



Semantic Dimensions of Symbols in Translating The Shirt Scene in Surah Yusuf - An analytical Study

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ABSTRACT

Semantics is the link that enables the study of meaning, the comprehension of texts, and ultimately the discovery of the purposes and ramifications of heavenly revelations. It is closely related to symbols, this is because it is one of the branches of linguistics, which is in turn a branch of semiotics. Since the Qur'anic text is replete with symbols, the present study deals with a selected surah from the Holy Qur'an, which is Surah Yusuf, in which we touched on the aesthetics of semantic and symbolic significance in the scene of the shirt. The current study has focuses on the use of translating and connotative words and their basic and secondary meanings in the selected scene of the surah. To show whether these dimensions were conveyed in the three translations of the meanings of the Holy Quran, the study has explored three translations namely Muhammed M. Khan and Mohammed T. Al Hilali, Abdullah Yusuf Ali, and Ahmad and Dina Zidan. This study first deals with what is semantics, meaning, and their relationship to symbols. Then, what is symbolism, and what is a symbol. The study also tackles the model which will be used in this study. Quranic story also takes part in this research. Next, this study presents a semantic analysis of the shirt scene, which was divided into three scenes according to the chronology of each. Then we will translate it, adopting on Vinay and Darblnet's (2004) Model in evaluating the three translations.

KEY WORDS

Semantic Dimension, Symbol, Shirt, Scene



1.1. Introduction:

The relationship between symbol and the semantic dimensions is an interesting topic in semantics and text science, as the symbol is one of the means in language to convey the message directly or indirectly. A symbol can be defined as an element that symbolizes something else that has a connection of an internal or external nature with the intended meaning of the text. As for the semantic dimensions, they are considered among the important elements in the analysis of texts, as they refer to the meanings, deep connotations, and textual forms that emerge through signs and relationships between vocabulary and sentences.

It is worth noting that the Holy Qur'an is a sacred book for Muslims, and it contains many symbols and semantic dimensions. In it, the relationship between the symbol and the semantic dimensions is clearly evident, as the symbol is used in the Holy Qur'an to convey meanings and deliver the message to the reader directly or indirectly, where the translation of symbols and semantic dimensions in the Holy Qur'an lies in understanding the hidden meanings behind these symbols and expressing them in another language in a way that preserves the authenticity of the original meaning and achieves the correct communication of the message. By understanding these symbols and semantic dimensions, the reader can understand the Qur'anic text and interact with it in a deeper and more effective way.

1.2. Semantics and Meaning:

The study of meaning was referred to generally as semantics. It played a key role in the study of communication. Although there are many ways to express the "meaning" or the information one wants to transmit, including gestures, pictures, symbols, etc., humans used language as their primary form of communication. Semantics is a subfield of linguistics that focuses on how the linguistic system, which is made up of many unit structures including sentences, phrases, words, morphemes, etc., conveys "meaning". Numerous disciplines, including philosophy, anthropology, psychology, communication theory, etc., were interested in semantics as a study of meaning that links language to the numerous facets of non-linguistic reality. Semantics can be thought of as the study of all language-based communication, but some academics prefer to limit the field to the study of logical or conceptual meaning, i.e., only those aspects of meaning that are logically acceptable while excluding deviation and abnormalities. Semantics is nearly synonymous with "meaning." It is "the link between symbols or signs generated by human beings and their referents, roughly reflecting what people normally consider of as meaning," according to Nida (1964:34)." Lyons (1977:1) defines semantics as "the study of meaning." Yule (2006:100) defines semantics as "the study of the meaning of words, phrases, and sentences" in *The Study of Language*. When performing semantic analysis, every attempt is made to focus on what the words normally signify rather than what a particular speaker may intend for them to mean at a given time. The concept that underlies the mental perceptions and representations associated to verbal expressions as well as the perceptual attitudes is known as semantic meaning. Semantic significance is what linguists record and use as a yardstick for evaluating every new language use. One of the most popular models in literary critical readings that considers the text as a network of significant indicators is the semantic dimension, which sees the text as a network of significant signs. The most important evolutionary trait of modern semiology is semantics' link to philosophical ideas. One of those who proposed a semiological semi-philosophical paradigm to distinguish between the semantic and functional components of the sign is Morris, according to the general consensus. The relationship between a symbol, sign, and a social group, in his opinion, is one of semantics. The relationship between a sign and other signs, on the other hand, is one of synthetics, while the relationship between a sign and its users is one of function [5]. There is a lot of fuzziness, obscurity, and ambiguity in the boundaries between any two languages, and the semantic relationship between words in two different languages does not match to one-to-one sets or even one-to-many sets

(Nida, 1994). Translation teams must contend with the risk of losing meaning due to the complex borders between languages. There are too many meanings in the SL for the linguistic system of the TL to handle. The expression of attitudes can be rather delicate, for instance, and occasionally, there aren't plural forms of words in English grammar where plurality makes a significant difference in meaning (Abdul-Raof, 2004: 197). When describing Nancy, we may choose to use one term over another, such as skinny, thin, slender, or sleek (Kreidler, 1998:45).

1.3. Symbolism:

As a reaction to naturalism and realism, symbolism was a late 19th-century artistic style with French and Belgian roots that sought to symbolically depict ultimate truths using language and metaphorical images. The word "symbol," which comes from the Latin *symbolum* and means "a sign of recognition," is the source of the phrase "symbolism." The anti-idealistic movements of naturalism and realism, which sought to depict reality in all of its gritty particularity and exalt the commonplace over the ideal, were predominantly the targets of symbolism. According to Balakian (1967:151), A response in favour of spirituality, fantasy, and dreams was symbolism. Symbolism is not just the understanding and application of symbols in literature and the arts; it also includes all religious texts as well as certain philosophical and agnostic materials. Hints, allusions, ambiguities, indications, and inductions are used in mysteries. In addition to wanting to have other signals and instruments in itself, metaphors, pomp, music, visionaries, fancies, colours, places, and wonders would be the inventor of a process known as symbolism (Michelle, 2011:91).

1.4. Quranic Symbolism:

The Quranic symbolism is the use of Quran from the symbols and signs that show and instruct us the religious facts because where ever that the words cannot say the facts, symbols are the best. The Quranic symbolism is a very specific beauty, Gnostics out of the eminent states of the religion. And it is also a bout the other world and faith to metaphysics or resurrection or Gnosticism. General aspects of the Quran language may include:

1. Structural.
2. Meaningfulness.
3. Cognitiveness.
4. symbolical.

This characteristic is based on the fact that man makes use of symbols to communicate with others, these symbols are partly conventional and differ from one culture to another these words and signs are called symbols, because these words by themselves are nothing special or no special sound, but because of meaningfulness Convey a special meaning, in fact the symbols reflect the innate concepts of human beings are used in communication and interactions (Rashidi ,2011 :264).

1.5. Symbol:

In Arabic, symbol is everything that replaces something else and denoting it, not by way of complete conformity, but by gesture or by the existence of an accidental or customary relationship. Usually, a symbol in this sense is a tangible thing that replaces the abstract, for example (الرجل الهرم) is a symbol of (الشتاء) (Al Fayrouz abadi,2008:66). Sometimes we get confused, and we think that a symbol is a sign, so there is a difference between a sign and a symbol (the sign is restricted to one form, and it may include a symbol or suggest within it a symbolic meaning. As for the symbol, it is a reference to something unlimited and contains in its implications. The meaning of the sign, in addition to this, the symbol conceals and obscures a large part of its meanings, and defies the attempts to fully interpret it Symbolic language according to (Pierre ,2005 :7) is:

"Is a language in which inner experiences, feelings and thoughts are expressed as if they were sensory experiences, events in the outer world. It is a language which has a different logic from the conventional one we speak in the daytime, a logic in which not time and space are the ruling categories but intensity and association. It is the one universal language the human race has ever developed, the same for all cultures and throughout history".

When differentiate between three kinds of symbols: the conventional, the accidental and the universal symbol. Only the latter two kinds of symbols express inner experiences as if they were sensory experiences and they have the elements of symbolic language (Ibid. 12f).

1.6. The Model:

Vinay and Darben's evaluation methodology is used to compare the three translations. Vinay and Darbelnet (1995/2004: 128–37) established two general translation techniques: (a) direct translation and (b) oblique translation. The two strategies consist of seven procedures, of which direct translation covers three: Calque, literal translation, and borrowing. While Vinay and Darbelnet assert that the approach of oblique translation must be adopted when a literal translation is not possible. This addresses four additional procedures: Adaptation, Equivalence, or Idiomatic Translation (Munday, 2016: 88-91). In the technical sense, a procedure is a specific technique or method used by the translator at a particular point in a text (e.g., the addition of an explanation or a footnote in the TT), whereas a strategy is an overall orientation of the translator (e.g., towards "free" or "literal" translation, towards the TT or ST, towards domestication or foreignization). whereas a procedure is a particular approach or method the translator uses at a particular moment in the translation (such as borrowing a word from the source language or adding an explanation or footnote in the target language), (Vinay and Darbelnet, 2004:130).

1.7. Quranic Story:

The Holy Qur'an does not adopt a single method to convey its message to people, but rather its methods are many and varied. Sometimes it adopts the method of dialogue, and at other times it adopts the method of example, and sometimes it adopts the method of psychological education and moral guidance and other methods that are not hidden from those who contemplate and meditates on the holy Quran. Other style which is adopted by the Holy Qur'an is the style of story, it takes special care of the Holy Qur'an, because of - The element of suspense, and aspects of admonition and consideration.

1. Proof of the sincerity of the Prophet's message, for the news of previous nations is known only to God Almighty.

"ذَلِكَ مِنْ أَنْبَاءِ الْغَيْبِ نُوحِيهَا إِلَيْكَ مَا كُنْتَ تَعْلَمُهَا أَنْتَ وَلَا قَوْمُكَ مِنْ قَبْلِ هَذَا" (يوسف: ١٠٢).

"These are from the tiding of the Unseen, we reveal to you" (Yusuf:102) (Zidan, 1992:247).

2. Fixing the heart of the Messenger of God, may God's prayers and peace be upon him, and the hearts of his ummah upon the religion of God, and strengthening the confidence of the believers in supporting the truth.

"وَكَلَّا نَقْصُ عَلَيْكَ مِنْ أَنْبَاءِ الرُّسُلِ مَا نَثَبْتَ بِهِ فَؤَادَكَ" (يوسف: ١٢٠).

"And all We relate to you of the tidings of the Messengers in order to make firm your heart " (Yusuf :120) (Zidan, 1992:235).

3. Believing the previous prophets, reviving their memory, and immortalizing its effects.

Surah Yusuf is considered one of the suras that included one story from its beginning to the end. The Qur'an described it as the best of stories.

"نَحْنُ نَقُصُّ عَلَيْكَ أَحْسَنَ الْقَصَصِ" (يوسف: ٣).

" We narrate to you the best of narratives " (Yusuf: 3) (Zidan, 1992:235).

The great importance of Surah Yusuf lies in that this surah is unique, as it contains a complete story of Yusuf, beginning with Yusuf's vision and ending with its real interpretation. It was

revealed to the Messenger of God (PBUH) when he was in great distress in which he needed some kind of reassurance to reduce the great sadness that was filling his heart. The revelation of Surah Yusuf to the Messenger of God (PBUH) was one of the factors of consolidation, consolation, and alleviation of pain and sorrow in the stage of distress and loneliness, and the loss of the supporter with the death of his uncle Abu Talib and his wife Khadija bint Khuwaylid - may God be pleased with her - in Mecca, in this surah, there is a reference to that relief will inevitably come, no matter how severe the difficulties, and the people of falsehood, by reviewing what Yusuf (PBUH) went through in terms of hardships, temptations, and misfortunes, starting with his story with his brothers, throwing him into the well, and then moving to the Al-Azeez's house, hence his unjust entry into prison until he became Azeez to Egypt.

2.1. The Analytic Study of The Scene of the "Shirt" The Surah of Yusuf:

The shirt was not mentioned in the Holy Qur'an, otherwise it was meant to be the Shirt of Yusuf. Because of his great importance in this surah, this Qur'anic story summarized the entire story of Yusuf from its beginning to the end in the three scenes of the shirt in the surah. The shirt embodies three different essential symbols: the symbol of betrayal, the symbol of chastity, and the symbol of life, appeared in different scenes, in different times and places. Those who think about the contexts in which Yusuf's shirts are mentioned, It turns out that the contexts mention the shirt as a tangible thing, and its mention is associated with feelings and feelings that are not related to tangible clothes, but rather are related to the feelings of souls, and a symbol indicating them also, effective in communicating their facts and the smallest details to us. Then, there is not a single word in the conjugation of the word (قميص) that came in the Holy Qur'an, while we find, for example, many words in the conjugation of the word (رداء), such as "يرتدي - ارتداء" etc." and from the term (اللباس) many words as well like "تلبسوا. يلبسون" etc." This is another feature of the appearance of the word shirt. The word shirt mentioned six times in Yusuf Surah in three scenes as follows:

2.2. The First Scene: The Conspiracy:

The story of Yusuf begins since he started telling his dream to his father

"اذْ قَالَ يُوسُفُ لِأَبِيهِ يَا أَبَتِ إِنِّي رَأَيْتُ أَحَدَ عَشَرَ كَوْكَبًا وَالشَّمْسَ وَالْقَمَرَ رَأَيْتُهُمْ لِي سَاجِدِينَ" (يوسف: ٤).
"When Yusuf said to his father." O my father, I saw eleven stars and the sun and the moon, I saw them prostrating themselves to me" (Yusuf: 4) (Zidan, 1992:235).

This dream carries three clear connotative symbols, which are:

The sun that symbolized his father, the moon to his mother, and the eleven planets to his brothers. The father's love for their younger brother made them plot against him to get rid of him, thinking that their father's love would turn to them alone after salvation from Yusuf. So, the first appearance of the word (shirt) is in verse (18). The symbol of the shirt in the verse (18) has many semantic dimensions, the most prominent one is that the shirt represents forged evidence which exposes their conspiracy, lie, jealousy, and hatred. It is the conclusive evidence of betrayal of sons to their father. The shirt is also considered the beginning of Jacob's grief and suffer.

"وَجَاءُوا عَلَى قَمِيصِهِ بِدَمٍ كَذِبٍ قَالَ بَلْ سَوَّلَتْ لَكُمْ أَنْفُسُكُمْ أَمْراً فَصَبْرٌ جَمِيلٌ وَاللَّهُ الْمُسْتَعَانُ عَلَى مَا تَصِفُونَ" (يوسف: ١٨).

A: 18. And they brought his shirt stained with fake blood. He said: "However your evil souls have tempted you to do something. But good patience! GOD is the succor for me from what you are describing".

AD: 18. They stained his shirt with false blood. He said: "Nay, but your minds have made up a tale (that may pass) with you (for me) patience is most fitting: Against that which ye assert, it is God (alone) Whose help can be sought".

M: 18. And they brought his shirt stained with false blood. He said: "Nay, but your own selves have made up a tale. So (for me) patience is most fitting. And it is Allah (Alone) Whose help can be sought against that (lie) which you describe."

Although we are not going to translate a specific word, we are looking beyond the word and its symbol, we will evaluate how the shirt symbol was translated into the TL. All the above three translations adopted direct strategy and the literal type in rendering the word "shirt", cause this word has no corresponding word or symbol in the TL except the word (shirt), because as we mentioned above, this word has no other conjugations therefore, the semantic dimensions of this symbol will not be explained. As for what is related to the image of the blood-stained shirt, the first translation seems more oriented to the oblique strategy, equivalence type in rendering (بدم كذب) by (fake) while the second and third ones adopted more literal translation by using the word (false).

2.3. The Second Scene: The Victory of Chastity Over Vice:

"وَأَسْتَبَقَا الْبَابَ وَقَدَّتْ قَمِيصَهُ مِنْ دُبُرٍ وَأَلْفِيَا سَيِّدَهَا لَدَا الْبَابِ قَالَتْ مَا جَزَاءُ مَنْ أَرَادَ بِأَهْلِكَ سُوءًا إِلَّا أَنْ يُسْجَنَ أَوْ عَذَابٌ أَلِيمٌ" (يوسف: ٢٥).

The shirt comes again, with a different scene, at a different time and place, in this scene. This tangible fact appears again as forged evidence in verse (25) as a semantic dimension of the symbol of the shirt, when she (Al- Azeez's wife) tore the shirt up and accused Yusuf of betraying his lord. Then the shirt returns to be the actual evidence when the witness acquits him, and told them it was a lie in the next two verses, (26), and, (27):

"وَشَهِدَ شَاهِدٌ مِّنْ أَهْلِهَا إِنْ كَانَ قَمِيصُهُ قُدَّ مِنْ قُبُلٍ فَصَدَقَتْ وَهُوَ مِنَ الْكَاذِبِينَ" (يوسف: ٢٦).
 "وَإِنْ كَانَ قَمِيصُهُ قُدَّ مِنْ دُبُرٍ فَكَذَبَتْ وَهُوَ مِنَ الصَّادِقِينَ" (يوسف: ٢٧).

"And the witness from her own family said: "if his shirt torn from the front, she has spoken truly and he is a liar" (Yusuf: 26) (Zidan, 1992: 238)

"If his shirt torn from the back, then she has lied and he is truthful" (Yusuf:27) (Zidan, 1992: 238).

So, the shirt has replaced the rule on which the judgment is based and through which Yusuf's innocence or guilt is proven. The shirt here is a symbol of innocence and virtue. Among the Arabs, clothes carry what souls, hearts, and consciences carry because they are mirrors that reflect the wearer's state. So when they say: (نقي الثوب) (naqi al thaub). It is a metonymy for chastity and purity and this is completely consistent with the above verse (27). In which God shows his innocence. "وَأَسْتَبَقَا الْبَابَ وَقَدَّتْ قَمِيصَهُ مِنْ دُبُرٍ وَأَلْفِيَا سَيِّدَهَا لَدَا الْبَابِ قَالَتْ مَا جَزَاءُ مَنْ أَرَادَ بِأَهْلِكَ سُوءًا إِلَّا أَنْ يُسْجَنَ أَوْ عَذَابٌ أَلِيمٌ" (يوسف: ٢٥).

A: 25. So they raced towards the door and she tore his shirt from the back. they encountered her husband at the door, she said, "What is the punishment for one who intends evil towards your wife, either imprisonment or a painful chastisement?"

AD: 25. And they both raced to the door, and she tore his shirt from the back, and they found her husband at the door. She said, "What is the recompense of one who intended evil for your wife but that he be imprisoned or a painful punishment?"

M: 25. So they raced with one another to the door, and she tore his shirt from the back. They both found her lord (i.e. her husband) at the door. She said: "What is the recompense (punishment) for him who intended an evil design against your wife, except that he be put in prison or a painful torment?"

All the above three renderings adopts direct strategy and the literal type in translating the word "shirt". The cultural affinity between the two languages for the shirt symbol made the translators restricted in choosing alternatives to translate this symbol. Accordingly, the three translations seemed similar in choosing the same translation equivalent. However, the third translation seemed more clear than the previous two translations. The translator resorted to more clarification when he gave more than one translation of the words (lord) and (recompense).

2.4. The Third Scene: The Return of The Life:

"أَذْهَبُوا بِقَمِيصِي هَذَا فَأَلْقُوهُ عَلَى وَجْهِ أَبِي يَأْتِ بَصِيرًا وَأَنْتُونِي بِأَهْلِكُمْ أَجْمَعِينَ" (يوسف: ٩٣).

The symbol of the shirt in this scene comes to be true evidence that it carries a semantic dimension of the end of Jacob's sorrows, and a glad tidying for his father, that Yusuf is still alive. And that God always supports His righteous servants, even if their suffering is prolonged, and that God's compensation will inevitably come, even if it is delayed. Here, the shirt takes the place of the absent Yusuf and acts on his behalf in returning the light to the darkness that his father lived through.

A: 93. "Take my shirt and go cast it over my father's face, and he shall recover his sight, then bring me your family all together."

AD: 93. Go with this my shirt, and cast it over the face of my father: he will come to see (clearly). Then come ye (here) to me together with all your family".

M: 93. "Go with this shirt of mine, and cast it over the face of my father, he will become clear-sighted, and bring me all your family."

The three translators did not change the strategy they used in rendering the shirt symbol in the third scene from what it was in the first and second ones. They adopted direct strategy and literal type in rendering the symbol of shirt. Except, the first rendering seems to have superiority in translating (يرتد بصيراً) than the second and third ones, cause it looks more focused on the adequate meaning and preserve the adequacy in translating this phrase and convey the analogous effect of the ST to the TL reader that (he will regain his sight), but not (to see clearly) which seems less accurate and slightly deviant from the intended meaning.

Conclusion:

The scene of the shirt in the Surah of Yusuf contains wonderful semantic dimensions that confirm that these words are not the words of man, but rather the words of a mighty God. Joseph's shirts are not one shirt that could be replaced by one for the other. Rather, they were different shirts according to the time and place for each of them. Thus, each of them has a clear distinction, referring to a different symbol and semantic dimension from the other. The three translations did not differ in translating the symbol of the shirt, because the three translators relied on one strategy, which is the literal translation. As the word (القميص) has no equivalent in the target language except for the word shirt. As for the semantic meanings, they are not clear in the translations. The fact that translators of the Holy Qur'an rely primarily on the apparent meaning of the text and its transmission to the recipient.

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