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## A Conceptual Framework for Translating Deictic Expressions in Literary Texts

### S T R A C T

Deictic expressions can affect the literary translation. They represent a way of guiding readers to imagine a fictional world when reading a literary work in a source text and target one. Yet, the literature lacks a conceptual framework correlating the use of deixis and their translation, especially in relation to literary works. Hence, this paper attempts to build a conceptual framework relating deixis and their translation in literary works, especially in relation to poetic translation. It is suggested that deixis can be a considerable issue in conducting the accurate poetic translation. This can be achieved by developing a model that considers deixis in poetic translation. Therefore, the study built a network that can be used to translate the deictic expressions used in literary works, e.g., poems, novels, plays and short stories

اطار مفاهيمي لترجمة التعبيرات الاشارية في النصوص الادبية

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الخلاصة يمكن أن تؤثر التعبيرات الاشارية على الترجمة الأدبية. فهي تمثل وسيلة لإقناع القراء بتخيل عالم خيالي عند قراءة عمل أدبي في النص الاصلي والنص المترجم اليه. حتى الآن، تفتقر الدراسات السابقة إلى اطار مفاهيمي يربط استخدام الاشارات المرجعية وترجمتها، خاصة فيما يتعلق بالأعمال الأدبية. ومن ثم، يحاول هذا البحث بناء اطار مفاهيمي يربط الاشارات المرجعية وترجمتها في الأعمال الأدبية، وبخاصة فيما يتعلق بالترجمة الشعرية. ويقترح أن الاشارات المرجعية يمكن أن تكون ذات اشكالية في إجراء الترجمة الشعرية الدقيقة. يمكن تحقيق ذلك بوضع نموذج يدرس الاشارات المرجعية في الترجمة الشعرية. ولذلك، تم بناء اطارا يمكن أن يستخدم لترجمة التعبيرات الاشارية المستخدمة في الأعمال الأدبية، مثل القصائد، الروايات، والمسرحيات والقصص القصيرة.

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## **1.1 Introduction**

The use of deictic expressions represents an element that can affect the literary translation. "The use of deixis is thus one of the ways in which writers persuade readers to imagine a fictional world when they read poems, novels, and plays" (Short, 1996, p.100). The significance of deixis to cope a stylistic analysis of a literary text is being the concern of many studies (Culler, 1997; Fowler, 1981; Gavins & Steen, 2003; Leech & Short, 1981; Levinson, 1983; Short, 1996; Simpson, 1993; Stockwell, 2002). Deixis and poetry both reveal linguistic self-referentiality; deixis is being rather implicitly and poetry more explicitly (Merilai, 2003). As a result, deixis has a crucial impact on enriching themes of poems and expressing the poet's opinion regarding the power of themes. In addition, sometimes it is difficult to explain deixis unless it is being related to the extra linguistic context of the expression. The function of deixis used in poems is to concentrate on specific poetic topics, carry readers to different settings, and make them share the desired mood of the poem (Sultan, 2006).

Authors like Al-Azzawi, 2011; Bosseaux, 2007; Doiz-Bienzobas, 2003; Krein-Kühle, 2002; Mason and Şerban, 2003; Şerban, 2004 and Whittaker, 2004 discovered that deictic shifts are misleading in translation and may indeed affect the contextualization of the text. In 1995, Dry indicated that ambiguity in deixis can improve our comprehension of a character, whereas Stockwell (2002) proved that it enables various themes to be tracked in a literary work. Zandi and Azizinezhad (2011) said that understanding the connotation of the whole poem whilst translating the deictic expressions helps to recognize the meaning of deictic expressions. The identification of the translational changes between both ST and TT can be achieved by comparing them and this in turn can clarify the TT's deictic features which reflect those of ST and then to be assigned to the translational interpretation (Goethals & De Wilde, 2009).

Moreover, poetic translation can be affected by different linguistic and semantic elements and there will be a defect in the translation due to the absence of deixis in the analytic procedure. Deixis has an important impact in identifying the actual meaning of the original poem. Thus, it plays a crucial role in poetic translation. There are many related studies, articles, theses, and dissertations that dealt with deictic expressions in literary texts and their translations, such as poetry, novels, short stories, plays and fictions, especially in Persian, German, English, Portugal,

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Chinese, Russian, Italian, Japanese, and Spanish languages (Adamson, 2006; Boctor, 1987; Breem, 2006; Dehcheshmeh, 2013; Entwistle, 2010; Freeman, 1997; Gavins & Stockwell, 2012; Goethals & De Wilde, 2009; Green, 1992; Hasan, 2010; Henriksen, 2001; Hussein, 2013; Johnson, 2011; Jong, 2012; Koyama, 2004; Riccobono, 1996; Semino, 2011; Sousa, 2011; Straiton, 2009; Zandi & Azizinezhad, 2011). Other studies dealt with the use of deixis in certain chapters from the Holy Qur'an, Al-Hadeeth Al-Nabawi, and Arabic statements (Al-Saif, 2008; Faizah, 2008; Masyhuroh, 2008; Zaki, 2011). Besides, there are studies conducted to study the translation of deixis and define its effect on the translated texts (Mason & Şerban, 2003; Morini, 2014; Poerwalangendaru & Asmarani, 2013; Semlali, 2006; V., 2012; Widaryaningrum, 2013).

In spite of its importance, the poetic translation still faces crucial problems and difficulties regarding the linguistic, semantic, and pragmatic aspects of ST; therefore, it is considered to be critical inasmuch the restrictions it requires (Alawi, 2010; Kolahi & Shiraz, 2012; Prynne, 2010; Zandi & Azizinezhad, 2011). Panajoti (2013) clarifies that the explanation of linguistic features is problematic in the analysis of poetic discourse translation. The application of pragmatics to poetry is revealed in the comparisons between ST and TT. This happens because the poetic translation does not reflect the translator's poetic anticipation but the effective analysis of each line in the poem. Levy (1969) ensured that problems in poetic translation arise when the translator becomes a close reader and uses the word-for-word translation equally.

However, the current study differs from previous studies related to translation of deictic expressions in literary texts in that it is related to conceptualizing a framework for translating deixis in Arabic poetry, and its effect on the meaning of the poem in ST and when it is translated into English. Such a topic has not been dealt with before and this configures the gap that this study will be conducted to fill. The present study will build a model through mixing two poetic translation models and a deixis analysis model following the polysystem theory that aims to provide and integrate these models as one model (Lambert, 1995) to analyze the use of deixis in poetic translation, especially from Arabic into English, since the current poetic translation models do not incorporate deixis. Therefore, there should be a model to integrate deixis and poetic translation with consideration of author's, translator's, and reader's roles in order to tackle such a problematic case.

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The significance of the current study is to enhance the accuracy and fluidity of poetic translation. By accuracy it is meant that the Arabic poetry has to be equal to the English poetry; and by fluidity it is meant that the flow or stylistics of poetry should be maintained even after translation. It is hoped that this study will have a significant contribution to fill the gap in literature regarding the poetic translation with deixis theoretically and practically. Theoretically, this study is conducted to show the importance of poetic translation in reflecting the intended message of ST by a proper translation for it in TL without deviating the meaning of the original poem.

This study integrates three main parts in applied linguistics, namely discourse, literature, and translation. Deixis or deictic expressions, as being related to discourse, can affect the meaning of the translated poem in that it has a strong referential meaning which can be applied in poetic translation. This can be attained by studying the semantic and pragmatic features of deixis and how it can make the intended meaning clear. In relation to literature, it concentrates on the importance of poetry in composing meaningful expressions to convey a meaning of a certain theme to make the reader interested in what s/he reads. With regard to translation, it is a very important means of communication among different nations; it can be spoken or written. Translation is being of a considerable matter in relation to poetry that it can deliver the intended meaning properly or deviate it depending on the translator and his/her ability to deal with different types of texts and how to translate them.

## **1.2 Literature Review**

### **1.2.1 Translation**

Translation is defined as a process through which the tenor of a text in source language (henceforth, SL) is transferred into target language (henceforth, TL) (Oxford, 2001; Sherry, 2003). Nida and Taber (1982) believed that translation should reproduce the message of the source text (hereafter, ST) in a proper equivalent in target text (hereafter, TT) semantically and stylistically. Therefore, translation must include lexical, grammatical, and rhetorical meaning, whether being implied or concluded, for the target readers since it is a process of challenge to cover the intended meaning of the ST author to the TT reader (Hatim & Mason, 1990). So, it can be said that translation is composed of description and prescription, being a process and product, and formed production and reproduction (Sherry, 2003).

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The notion of making the same or nearly the same effect of TL as that of SL one is of elementary studies (Panajoti, 2013). This has been noticed in Nida and Taber's work when they stated that the meaning is transferred through a dynamic translation to produce the total content, concepts, and feelings of a text which are needed to be understood and perceived by the reader (Nida & Taber, 1969). Hatim and Mason (1990) clarified that translators have to examine the text as a whole entity; in this case, strategies like omissions, additions, and alternations may be used in order to convey the intended meaning.

In addition, a successful translation must have the feature of equality. To be equal, Nida (1964) stated that, ST and TT have to be analyzed in accordance with the following basic requirements of translation:

- Understanding the content intended meaning.
- Transferring the essence and style of the ST.
- Making use of simple and straight expressions.
- Creating a comparable effect.

In relation to this, Prynne (2010) appended that TT must have the same characteristics of language use; e.g. if ST is being difficult in terms of the used words, then TT must be of the same difficulty.

### **1.2.2 Poetic Translation**

Poetry has been a focused topic in literary studies since decades because of its importance in delivering different meanings and tackling various issues, e.g. cultural, social, and political; thus many researchers and scholars (Newmark, 1988; Oxford, 2001; Panajoti, 2013; Sherry, 2003) tried their best to formulate a comprehensive definition for poetry. For Newmark (1988, p.163), poetry is "a personal and concentrated form of writing with no redundancy, no phatic language, where, as a unit, the word has greater importance than in any other type of text", and he continued by adding that it "presents the thing in order to convey the feeling, in particular, and however concrete the language, each represents something else- a feeling, behavior, or a view of life as well as itself" (p.164). In the same concern, Oxford (2001) agreed with this definition and confirmed that poetry is a literary message whereby much concern is being paid to the expression of feelings, thoughts, ideas or the description of places or events by using a distinctive style, rhythm, and imagination. In addition to that, Sherry (2003) stated that poetry is a composition of skillful expressions that are used in a stylistic way of writing to express the inner passions of the poet. As a matter of elaboration, Panajoti (2013) defined poetry as a literary work that reflects a linguistic manipulation regarding its organization and the usage of aesthetic effects.

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Being such a valuable and distinctive literary work, poetry needs to be translated in order to popularize the worthy cultural and artistic values to the target language (henceforth, TL) readers. Poetic translation contributes to transfer these values of a nation to other nations and in this way it is being of a crucial role in configuring their characters (Zandi & Azizinezhad, 2011). In the poetic translation, the translators should take in consideration the basic linguistic and psychological elements, such as: lexical, grammatical, rhetorical, functional, social, and cultural elements (Sherry, 2003; Zandi & Azizinezhad, 2011). There are some shared features between composing a poem and performing translation. Such features are: selecting appropriate expressions, constructing the form, and transferring thoughts into words to be written on the page (Prynne, 2010). According to Newmark (1988:p.165), poetic translation means “the selection of a TL poetic form, reproduction of the figurative meaning, the concrete image of the poem and reproduction of the setting, the thought; ... a successful poem is always another poem”. Thorsell (1998) added that poetic translation can be direct and indirect, i.e. direct translation when the translator maintains the original meaning and indirect one when s/he tries to transfer the intended theme of the text. In poetic translation, the priority must be given to the meaning correspondence over that of style.

In poetic translation, the selection of the most appropriate meaning for the vocabulary that has more than one alternative meaning depends on the reader/translator ability in confirming its intended meaning (Prynne, 2010). In order to perform a successful poetic translation, certain features and elements need to be focused on (Nida, 1964; Prynne, 2010; Sherry, 2003); such as the artistic and subjective aspects where the conversion of the meaning plays an important role, thus all ST aspects, i.e. semantic and aesthetic information, should be transferred into TT (Sherry, 2003). Sherry (2003) added that recreation, translator’s basic orientation, and familiarity with SL linguistic and semantic structures all have a considerable impact on poetic translation and identification of its type. Moreover, Sherry (2003) claimed that to be a perfect translator of poetic text, s/he ought to be “a bilingual poet”.

### **1.2.3 Deixis**

Deixis is a Greek term which means “pointing” by the use of language, refers to the use of indicators within an expression to refer to personal, temporal, or even spatial characteristics to make the relations very clear (Yule, 2010). In its primitive or primary function, deixis is associated with the gesture of pointing in actual space, from which it derives its

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appellation, and there appears to be general agreement among pragmatic and functional approaches to deixis as regards its role as a device through which this situation-bound, gesticulative action of pointing to a physical object is formalized in grammar. Language enables to portray and process events and states of affairs which are not part of the immediate speech situation. The occurrence in speech of indexical devices irrespective of the actual physical presence or absence of the referent suggests that physical pointing is transferrable, as a cognitive action, to a discourse-based linguistic context (Matras, 1998).

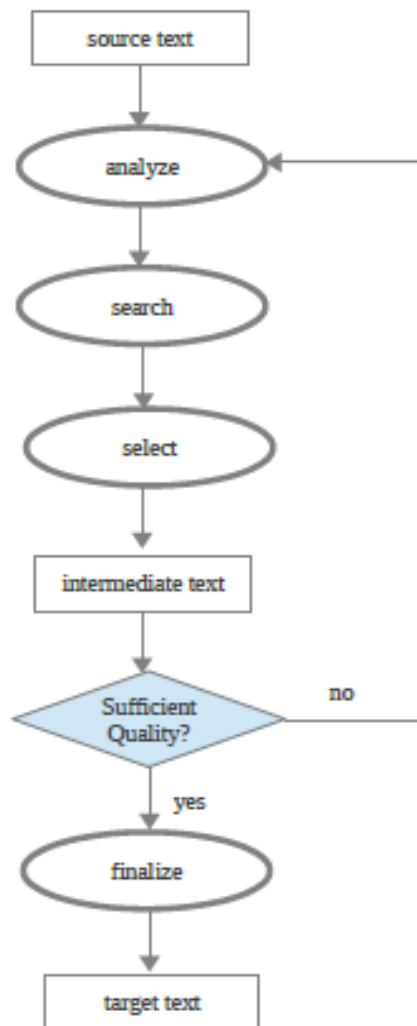
In linguistics, deixis refers to words and phrases, such as "me" or "here", that cannot be fully understood without additional contextual information; in this case, the identity of the speaker ("me") and the speaker's location ("here"). Words are deictic if their semantic meaning is fixed but their denotational meaning varies depending on time and/or place. Words or phrases that require contextual information to convey any meaning, for example, English pronouns are deictic. In linguistic anthropology, deixis is treated as a particular subclass of the more general semiotic phenomenon of indexicality, a sign "pointing to" some aspect of its context of occurrence (Lyons, 1977).

Possibly the most common categories of contextual information referred to by deixis are those of person, place, and time; what Fillmore (1971) calls the "major grammaticalized types" of deixis. Person deixis concerns itself with the grammatical persons involved in an utterance, (1) those directly involved (e.g. the speaker, the addressee), (2) those not directly involved (e.g. overhearers; those who hear the utterance but who are not being directly addressed), and (3) those mentioned in the utterance (Levinson, n.d.). Place deixis, also known as space deixis, concerns itself with the spatial locations relevant to an utterance. Similarly, to person deixis, the locations may be either those of the speaker and addressee or those of persons or objects being referred to. The most salient English examples are the adverbs "here" and "there" and the demonstratives "this" and "that", although those are far from being the only deictic words (Fillmore, 1971). Place deictic terms are generally understood to be relative to the location of the speaker. Although "here" and "there" are often used to refer to locations near to and far from the speaker, respectively, "there" can also refer to the location of the addressee, if they are not in the same location as the speaker (Levinson, n.d.). Time, or temporal, deixis concerns itself with the various times involved in and referred to in an utterance. This includes time adverbs like "now", "then", "soon", and so forth, and also different tenses. A good example is the word *tomorrow*, which denotes the consecutive next day after every day.

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The "tomorrow" of a day last year was a different day from the "tomorrow" of a day next week. Time adverbs can be relative to the time when an utterance is made (Fillmore, 1971).

### 1.3 The Conceptual Framework



This study aims at building a conceptual framework for correlating deixis and translation of literary works, especially poetic translation. The following figure illustrates the conceptual framework for translating deixis in poetic works.



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**Figure 1:** the conceptual framework for translating deixis in poetic works

As illustrated in Figure 1, this conceptual framework contains a number of steps through which translation of deixis in poetic works can be achieved. The first step in this framework is related to the source text that needs to be translated into target text (whether from Arabic into English or vice versa). Firstly, this text has to be analyzed in order to extract the main ideas in the text to understand it when being read in ST and TT. After analysis, it is time to search for the main deictic expressions found in the text to find the equivalent translation for them. Then, the translator has to select the best translation for deictic expressions that are found in ST into TT. Next, the translator has to write down the first draft of translation to examine whether TT is equivalent to ST or not. If the translator believes that TT can be read and understood by readers as it is in ST and that this TT has the sufficient quality of ST, then TT is ready to be written in its final draft or form. However, if the translator believes that TT is not good and does not have the sufficient quality of ST, then s/he has to re-translate the text until reaching the best translation for ST into TT.

#### **1.4 Conclusion**

This paper aims at building a conceptual framework correlating translation of deictic expressions with poetic translation. The literature lacks such a framework; consequently, this study has contributed to the existing literature on deictic expressions and poetic translation by formulating this framework to be employed by translators when performing translation process.

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