

*Degree of Strength as a Distinctive
Feature in Translating Directives of
Similar Illocutionary Point*

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Abstract

Among different approaches to translation is the pragmatic one. This approach attempts to explain translation from the point of view of what is potentially done by the original author in the text and what is potentially done in the translation as a response to the original text. Adopting such an approach in which speech act functions as a unit of translation, translators continuously face the problem of translating certain speech acts of similar illocutionary point. The present paper is an attempt to solve such a problem by using the degree of strength of the illocutionary force as a distinctive feature in translating illocutionary forces of speech acts of similar illocutionary point. A brief theoretical background of the terms used in this paper is submitted with examples. Practically directives of similar illocutionary point have been chosen to be the data of analysis. So, this paper helps translators to overcome the difficulties of translating directives of similar illocutionary point by providing a method by which such acts can be distinguished.

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1. Degree of Strength

The term "Degree of Strength' has been used in pragmatics as one of the components of the illocutionary Force to express the amount of intensity of the mental states of the speaker (Searle and Vanderveken, 1985: 15). The importance of such a degree lies in comparing those illocutionary forces which have the same illocutionary point (Vanderveken, 1990: 120 and Searle, 1998. 102) For example, the

illocutionary forces of supplication and requesting have the same illocutionary point in that the speaker wants the hearer to do something for him. However, to distinguish between these two forces, it can be said that the degree of strength of supplication is greater than that of requesting because a speaker who supplicates expresses a stronger desire than a speaker who requests (Ballmer and Brennenstuhl, 1981: 67 and Vanderveken, 1990: 119) Strength of sincerity conditions is the strength of the psychological state that the speaker commits to in employing a particular illocutionary force. Searle and Vanderveken (1985) cite requesting and ordering as illocutionary acts that show a distinction between the two strengths.

Ordering in their analysis, has a greater degree of strength of illocutionary point than requesting, due, at least in part, to the institutional authority of the orderer. But they add that ordering does not necessarily express a commitment to a stronger accompanying psychological state of desire; that is, requesting and ordering need not have a different degree of strength of sincerity conditions. despite their different degree of strength of illocutionary point Thus, they distinguish the two terms. Here are some speech acts that illustrate strength of sincerity conditions.

Suggesting and swearing

Promising and vowing

Requesting and demanding

Approving and endorsing (Searle and Vanderveken, 1985: 98)

The second act in each pair has a greater degree of strength of sincerity conditions than the first.

2. Increment of the Degree of Strength

The degree of strength of an illocutionary force can be increased by different means. For example, adverbs like 'sincerely, frankly' can be used to strengthen the degree of strength. When a speaker says "frankly, he is dead" the degree of force is greater than that when he says "he is dead". The mode of achievement of the force can also increase the degree of the force. For example, commanding has a greater degree of strength than requesting because of the special mode of achievement of the directive point that increases the degree of strength of the illocutionary force (Vanderveken, 1990: 120, Al-Sulaimaan, 2001. 18 and 2002. 105) The intensity of the desire can be another source of increasing the degree of strength. For example, pleading has a greater degree of strength than requesting because of the intensity of desire expressed in pleading (Searle and Vanderveken, 1985 15) Another example is that of blaming and accusation. The public mode of achievement of an accusation increases its degree of strength more than that of blaming (Vanderveken, 1990. 179).

3. Degree of Strength as a Distinctive Feature

The term 'Distinctive Feature' has been mainly used in phonology. The purpose of using this term is to enable us to make a contrast between different linguistic units that share many features but differ in only one feature which distinguishes one unit from the other (Crystal, 1985: 98 and Poole, 1999. 56) For instance, the two phonemes /p/ and /b/ are distinguished by the feature of voiceness. Thus, /p/ is voiceless, whereas /b/ is voiced. In this paper, the concept of distinctiveness will be adopted and applied to the degree of strength to be used in translating the illocutionary forces of speech acts of similar illocutionary point. For

example, the following English verbs differ only in their degree of strength. A scale of integers (0-4) can be used to indicate the degree of strength as in the following table:

Title		Degree of strength				
		0	1	2	3	4
<i>Illocutionary Force</i>	Directives	Suggest	Direct	Request	Beg	Supplicate
		Suggest	Tell	Demand	Order	Command
		Suggest	Advise	Recommend		Alarm
		Suggest	Warn	Caution	Alert	
	Declaratives	Declare	Pardon	Forgive	Absolve	
		Declare	Enact	Promulgate	Decree	
		Declare	Approve	Confirm	Sanction	
	Commissives	Commit	Pledge	Vow	Swear	
		Commit	Accept	Agree		
		Commit	Pledge	Assure	Certify	
	assertives	Assert	Tell	Inform	Reveal	Divulge
		Assert	Tell	Sustain	Attest	Testify
		Assert	Criticize	Blame	Accuse	Castigate
	Expressives	Express	Approve	praise	Laud	Boast
		Express	Greet	Welcome		
		Express	Complain	Deplore	Protest	
		Express	Complain	Disapprove	Blame	
		Express	Complain	Grieve	Mourn	

Table (1) Degree of Strength of Some English Speech Act Verbs

4. Degree of strength of Directives

This paper studies the degree of strength of Directive acts. In order to be more specific, only the act of suggestion with two of its different sequences of forces will be investigated. As table (1) indicates, the act of 'suggest' can be considered as the origin of four may be more, different sequence of subacts. The difference between these acts lies in the fact that in each force what is strengthened differs from what is strengthened in another force. For instance, in the sequence "Suggest, Direct, Request, Beg, Supplicate", what is strengthened here is the degree to which the speaker wants the hearer to do something though the speaker is not in a position (Mode of achievement) to ask so. while in the sequence "Suggest, Tell, Demand, Order, Command", what is strengthened is the degree to which the speaker wants the hearer to do something and the speaker is in a position (Mode of achievement) to ask so.

5. Determining the Illocutionary Force of Directives

For Directives, certain features of speech act have to be specified to determine the Illocutionary force. The most important ones needed for this purpose are

1. The speaker wants the hearer to do the state of affair (+).
2. The state of affairs is a future event (+) or not (-).
3. The state of affairs involves an agent (+) (the hearer)
4. The speaker is in a position to ask the hearer to do the state of affair (+),if not (-).
5. Degree of strength as given above (0-4).

The following table shows the criteria to be adopted to determine the Illocutionary Force of Directives.

Title	Act Features				
	1	2	3	4	5
Act					
Direct	+	+	+	+	1
Request	+	+	+	-	2
Beg	+	+	+	-	3
Supplicate	+	+	+	-	4
Demand	+	+	+	+	2
Order	+	+	+	+	3
Command	+	+	+	+	4

Table (2): Shows the Criteria for Determining the Illocutionary Force of Directives

6. Directives in Arabic

Directives in Arabic include, among others, j-VI' (imperative) الالتماس (request) الرجاء (supplication). The 'imperative' is defined as the request of doing something from a higher rank to a lower one. There are different forms of imperative in Arabic. The basic ones include: the imperative verb, the imperfect verb with ل as in لنذهب, verbal imperative noun as in عليكم انفسكم, and the infinitive as in فاضرب الرقاب (Haroun, 1979: 14). Requests in Arabic include Al-Iltimaas' (request) between similar ranks. Finally, 'Al- rajaa" (supplication) as in لعل (Matloub, 1980:117)

7. Data Analysis and Translation with Reference to Degree of Strength

SL Text (I)

Brutus to Cassius

"I will come home to you, if you will, come home to me, and I will wait for you". (Julius Caesar I, ii, line 310)

Interpretation

Brutus politely asks Cassius to come to his (Brutus) house using "if" to give Cassius a choice to accept or to refuse his suggestion

Text IF analysis

1	2	3	4	5	IF
+	+	+	-	2	Request

TL Texts

1. Jamal : "سأتي لاراك في بيتك أو اذا تفضل ان تأتي الى منزلي فسأنتظرك" (ص53)
2. fadhil : "ان الحبيب جئتكَ في دارك وان شئت جئتني في داري وسأنتظرك" (ص44)
3. Hamdi: "واذا اردت ان تسرني غدا فاني ازورك في منزلك او تعال انت وسأكون بانتظارك" (ص28)
4. Beirut : فاذا رغبت غدا ان اتحدث معك بشأن هذه الامور فسأتي لاراك في منزلك هذا الا اذا كنت تفضل ان تأتي الى منزلي فانا بانتظارك" (ص56)

Discussion

Three translators have given the IF of requesting. Yet, the degree of strength of the force differs. Jamal and Beirut have used اذا تفضل , اذا Whereas, Fadhil has used "او تعال" . The linguistic device اذا تفضل is more polite than اذا تفضل because it gives more chance to the hearer whether to accept or to refuse the request. However, Fadhil has expressed the IF with almost similar degree of strength. As for Hamdi, he used the imperative form "تعال" which gives so higher degree of strength that it reaches the force of an order not a request. He should have taken into consideration that ad Hamdi has the speaker is not in a position to give an order.

SL Text (2)

Cassius to Casca

Shall we sound him" (Julius Caesar: II, i, line 141)

Interpretation

Cassius asks the conspirators whether to try to find Cicero's opinion about the Conspiracy or not.

Text IF analysis

1	2	3	4	5	IF
+	+	+	-	2	Request

TL Texts

1. Jamal : "هل سنحاول ان نجس نبضه" (72)
2. fadhil : "افنسير غوره ؟" (ص 66)
3. Hamdi: "هل نسبر غوره (ص 28)"
4. Beirut : "هل نذهب اليه ونجس نبضه" (ص 79)

Discussion

All translators have given the IF with the required degree of strength. Yet, three of them have used the interrogative هل and the second translator has used أ. In Arabic both particles can be used to indicate a degree of strength that gives the hearer a chance to refuse or accept the suggestion. All the translators have taken into consideration the view that the speaker is not in a position to give an order. However, In Beirut translation the interrogation has been falsely given to نذهب and not نجس as it is required .

The Proposed Rendering لنجس نبضه

SL Text (3)

Brutus to the Conspirators

"Count the clock (Julius Caesar Li, line 193)

Interpretation

Brutus asks the rest of the conspirators to count the clock in order to know the time to make their preparations for the conspiracy

Text IF analysis

1	2	3	4	5	IF
+	+	+	+	2	Demand

TL Texts

1. Jamal : "لنصغ الى دقائقها ونعلم الوقت" (75)
2. fadhil : "عدوا الساعة" (ص 64)
3. Hamdi: "عدوا الساعة (ص 47)"
4. Beirut : دعونا نصغي الى دقائق الساعة " (ص 82)

Discussion

In this example, it is obvious that there are two directions Jamal and Beirut have given the force of requesting by using the Arabic particle ل and the verb دعونا. They, in fact, have regarded Brutus as only one member of the conspirators. Yet, he is not only a member, but the head of the conspiracy. That is, he is in a position to demand, order, or command his followers. Hence, the degree of strength should be higher than requesting. Fadhil and Hamdi, on the other hand, have taken into consideration the fact that Brutus is in a position (mode of achievement) to demand, order, or command his followers. Therefore, they have used the imperative verb عدوا. However, the increment of the degree of strength is not so high to use a command .

The Proposed Rendering لنعرف كم الوقت

SL Text (4)

Cassius to Brutus

"Nay, we -will all of us be there to fetch him" (Julius Caesar IL,i, line 212)

Interpretation

Cassius suggests that the whole conspirators should go to get Caesar out in order to kill him in the Capital.

Text IF analysis

1	2	3	4	5	IF
+	+	+	-	2	Request

TL Texts

1. Jamal : "ربما كان خيرا لنا لو زرناه واخرجناه" (76)
2. fadhil : "بل نكون كلنا هناك لمرافقته" (ص 72)
3. Hamdi: "بل نذهب جميعا لنخرجه" (ص 48)
4. Beirut : "بل نذهب جميعا الى منزله ونرافقه الى دار الحكومة" (ص 82)

Discussion

All translators have given the literal meaning without referring to the illocutionary force of requesting. They should have used the Arabic particle ل to indicate that the speaker is requesting his followers to go to Caesar's house.

The proposed rendering بل نذهب جميعا ونخرجه

SL Text (5)

Decius to Caesar

"Most mighty Caesar, let me know some cause ". (Julius Caesar: II,ii, line 69)

Interpretation

Decius begs Caesar to tell him a sound reason for not going to the Capital. He is, in fact, trying to persuade him to go.

Text IF analysis

1	2	3	4	5	IF
+	+	+	-	3	Beg

TL Texts

1. Jamal : "يا قيصر العظيم ,اضرع اليك اعطني عنذرا اخرا" (88)
2. fadhil : "يا قيصر المعظم القادر فلا اعرف سببا ما" (ص 84)
3. Hamdi: "قيصر مولاي –رب القدرة والعظمة ,انبئني ببعض سبب" (ص 57)
4. Beirut : "مولاي قيصر العظيم ,اعطني سببا اتذرع به" (ص 97)

Discussion

In this example the degree of strength of request is high because the requester is far distant from the position of the requestee. So the force, here, is the one of begging. Only Jamal has indicated the same degree of strength by using the verb اضرع Other translators have used the imperative form اعطني alone neglecting the fact that the speaker is not in a position to give orders. So, the degree of force is higher than that of the original text.

The Proposed Rendering

مولاي قيصر العظيم :اتوسل ان تعطيني سببا

SL (Text (6)

Artemidorus to Caesar

"O Caesar ,read mine first" (Julius Caesar III, i, Line 6)

"Hail, Caesar ! read this schedule Julius Caesar III, i, Line 9)

Interpretation

Artemidorus begs Caesar to read his letter twice. Yet, in the first request his voice is lower and more polite than the second Shakespeare

intentionally used the imperative form though the speaker is not in a position to give an order to indicate that the speaker is angry and to show Caesar's snobbery when he refuses the request because of the imperative form.

Text IF analysis

1	2	3	4	5	IF
+	+	+	-	3	Beg
+	+	+	-	3	"order" dramatic function

TL Texts

1. Jamal : "يا قيصر العظيم ,اضرع اليك ان تقرأ رسالتي اولاً
احبيك يا قيصر العظيم .اقرأ هذه الرسالة " (ص 97)
2. fadhil : "أي قيصر اقرأ رقتي اولاً
سلام على قيصر ,اقرأ هذه الرقعة " (ص 84)
3. Hamdi: قيصر اقرأ رقتي اولاً
"حيك الله وبياك مولاي قيصر ,اقرأ هذه الرقعة" (ص 67)
4. Beirut : " قيصر اسألك ان تقرأ رسالتي اولاً "
احبيك يا مولاي القيصر ارجوك ان تطلع على هذه الورقة " (ص 112)

Discussion

In this example, there are two apparently similar requests said by a lower ranked person to a higher one. Yet, in the second request Shakespeare intentionally used the imperative form, though the speaker is not in a position to give an order, to indicate that the speaker is angry. Translators should keep the dramatic function of imperative form in the second quotation. As for the first example only Jamal has given the force of begging by using the verb "اضرع" whereas the other translators have used the imperative verb "اقرأ" which indicates the force of an order. In the second example, three translators have given the force of an order by using whereas Beirut has used which indicates the force of begging.

The Proposed Rendering

" يا قيصر العظيم
اضرع اليك ان تقرأ رسالتي اولا "
"حيالك الله يا قيصر , اقرا هذه الرسالة "

Conclusion

Translating certain speech acts of similar illocutionary point constitutes a problem for translators who have given different translations for such acts. In (5) out of (6) examples, the translators failed to give the IF of the utterance. To solve such a problem, the degree of strength can be adopted to be a distinctive feature to find aid the specific force. In this regard, the translator has to specify the increment of the degree of strength. Such criteria involve certain steps regarding the degree of the IF of directives :

- I. The translator should determine the speaker and the hearer .
2. He should determine the rank of both speaker and hearer.
 - a. If speaker is in a higher rank, he is in a position to give orders and commands. The higher rank he is, the higher degree of strength of IF he gives in the sequence of "Suggest, Tell, Demand, Order, Command"
 - b. If both speaker and hearer are of the same rank, the degree of strength is limited to low degrees of both directions 1. "Suggest, Tell, Demand, Order, Command" and 2. "Suggest Direct, Request, Beg, Supplicate" the speaker may Suggest Tell, Direct, and Request.
 - c. If speaker is in a lower rank than hearer, The lower rank he is the higher degree of strength of IF he gives in the sequence of "Suggest, Direct, Request, Beg, Supplicate"

For "a". translators who translate from English into Arabic should use one form of imperatives, as for 'b', they have to use one form of request, whereas for 'c', they have to use one form of Al-Rajaa" .

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المستخلص

درجة القوة العبيرية كسمة مميزة في ترجمة افعال التوجيه ذات الهدف المتشابه

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يعد المنهج التداولي من المناهج المختلفة في حقل الترجمة . اذ يحاول تفسير الترجمة من منظور ما ضمنه الكاتب في النص وما تم تضمينه في ترجمة النص استجابة للنص الاصلي . وعند تبني هذا المنهج الذي يعمل فيه فعل القول كوحدة للترجمة , يواجه المترجمون باستمرار مشكلة ترجمة الافعال ذات الهدف الواحد . يحاول هذا البحث تقديم حلول لهذه المشكلة باستخدام درجة القوة التعبيرية كسمة مميزة في ترجمة معاني افعال القول ذات الهدف المتشابه . وقد قدم الباحث خلفية نظرية موجزة للمصطلحات المستخدمة فيه مع الامثلة . اما فيما يتعلق بالجانب العملي فقد تم اختيار افعال التوجيه ذات الهدف المتشابه كمعطيات للتحليل . لذا فإن هذا البحث يساعد المترجمين في تجاوز صعوبات ترجمة الافعال قيد النقاش من خلال تقديم طريقة يتم من خلالها تمييز هذه الافعال.

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