

**Strategic Maneuvering and Translation with Respect
to Topical Potential in Imam Ali's Letter
to Malik Ashtar**

**Key words: adaptive translation, strategic maneuvering, topical
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التناور الاستراتيجي والترجمة بالإشارة إلى الأرجحية الموضوعية في رسالة
الإمام علي (عليه السلام) لمالك الأشتر

الكلمات المفتاحية: الترجمة بتصرف، التناور الاستراتيجي، الأرجحية الموضوعية

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Abstract

This paper is mainly concerned with shedding light on the pragma-translation amalgam. This is done by means of bringing the theory of strategic maneuvering to the forefront. More conspicuously, this work aims to investigate how adaptive translation can be strategically utilized, by means of topical potential, to achieve the translator's aim which need not necessarily be what is actually communicated in the source text. To achieve this aim, Imam Ali's Letter to Malik Ashtar is selected as the data of analysis. This text is well-known in the Arabic heritage for its eloquence and importance. An analytic mechanism, consisting of various techniques and strategies, is developed for this purpose.

The study comes up with some conclusions the most notable of which is that adaptation can stand as a hindrance rather than an aid. It is not always accurate to adapt when translating a text, especially if the text is of high importance in a nation's heritage as the one under scrutiny.

الخلاصة

يختص البحث بتسليط الضوء على التداخل التداولي-الترجمي. إذ يتم ذلك بالتركيز على نظرية التناور الاستراتيجي. ويهدف البحث لاستكشاف كيفية الافادة من الترجمة بتصرف استراتيجيا عن طريق الارجحية الموضوعية من اجل تحقيق هدف المترجم والذي من غير الضروري ان يكون نفسه الغرض المتوخى من النص الاصلي. وليحقق البحث هدفه فقد اختيرت رسالة الامام علي -عليه السلام- لتمثل بيانات التحليل. ولذلك فقد طورت أداة تحليل مكونة من عدة صيغ واستراتيجيات لتحليل هذا النص المعروف بأهميته وبلاغته في التراث العربي. ومن اهم ما توصلت له الدراسة هو أن التصرف في الترجمة يمكن أن يشكل عائقاً أكثر من كونه عاملاً مساعداً إذ أنه من غير الدقيق اللجوء إلى هذا النوع عند ترجمة نصوص ذات اهمية كبيرة كما هو حال النص قيد الدراسة.

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1. Introduction

Owing to the interdisciplinary nature of science, the task of bridging pragmatics and translation turns out to be pseudo-handly. The relationship between the two, in fact, never seems to wane. Accordingly, what this paper aims to is showing how adaptive translation can be strategically employed at the communicative level to address another function than that performed by the original text. In other words, the aim is to spot the role of pragmatic adaptation (which is one type of adaptive translation) in translating a text that is deemed a rough and ready constitution for a just system of governing people, hence appears its importance in the Islamic heritage.

The paper starts with reviewing the concept of adaptation, in general, as far as its definition, triggers, and limitations are concerned. Then, a rapid review of the concept of pragmatic adaptation (which is the main concern of this work) embracing its definition, techniques, and strategies is presented. Later, a bird's-eye-view is introduced on the theory of strategic maneuvering. The focus, however, goes to a specific component of this theory – topical potential – owing to the fact that tackling all components is too lengthy to include. Finally, the role of pragmatic adaptive translation in Imam Ali's letter to Malik Ashtar is highlighted by means of the various triggers, techniques and strategies.

2. Adaptation: Definition, Triggers, Approaches, and Limitations

To start with, adaptation, in general, is thought to be an inescapable element of the translation process whose aim is consolidating the link between source and target texts, from one side, and source and target audiences, from another (Volkova and Zubenina, 2015: 89). It has various triggers as proposed by Baker and Saldanha (2011: 41):

1. Cross-code breakdown: There is no lexical or any other kind of equivalents in the target language.
2. Situational and cultural inadequacy: Contexts and views of a source text cannot be properly applied to the target text.

3. Genre switching: A need to switch from one genre to another.
4. Disruption of a communication process: A need to address a different type of readership.

In accordance with these triggers, they (ibid.) remark that a translator has two approaches in translating a source text: local and global. The former refers to a limited part of the source text (henceforth, ST). The latter, on the other hand, is a strategic one that is applied to the text as a whole to cope with the intricacy of the ST.

Additionally, adaptation has certain limitations, that is to say, there are certain components of the ST which tolerate utilizing this kind of translation. These are already unfolded by Neuber (1986: 56):

1. Stylistic aspects, e.g. metaphor, simile, etc.
2. Expressive elements: These refer to various parameters of the ST register. By the latter Neuber (ibid.) invokes Halliday's tripartite division of field (i.e. total event of communication), mode (i.e. function of a text), and tenor (i.e. the type of interaction)
3. Syntactic construction: This sheds light on a specific part of an ST (e.g. inversion).
4. Extra-textual features: They are, in fact, interrelated with the expressive elements just reviewed (e.g. time, function, place of communication).

3. Pragmatic Adaptation: Definition, Techniques, and Strategies

Understanding this type of translation is not easy owing to the many definitions given. However, Volkova and Zubenina (2015: 92) invoke three different definitions of pragmatic adaptation (henceforth, PA):

1. Neubert's (1986: 34) definition: adapting a translated text to the needs of the target language audience.
2. Lehto's (2002: 101) definition: PA is applied to modify ST elements which translated as is [sic!], would not work properly in the target language.
3. Kosonen's (2011: 36) definition: Modification of the ST in order to produce the text which conforms to the needs of a new language environment.

Out of these definitions, the third serves the aim of this work as it implicitly embraces the first two, hence becomes more exhaustive. Accordingly, it is taken as the operational definition of this study.

Modifying the ST does not come from scratch. It requires certain techniques and strategies to be performed. Both of the techniques and strategies of PA are taken advantage of to facilitate comprehending the ST and make it fit the variables of the target language. The difference between them, however, lies in the how not the what. That is, the former are provided as cover terms to subsume various strategies of their own. The latter, in turn, perform the task of adaptation by themselves; they are the actual realizations of the techniques.

Kosonen (2011: 56) suggests the following techniques of PA:

1. Omission.
2. Expansion, i.e. explication of source information.
3. Exoticism, i.e. substitution by rough equivalents.
4. Updating, i.e. substitution by modern equivalents.
5. Creation, i.e. a target text preserves only the most essential information of an ST.

The strategies, on the other hand, are previously proposed by Chesterman and Wagner (2002: 60-3):

1. Explicit change: This involves clarifying the information of the ST by making it more explicit or implicit. When some information left implicit in the ST is not clear enough to the target audience (henceforth, TA) to understand, the translator can make it explicit in the target text (henceforth, TT). By contrast, if some explicit information is considered already known by TA, the translator can leave it implicit in the TT. (This strategy appeals to the first two techniques)
2. Interpersonal change: This is a token of changing the level of formality and the degree of involvement and emotivity of an ST author.
3. Illocutionary change: This has to do with the change of:
 - Moods (e.g. declarative to imperative).
 - Structure of rhetorical questions and exclamations.
 - Variation between direct and indirect speech.
4. Coherence change: This hinges upon variously altering the ST general structure (e.g. paragraphing). (This appeals to the creation technique)
5. Partial Translation: This means reducing an ST to a summary. (This appeals to the omission technique)

6. Visibility change: This embraces changing the extent of the author's presence in the text. It also involves making the translator per se visible by adding footnotes, bracketed comments, etc. (This appeals to the exoticism and updating techniques)
7. Transediting: This means a drastic re-writing of an ST.

4. Strategic Maneuvering

This is a somehow recent theory launched in (2002) by Eemeren and Houtlosser and proposed as the extended version of the standard pragma-dialectical theory originally launched in (1984) by Eemeren and Grootendorst. According to the standard version, resolving a difference of opinion requires discussants to follow a reasonable code of conduct represented by ten rules of reasonableness. The extended version, however, postulates that it is not only important to resolve the difference of opinion reasonably; it is equally significant to resolve it to an arguer's own good. This is done by making rhetoric join the queue. That is, every dialectical (i.e. reasonable) move has at the same time a rhetorical role of persuading the peer arguer. Hence, strategic maneuvering (henceforth, SM) is delivered.

It is interesting to state that reasonableness in TT remains dormant because it is already established in the ST; so it is not discussed here. The focus, nonetheless, shifts to the second valence: effectiveness or rhetorical aspect.

Rhetoric, in the theory of SM, is instantiated by three aspects, as Tindale (2009: 44) believes:

1. Topical Potential (henceforth, TP).
2. Audience Demand (henceforth, AD).
3. Presentational Devices (henceforth, PD).

Out of these, the first is selected owing to the following points:

1. Analyzing all the three aspects is lengthy as aforementioned.
2. TP automatically involves AD in translation, otherwise it seems very difficult, if not impossible, to render the ST into an accurate TT.
3. The translator has no role in the PD employed in the ST; they are among its essential elements. Thus, they are, also, automatically included in TP.
4. The text is just like a constitution organizing people's lives and boosting their welfare. Thus, its translation needs a profound insight to communicate the instructions, orders, pieces of advice, etc. as accurately as required. Moreover, it requires closer perusal at the

most influential elements which persuade the people to follow them. This means that the topics presented in the text are selected strategically to achieve this goal. Hence comes the role of TP. By TP is meant, as Tindale (ibid.: 43) argues, selecting those pieces of information on the basis of what serves an arguer's own advantage. In translation, generally, one might not expect to have such a case wherein the translator is thought to follow an already paved path by the ST. In adaptive translation, however, the case is not so as the techniques and strategies reviewed before show.

5. Analyzing TT

5.1 Theoretical Analysis

After surveying the most relevant aspects that serve the aim of this work, it is time to draw the mechanism followed to investigate the TT. The mechanism is described as follows:

Reading the ST and TT paragraph by paragraph to identify these aspects respectively:

1. Techniques of PA.
2. Strategies of PA.

These three will lead us to

3. Trigger(s) behind adaptation.
- which, in turn, lead(s) to identify:
4. Approach of adaptation.

So, if adaptation meets one (or more) of the triggers mentioned above, it is tolerable. If not, it indicates a translator's intent or attempt to maneuver. This maneuver is highlighted by the TP, as stressed before. Nevertheless, the TP translated leads to unfold the facets of the ST which the translator deems important to transfer to the TA.

The diagram, below, schematically shows the mechanism of investigation:

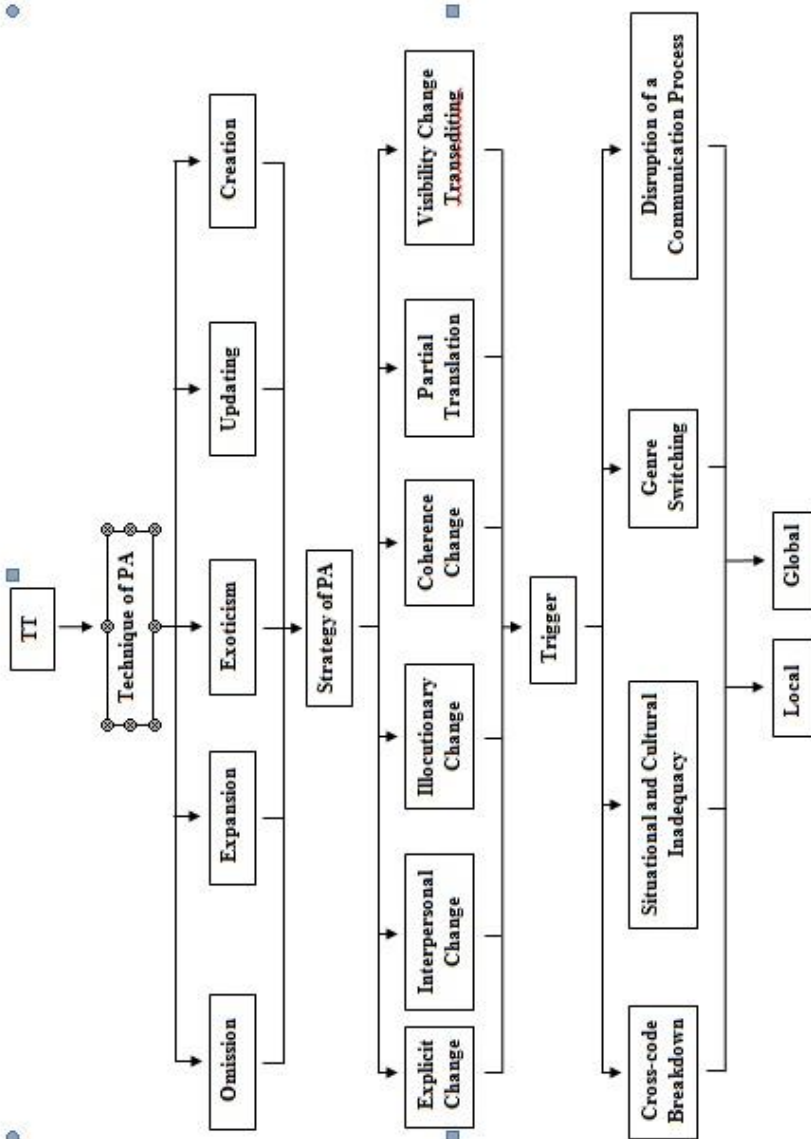


Figure (1) Mechanism of Investigating the TT

5.2 Practical Analysis

This sub-section practically investigates the TT in accordance with the mechanism proposed above. Four examples are cited to examine the adequacy and usefulness of adaptation in translation as far as pragmatics is concerned.

Example (1):

At first glance, the TT shows an expansive technique of adaptation realized by coherence change. The latter is mainly symbolized by altering the ST structure by means of paragraphing it into seventeen sub-texts, each with its own title. Such a global adaptation finds no reflection in the triggers mentioned before. This means it hints at some intention by the translator.

The intent behind such a procedure can be interpreted as follows: the translator wants to bring to the forefront the gist of the various instructions dictated in the letter as a whole. This is confirmed by the titles suggested for the sub-texts: the richest treasure, the common man, the counselor, to name just few, which are taken from the instructions per se. Accordingly, the strategic maneuver here is made to have people understand the instructions as easily and clearly as possible.

Example (2):

The TT starts with omitting the building blocks, i.e. opening statements, of Imam's letter. It follows that the omission technique is employed. It is realized by two strategies:

1. Interpersonal change: The omission, in fact, changes the degree of formality in the letter itself. Hence, the TT does not show the ST as being a letter embracing commands; it makes it appear as holding pieces of advice. Such speculation is supported by what Paul Armstrong, the translator himself, describes this letter in his prelude: "letter of advice".
2. Visibility change: This is interrelated with the previous type as it pertains to changes in the ST author's presence.

This technique and its strategies have no trigger to engender them. However, the omission makes the approach of adaptation global because it makes a difference to the text as a whole. Let's explain this point more clearly.

The opening statements of the letter include the explicit performative 'command' to state clearly what the letter embraces: orders. As such, what follows this performative is commands and not pieces of

advice as the TT postulates. Furthermore, it is in the commands themselves that the degree of formality is reflected – as being communicated between a governor and his fellow-ruler; hence it is very formal. This degree has been changed with the omission technique, as when someone issues commands is not the same as giving advice. The latter subsumes a lower degree of formality than the former. These two make Imam's presence in the TT fade as the TT proceeds further.

The question which raises itself now: How this adaptation is related to TP? The relationship is coined by not selecting 'topics' which actualize what has been just mentioned. This is done for the sake of making the letter have the tint of advising rather than commanding.

Example (3):

أنصف الله وأنصف الناس من نفسك، ومن خاصّة أهلك، ومن لك فيه هوى من رعيتك، فإنّك إلا تفعل تظلم ! ومن ظلم عباد الله كان الله خصمه دون عباده، ومن خاصمه الله أدحض حجّته، وكان لله حرباً حتّى ينزع أو يتوب.

[Let your mind respect through your actions the rights of God and the rights of man, and likewise, persuade your companions and relations to do likewise. For, otherwise, you will be doing injustice to yourself and injustice to humanity. Thus both man and God will turn unto your enemies. There is no hearing anywhere for one who makes an enemy of God himself. He will be regarded as one at war with God until he feels contrition and seeks forgiveness.]

The technique employed here is expansion realized by explicit change. As with the previous examples, no trigger justifies this local adaptation.

As a matter of fact, the adaptation investigated in this example is inaccurate as it translates (خصم) into 'enemy', whereas in the ST it does not mean so. A more suitable translation would be (He who oppresses people makes God his disputant). This is suggested on the basis of the axiom that God is not an enemy of any human, He is the most Merciful. Almighty God may stand as a disputant, that is, supports powerless people. The proposed translation is confirmed by what immediately follows in the ST (ومن خاصمه الله ادحض حجّته) (He whom God disputes will get his argument disproved).

Depicting oppression as an act which attracts God as an enemy is the TP utilized. It is transferred as such in order to magnify the bad consequences of oppression and persuade people to avoid it. Differently put, the impact of 'disputant' is not the same as that of 'enemy'. Nevertheless, such adaptation does much harm to the text.

Example (4):

فإنَّ سخطَ العامَّةِ يجحف برضا الخاصَّةِ، وإنَّ سخطَ الخاصَّةِ يغتفر مع رضا العامَّةِ.

[The discontent of the masses sterilises the contentment of the privileged few and the discontent of the few loses itself in the contentment of the many.]

The technique utilized is exoticism with explicit change as its strategy. There is no matching trigger for this local adaptation.

The following lines explain how TP is actualized in this example. Overlooking discontent is translated as making discontent lose itself, which is inaccurate. It has been translated as such so as to match the title suggested to this sub-text 'The Common Man'. In other words, common men do not overlook the discontent of the privileged, as they have no choice of doing so.

CONCLUSIONS

The paper has come up with the following conclusions:

1. Reasonableness remains dormant in translation as far as strategic maneuvering is concerned. However, this is unintentionally done because reasonableness is already imposed by the ST.
2. Adaptation can stand as hindrance rather than an aid. That is, it can distort the ST when it does not communicate what is actually intended in the ST.
3. Global and local adaptation has the same impact on the ST. They either (de)escalate the level of informativity.
4. Focusing on TP when translating adaptively can do much harm to both ST and TT, as in the example of God as enemy above.
5. Omitting the opening statements of a text functions as a good strategic tool to maneuver in translation. This technique helps the translator tailor what comes later in the text to what he has in mind.
6. Changing coherently as utilized in the TT is found to be an efficient strategy to boost TP in pragmatic adaptive translation. One can link some parts of the sub-texts to the title suggested, while using at the same time certain terms to consolidate the implicit standpoint.
7. The proposed mechanism of investigating the TT has been found to be workable and useful in this regard.

RECOMMENDATIONS

In line with the conclusions arrived at above, this study recommends the following:

1. Adaptation should be 'handled with care'; it is a two-edge weapon. Consequently, much training is needed in the ST on the basis of which the TT is accurately created.
2. Omission should not be utilized in the opening statements of the ST. Opening statements pave the way for text as a whole, so omitting them does not support maneuver; it enhances manipulation.
3. Recent research on adaptation has to be given its due attention in Departments of Translation.
4. Research embracing both pragmatics and translation is recommended to be included in the Departments of Translation as well. It is very useful in maintaining various levels of communication.
5. Iraqi Translators Association should take part in conferences held for such purposes. Moreover, it should hold sessions and seminars whose main aim is interconnecting pragmatics and translation by various researchers.

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