Redundancy in Translation: Problems and Solution

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Abstract: This research tackles the problem of redundancy in translation . It discusses the issue of where redundancy occurs most whether in Arabic or English . It examines the issue of redundancy as a must or as an option specially for Arab translators . It also tries to know when an addition to the translated text is considered useful or redundant .The researcher hypothesizes that all languages have redundancy , especially in translating , whether spoken or written , with every language accusing the other language of being redundant. Sometimes it is the speakers of that language make the accusation. The researcher , has come up with a conclusion that redundancy is context bound . All languages have redundancy , and it is a kind of equivalence shifts in translation: an attempt to provide a readable text for target language (TL) readers.

الاسهاب في الترجمة: مشاكل وحلول

الملخص: يتناول هذا البحث مسألة الاسهاب في الترجمة ، و يناقش اين يكثر الاسهاب سواء كان ذلك في اللغة العربية ام الانكليزية . كما يدرس البحث فيما اذا كانت مسالة الاسهاب ضرورة ام اختيارية خاصة بالنسبة للمترجم العربي و معرفة تحديد فائدة الاضافة من عدمها. ويبين البحث ايضاً نظرة اللغويين و المترجمين الدونية للإسهاب . و يظهر البحث اهمية الاسهاب كونه ناحية ثقافية مهمة و جزءاً من جهود المترجم المتميزة لاسباغ المزيد من التوضيحات و المعلومات لقرائه و نوعاً من اخلاص المترجم لثقافته و لغته الأم و قرائه . كما يحاول البحث القاء الضوء على الفرضية القائلة بأن الاسهاب هو نوع من المكافيء الترجمي . و يكشف البحث ان كل اللغات تعاني من مسألة الاسهاب خاصة عند ترجمتها الى لغة اخرى سواء حدث ذلك بصورة شفوية ام تحريرية و ان كل لغة توجه اصبع الاتهام للغة الاخرى و في بعض الاحيان يكون من يوجه سهم الاتهام هذا هو ابن اللغة نفسها .توصل الباحث الى ان الاسهاب هو خيار محكوم بالسياق و ان كل اللغات فيها اسهاب و هو نوع من المكافيء الترجمي لتوفير نص مفهوم لقرائه.

1 Introduction

Redundancy is defined by Guramik . D" to be superfluity , overabundance " . It means "the use of redundant words ". (1984:1191).

Redundancy has been the issue of debate among linguists and translation theorists in particular . Of course no translation theorist would talk frankly about the problem of redundancy in his / her language , rather any talk about this subject which is always the problem of the counter language . As far as the researcher knows, this issue isn't mentioned by any linguist or translation theorist in details and as a subject of research because , historically speaking, most of the previous works about redundancy were of prescriptive, not descriptive nature as it is revealed in the following saying " The translator should eliminate any semantic redundancy" (Farghal and Al-Shunaq, 1999: 136) .

The issue of redundancy is deeply rooted in the culture of all languages, and it's realized in the process of translation. This can be seen when translation occurs between languages that differ greatly in culture, language systems norms , and traditions , etc.

However , any substitution of a word in one language by units that are longer in the target language is to be called by some theorists as redundancy (Karimi , 2009).

Redundancy is regarded a problematic especiallywhen it is related to culture , habits , information, casualty, settings and degree of civilization between the people speaking language (A) and those speaking language (B). (Shunnaq , 1993 : 16)

Redundancy sometimes may come from the assumption that the translator who thinks that everything he knows about the subject to be translated for the benefit of his readers (Zakhir, Marouane, 2009) . The subject of redundancy went off focus in the previous researches on translation due to the fact that the focus was on equivalence , the most known object and how to achieve" the nearest natural equivalent between the source language and the target language " (Nida, 1980 : 3)

The research also shows that redundancy is thought as something trivial by most linguists and translators, whereas it's an important cultural aspect. It is a part of good efforts made by the translator to give more explanations and

information for his readers , a kind of loyalty for his own culture , language and readers . The research sheds light on viewing the idea of redundancy as a kind of equivalence shifts

1.2 Hypothesis

The study hypothesizes that:

1-Redundancy is a must if the source language text has a culture specific expression .

2-Redundancy is a must if the translator deals with expression text .

1.3 Definition of redundancy

Some old Arab scholars like Al-Jahiz, Al-Sakaki , Al-Askari , and IbnalAtheer Introduce the term (semantic redundancy) that means either اطناب او اطالة

(cf . Fagrhal . M and Shunnaq . A , 1999 : 136) The term Itnab is functional and should be retained by the translator whereas the former , " Italah" is not functional and should be eliminated (ibid) .

Furthermore, "Itnab" is " the motivated use of extra formal elements in the expression of given meaning . It is a rhetorical device that adds to the beauty of the text " (ibid) .

On his part , Ghazala (2008 : 253) defines redundancy as " the use of unnecessary extra words to express something . It is a long boring way of expressing meaning using two , three , or more words instead of one word only " .

Other numerous definitions of the word redundancy means , in a way or another , the same indication given by the previous definitions . The researcher defines the term "redundancy" as a strategy adopted by the translator to add or eliminate , to write or ellipse words , phrases , sentences to the translated text to achieve the best comprehension and to create a kind of communication competence on the part of the TL reader.

As the current research tackles both English and Arabic languages, an idea must be given in both languages .

1.4 Redundancy in English language :

In what follows , features of spoken and written language will be given

1.4.1 Features of Spoken English

According to Aitcheson (1987) , there was a long debate to regard spoken or written as the base for the later grammarians for description of language.

The features of spoken language are listed below :

1-Spoken English depends on the sound pitch to grasp the meaning of what the speaker says by observing his pitch as well as the use of facial expressions (Al-Jalili , 2000 : 38)

2-Heavy use of synonymy specially in jokes

Example :

Three tomatoes are walking down the street , two are ahead while the other is a little left behind . So one of the two tomatoes tell the late one to " catch up " .

3-The use of certain expressions to indicate certain conditions

Example : you can say that again (used for assertion) .

4-The use of social features of a person to draw a picture of the person in the mind of the hearer . For example :

The red haired Tom

توم الفتى ذو الشعر الاحمر

5-The heavy use of taboo words specially in American English . Let's ponder on the following :

You have a hell of a family

لديك عائلة رائعة

Hell of a man رجل رائع

6- English , like all languages , uses exaggeration .

Example : I have been waiting here for ages

أنا أنتظر هنا منذ الازل

7-The use of thinking gaps like pauses (long or short) (Brown and Yule , 1991: 20)

8-Repeating some facts (violating maxim of quantity) (Halliday and Hassan, 1967:3)

1.4.2 Features of Written English

Written language was, until recently, the language preferred by philosophers , thinkers , and scholars (Chapman,1973:32) . Written English is characterized by :

1-Simplicity , non-sophisticatedness , the least degree of vagueness (except when the author tends to be vague) (Al-Jalili,2000:44) .

2-English , like all written languages, needs well-organization and arrangements of its elements .

3-English , unlike written Arabic , lacks flexibility in the shapes of its letters (ibid).

4-In written English , there is an extensive use of the infinite reference , clarity of reference , clarity in substitution , rare cases of ellipsis , a very careful and conscious use of the pronouns and demonstratives (Vachek , 1976:16) .

5- The rightful use of punctuation (commas , inverted commas , full stops , etc.) in addition to some lexical and grammatical conjunctions which make the written text unified .

6-Similarly , the logical organization of thoughts and aims of the writer (Kroll and Van , 1981:3) .

After speaking about the first part , that is English language , it is time to speak about

1.5 Redundancy in Arabic

Spoken Arabic is characterized by:

1-The intensive use of proverbs , and Quranic verses

2-The use of kinship terms or any other distinguishing features of the person the speaker and the hearer are talking about (Stubbs 1983:22) .

3-Arabic language uses honorific forms to honor the speakers as well as it is the case when a lower status person speaks with a higher status one .

Example :

استاذ

حضرتكم

(Al-Jalili , 2000 : 37)

4-The extensive use of pronouns to express not only geographical distance but also social distance (ibid).

Arabic spoken language also uses pronouns extensively like

هذا

ذلك

5-Arabic spoken language also uses pitch to express irony , anger , sadness , etc . as well as the overwhelming use of gestures specially hands .

6-Finally comes the use of gap fillers which include :

a-Swearing

Example :

و الله..... و القرآن

1.5 Features of Written Arabic

Written Arabic language is the language of Holy Quran . It is so rich in grammar , phonology , semantics and pragmatics (Al-Jalili 2000 : 42) . Written Arabic language is characterized by :

1-It is richer than English in aesthetic tools (Al-Zoubi , 2009:internet)

2-The special care and patience in drawing the letters .

3-The chaos in punctuation . Beeston (1968:6) states that punctuation has never been standardized in Arabic such as the non – systematic use of round brackets and quotation marks as well as question mark to denote exclamation .

4-The use of definite article

ال

to indicate a real (the) , (a) or (an) (ibid)

5-Arabic language depends on simplicity , naturalness and non –complication style except for poets and men of letters like the following example :

كتب احمد شوقي واصفاً الأهرام :

ما انت يا أهرام ؟ أشواهق أجرام أم شواهق إجرام ؟ أوضاع معالم أم أشباح مظالم ؟ و جلائل ابنية و آثار أم دلائل أنانية و إستئثار ؟ تمثال منصب من الجبرية ام مثال صاح من العبقرية؟

(cited in Loutfi 1976 :83)

When translating a text from English into Arabic , it is inevitable to face difference in length , shifts , class and units . Due to the lack of belief and trust in the place of Arabic language by its own speakers , a false image is drawn in the minds of Arabs that west is better in everything even language . Sadly even some Arab researchers view Arabic as a language to explain over everything and it is to be redundant (Al-Zoubi, 2009:internet).

However, this redundancy as pictured by western countries may be very useful addition to the translated text that helps to clarify a vague meaning . Zakhir (2009:internet) said " the translated text is called to be redundant if it contains information that is not relevant or don't give anything new for the reader to know" .

<u>1.6 Comparison of redundancy between English and Arabic</u>

1-Redundancy is a feature that is present in every language . It is sometimes obvious in the person's own language , specially the spoken one . but it happens most frequently when shifting from one language into another This happens when we are engaged in translation .

Example :

(blue heelers , an Australian series on Syrian satellite channel 2)

You see his face ?

هل رأيت ما ارتسم على وجهه من تعبير ؟

What do you want to call him ?

ماذا ستسميه ؟

(Modern Arabic Short Stories p112)

Here the translator tried his best to keep the length of both sentences in both languages the same Nonetheless , there were some extra linguistic elements specially in Arabic rendering , especially in the first example , whereas the condition is reversed in the second example to make everything clear and eliminate vague expressions

2-Redundancy may be the result of the translator's effort when he faces a cultural – specific expression that must be translated, so that the whole meaning is not lost

Example :

كان بديناً و عنده أن البدانة للرجل كما للمرأة زينة و ابهة

He was overweight , but maintained that this was an attractive feature in both men and women

(modern Arabic short stories : 129) .

Here , the English translator tried his best to avoid these culture specific expressions and made a great effort when he eliminated all that doesn't affect the text and its comprehension

Example :

إني حامل و حق سيدي الكردي

Thank God and Sidi alKurdi , I'm pregnant

Here the translator added the word (God) and kept (Sidi al Kurdi) because the latter is a culture specific expression that has a religious indication that is unknown for western people . The best solution was to eliminate (sidi Kurdi) from the translation and keep (God) only . If the translator wants to add a word that is culture specific for western people with an equal religious meaning , he should has chosen one of the saints to swear by , because it is a common expression especially in Britain to say (by George) .

Another example :

و اعتاد الحاج محسن فقد ادى الفريضة بعد التجربة ان يقول لله حكمته

As for Mohsen , he began to reiterate the phrase " ours is not to question the wisdom of God "

(modern Arabic short stories p112)

Here we find that redundancy is in Arabic version . The redundant expressions are :

الحاج

أدى الفريضة بعد التجربة

These expressions in Arabic aren't found in English version because it's restricted to Arabic culture . The culture specific feature is that anyone goes to Mecca to pilgrim accept his fate .

3-Redundancy may also occur as a result for the translator or author's loyalty for his readers . It happens because the author or the translator knows information that he wants to share with them . To his mind " the new reader may need illustrative examples not supplied by the original text " (Aziz , 2000:78)

Example :

Some countries have a high population density , other countries are sparesly populated

بعض الاقطار لها كثافة سكانية كبيرة مثل مصر و بعض الاقطار الاخرى قليلة السكان كما هو الحال في الجزيرة العربية و بعض الاقطار الافريقية

An example from the other end (i.e.the original text) about redundancy can be seen in the following expression *The family hired mourners to weep over the deceased person . Nowhere in mourners were men or women*

كانت العائلة تؤجر نساءً و رجالاً للبكاء على الميت (ibid)

Here the translator kept what is important for his readers . The information in this example provides information that is unknown even to modern world , east or west . This practice was done as an appreciation for the deceased and it is a culture – specific practice .

1.7 Conclusions

The researcher came up with the following conclusions :

1-There is no redundancy in translation , except when the translator adds information that are not culture specific . Any unnecessary added information that affect the reading or comprehension of the novel or the film must be eliminated . Otherwise , it will borden the reader .

2-Any addition that helps to clear all that is vague for the readers should be regarded as a translation equivalent not redundancy .

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