaning "اشترى" (*bought*) (Al-Lughawi and Al-Halabi, 2012:162-3). In addition, when the context of situation could not be realized, one cannot disambiguate the text in a proper way. Consider the following example: شريت قميصاً .

Proposed Renderings

(a) I bought a shirt.

(b) I sold a shirt.

6.The SL Word (الجل)

NO.	SL Word	Default Meaning	Secondary Meaning
6.	الجل	العظيم	الصغير

Interpretation

The SL adjective (جل) can include two totally different meanings. It can refer either to "littleness" or "greatness" at the same time. It may mean "العظيم" (*great*)

or it may indicate "المهين" (*trivial*). The following poetic verse shows the meaning of "صغير":

كُلُّ شَيْءٍ مَا خَلَا الْمَوْتَ جَلَلٌ وَالْفَتَى يَسْعَى وَيُلْهِيهِ الْأَمَلُ

Anything, except death, is a matter of course

and the man lives in the allusion of hope

In the above poetic verse, the word "جَلَلٌ" implies the meaning of "هين" (*trivial*) (Al-Lughawi and Al-Halabi, 2012: 86-; Al-Syuti, 2007:309).

7.The SL Word(السليم)

NO.	SL Word	Default Meaning	Secondary Meaning
7.	السليم	السليم	المدوغ

Interpretation

It is worth noting that the SL noun "السليم" (*the healthy one*) can imply two opposite senses. Thus, it may mean "the one who is in a good health" "السليم". It may also carry the meaning of "المدوغ" "the one who is bitten by a snake, scorpion or anything else". This meaning is activated and employed for the sake of optimism (Al-Anbari,2013:72).

8.The SL Word(اللحن)

NO.	SL Word	Default Meaning	Secondary Meaning
8.	اللحن	الخطأ	الصحيح

Interpretation

The SL noun(اللحن) can include two unrelated and opposite meanings. It may convey the sense of "الخطأ" (*wrong*) or "الصواب" (*right*). In Arabic, the word (اللحن) is widely identified in the sense of "خطأ". So, there is no need for more clarification. In contrast, when the word(اللحن) implies the meaning of "صواب", it needs to be illustrated further. Consider the following aya: { مُحَمَّدٌ: ٣٠ } (وَلَتَعْرِفَنَّهُمْ) (في لحن القول (...and indeed you would definitely know them by the distortion in their saying) (Ghali, 2005:510) (Al-Daqeeqi, 2013:67).

9.The SL Word(الجَوْن)

NO.	SL Word	Default Meaning	Secondary Meaning
9.	الجَوْن	الأسود	الأبيض

Interpretation

It is quite evident that the SL noun(الجَوْن) can convey two opposite senses. Thus, it may refer to radically opposite colours. It may also carry the meaning of "أبيض"(white) or "أسود"(black). Let us take the following poetic verse by the famous poetess Al-Khansaa:

فَلَنْ أَصَالِحَ قَوْمًا كُنْتُ حَرَبَهُمْ حَتَّى يَعودَ بِيَاضًا جَوْنَةَ القَارِ

I will never compromise with those who I was quarrelling with
till the white colour turns to pure black

(Al-Daqeeqi, 2013:129)

10.The SL Word(بعث)

NO.	SL Word	Default Meaning	Secondary Meaning
10.	بعث	اشترى	باع

Interpretation

The SL verb above(بعث) clearly represents the phenomenon of Al-Tadhaad because it gives two opposite meanings at the same time. The verb(بعث) may imply "بعث" (sold) or "اشترى"(bought). It is far better to take the example below into consideration:

بِعْ لِي تَمْرًا بِدِرْهَمٍ.

It is essential to lay great focus on the intended meaning of the imperative verb (بِعْ). In fact, if translators pay no enough attention to the phenomenon of Al-Tadhaad in the imperative verb(بِعْ), they may wrongly render the text under discussion into English.

(a)Proposed Rendering

Sell me dates by dirham.

It is more enlightening and significant to show how the above-discussed text (بئ (لي تمرأ بدرهم

(b)Proposed Rendering

Buy me dates by dirham.

11.The SL Word(بصير)

NO.	SL Word	Default Meaning	Secondary Meaning
11.	بصير	بصير	أعمى

Interpretation

It is undeniable obviousness, in Arabic, that the noun(بصير) can encode two opposite meanings. Thus, (بصير) may either refer originally to "البصير"the one who does not suffer from blindness or to "*the blind one*" the one who goes blind. Some Arab semanticists are of the view that the noun(بصير) can be utilized instead of "أعمى" (*the blind one*) for the sake of optimism and euphemism (Al-Anbari,2013:216).

12.The SL Word(الغريم)

NO.	SL Word	Default Meaning	Secondary Meaning
12.	الغريم	الدائن	المدين

Interpretation

The main issue in the above-mentioned SL noun(الغريم) is that it can encode two opposite meanings. It can be utilized either in the meaning of "الدائن"(*creditor*) or "المدين"(*debtor*). As a result, the translators' awareness must be raised so as to avoid making horrible mistakes during the process of translation. For more illustration, one can consider the following poetic verse:

تُطالِعُنَا خَيَالَاتٌ لِسَلْمَى كَمَا يَتَطَلَّعُ الدَّيْنَ الْغَرِيمُ

We imagine that we gaze at Salma

As the creditor is looking forward his indebt to be paid back

(Al-Anbari, 2013: 128).

13.The SL Word(بَعْد)

NO.	SL Word	Default Meaning	Secondary Meaning
13.	بَعْد	بَعْد	قَبْل

Interpretation

It is really important to shed some light on the fact that the SL adverb (بعد) can imply the two opposite meanings. Such crucial phenomenon "Al-Tadhaad" should not go unnoticed on the part of translators in order not to create inconvenient renderings. In Arabic, the SL adverb (بعد) may convey the sense of Al-Tadhaad. Thus, it can be utilized in the sense of the word "قبل" (*before*). To illustrate more and more, one can consider the following aya, (النَّازِعَات: ٣٠ (وَالْأَرْضَ بَعْدَ ذَلِكَ دَحَاهَا) (And the earth, after that He flattened it (for life) (Ghali, 2005 : 584). It is also enlightening to consider the other aya as in: (وَلَقَدْ كَتَبْنَا فِي الزَّبُورِ مِنْ بَعْدِ الذِّكْرِ) (And indeed We have already written in the Scripture, even after the Remembrance)(Ghali,2005:331)(Al-Lughawi and Al-Halabi, 2012:64).

14.The SL Word (لَا)

NO.	SL Word	Default Meaning	Secondary Meaning
14.	لَا	نفي	إثبات

Interpretation

It is crystal clear that, in Arabic, Al-Tadhaad is not widely exercised in the field of markers. Even though, occasionally, one can come across certain markers which denote the meaning of Al-Tadhaad. As far as the marker(لا) is concerned, it may indicate both negative and positive at the same time. So, consider the following illustrative aya: (وَحَرَامٌ عَلَى قَرْيَةٍ أَهْلَكْنَاهَا أَنَّهُمْ لَا يَرْجِعُونَ) (٩٥). Obviously, the underlined verb (لا يرجعون) indicates positive but, Ghali (2005: 330) renders the whole aya as if it is in the negative as in (And it is prohibited for any town We have caused to perish that they will not return) (Al-Anbari, 2013:133).

15.The SL Word (فُوق)

NO.	SL Word	Default Meaning	Secondary Meaning
15.	فُوق	أعظم	دون

Interpretation

It is essential to remark that there is a kind of hidden oppositeness in the sense of the word, i.e. "فوق" (*over*). So, it may imply two opposite meanings. It refers to its default meaning, i.e. "فوق" (*over*). At the same time, it means "دون" (*under*). Consider the following illustrative aya:

قال تعالى (إِنَّ اللَّهَ لَا يَسْتَحْي أَن يَضْرِبَ مَثَلًا مَّا بَعُوضَةً فَمَا فَوْقَهَا) البقرة: ٢٦. (Surely Allah does not shy from striking a likeness even of a gnat, or anything above it) (Ghali,2005:302). Here, one could view that the underlined word "فُوق" implies its original meaning, i.e. "فوق" (*over*). Moreover, one can view such usage in Arabic (Al-Fayruz Abaadi, 2007:933). It is essential to point out that the word (فُوق) could give two opposite meanings; therefore, there are many views regarding the exact meaning of this word. Consequently, the word (فُوق) is interpreted into "أعظم" (*bigger than*) or "أصغر" (*smaller than*) or (Al-Baquli, 2011:28).

Proposed Rendering

Certainly Allah does not shy from striking a likeness even of a gnat, or anything whether it is smaller or bigger than it.

16.The SL Word (نُدُّ)

NO.	SL Word	Default Meaning	Secondary Meaning
16.	نُدُّ	مِثْل	ضد

Interpretation

The SL noun (نُدُّ) could imply two unrelated and opposite meanings. It may convey the sense of "مِثْل" (*like or similar*) or "ضد" (*against*). In Arabic, the word (نُدُّ) could easily be recognized in the sense of "مِثْل". In contrast, when the word (نُدُّ) implies the meaning of "ضد", it is far better to be illustrated in a very characteristic way, as in this aya: {البقرة: ٢٢} (So do

not set up compeers to Allah and you know (He has no compeers) (Ghali,2005:4) (Al-Anbari,2013:18-9).

17.The SL Word(الناهل)

NO.	SL Word	Default Meaning	Secondary Meaning
17.	الناهل	الريان	العطشان

Interpretation

It is crystal clear, in Arabic, that the adjective "الناهل" might encode two opposite meanings. As such, the word "الناهل" may either refer originally to "الريان" "the one who is full of water", i.e. (*quencher*) or to "عطشان" "*the one who is in urgent need of water*" (*thirsty*). Some Arab semanticists hold the view that the adjective (الناهل) cannot be utilized in place of "الريان" (*quencher*) and "عطشان" (*thirsty*) Accordingly, one cannot categorically determine the exact meaning of the word "الناهل" unless there is a convenient context of situation. In other words, the word (الناهل) is better to be contextualized in a convenient environment to be recognized by the reader. Then, the intended meaning is crystalized in a sensible manner (Ali, 2011:343).

Discussion in general

As noted in the tables of the current paper, just one word of Al-Tadhaad can alter radically the intended message of the whole text. As a result, translators must be fully aware and get familiar with the phenomenon of Al-Tadhaad so as to produce appropriate renderings as possible as they can. As such, novice and expert translators could make wide use of the identification of this phenomenon so as to distance themselves from making any possible mistake during the process of translation.

Conclusions

The present paper has arrived at the following conclusions:

1.A large number of translators do not expect that there is a one certain word in Arabic which could imply two opposite and unrelated meanings.

2.Al-Tadhaad is one of the characteristic features of Arabic. So, it is considered a very unique terminology which is confined to Arabic.

- 3.Sometimes Al-Tadhaad could be invested by some writers to expand the meaning widely.
- 4.Some poets can make wide use of the phenomenon of Al-Tadhaad to establish intentional vagueness for aesthetic communication.
- 5.Some translators do not differentiate between antonymy which is confined to two independent and opposite words and Al-Tadhaad which is restricted to one word with two opposite meanings.
- 6.English lacks even a convenient terminology for the Arabic phenomenon of Al-Tadhaad.
- 7.Even if Al-Tadhaad takes place once only within the text, it can distort the whole message if it is neglected on the part of translators.
- 8.The context of situation and the linguistic context serve a crucial role in the disambiguation of the text which includes certain words of Al-Tadhaad whenever it occurs.
- 9.Just one word of Al-Tadhaad can alter the whole meaning of the text radically.

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