

An Assessment of " Guest" Translation in Aziz Al - Semawi's Poem "Khuttar"

م.م. سميرة عطشان فياض

وزارة التربية العراقية

Asst. Lect. Sameerah Atshan Al-Fayyad

Ministry of Education/ Iraq

Abstract

The present study seeks to highlight the principle of (khuttar / guest) in the Iraqi poem (Khuttar) by Aziz Al Semawi. The study analyzes the poem and affirms culture-specific items (henceforth, SCI) with a specific reference to the principle of loss and gain.

This study tries to study how the concept of "khuttar / the guest" is dealt with in an Arabic poem and tries to find answers to the following questions: 1-How are the two items ' khuttar' and the 'guest' well- culturally transferred? How was the translation of the Arabic text successful? Are there any non-equivalent contents used? And it aims to achieve the following: Pinpointing how the two items 'khuttar' and 'the guest' are culturally transferred. Investigating the accuracy of the Arabic text's translation. Identifying the non-equivalent contents used. This study is limited to analyzing the item 'khuttar' in an Arabic poem by Aziz Al-Semawi.

Keywords: khuttar; guest; cultural specific items; loss; gain.

تقييم ترجمة مفهوم " ضيف " في قصيدة عزيز السماوي

" خطر "

المستخلص

تسعى الدراسة الحالية إلى إبراز مفهوم (خطر / ضيف) في القصيدة العراقية (خطر) لعزيز السماوي. تحلل الدراسة هذه القصيدة وتؤكد العناصر الثقافية المحددة. مع الإشارة إلى مبدأ الخسارة والمكسب. تحاول هذه الدراسة دراسة كيفية التعامل مع مفهوم "خطر / الضيف" في قصيدة عراقية وتحاول إيجاد إجابات للأسئلة التالية: 1-كيف يتم التعامل مع نقل البندين "خطر" و "الضيف" من الناحية الثقافية؟ كيف نجحت ترجمة النص العربي؟ هل هناك أي محتويات غير مكافئة مستخدمة؟ يهدف البحث إلى تحقيق ما يلي: تحديد كيفية انتقال البندين "خطر" و "الضيف" ثقافياً. التحقق من دقة ترجمة النص العربي وتحديد المحتويات غير المعادلة المستخدمة. تقتصر هذه الدراسة على تحليل مصطلح "خطر" في قصيدة عربية لعزيز السماوي الكلمات المفتاحية: خطر; ضيف; عناصر ثقافية محددة; الخسارة; الربح.

Introduction

Every person, company, organization, community, government, club, and the network wants to speak to all their friends, members, employees, investors, customers' hearts in their native languages or in other tongues. This is also the means used by poets to transform their emotions, thoughts, feelings, etc. to others. In order to achieve this goal, certain types of linguistic devices are used. Al- Semawi has followed the same path and succeeded in doing so by using many linguistic devices like; metaphor, simile, pun, paradox, etc. to enrich his literary works.

In translating any text from the source language into the target one, it is not easy to translate 'culture-specific items' (henceforth, SCIs) as they are related to cultural knowledge and the cultural background of the culture under investigation. The difference and distance between two various cultures determine the amount of gain and loss that will be experienced by the CSIs when they are translated (Tiwiyanti and Retnomurti, 2017:1).

Loss as a concept means the evanescence of certain features in the target language discourse that is present in the source language (Nozizwe and Ncube, 2014:676). In other words, the contradictions between the two linguistic structures cause some elements of the Source Language (henceforth, SL) like its features and process of transferring to the target text.

On the other hand, **gain** as a concept is related to the situation where the target text gains features not present in the source language Sallis,(2002:89) defines gain as an issue of expressing the meaning to a greater degree in the translation when it is compared with the authentic text.

This study tries to study how the concept of "khuttar / the guest" is dealt with in an Arabic poem and tries to find answers to the following questions:

- 1-How are the two items ' khuttar' and the 'guest' well- culturally transferred?
- 2- How was the translation of the Arabic text successful?
- 3-Are there any non-equivalent contents used?

1.2 The Aims

This study aims to achieve the following:

- 1-Pinpointing how the two items 'khuttar' and 'the guest' culturally transferred.
- 2-Investigating the accuracy of the Arabic text's translation.
- 3-Identifying the non-equivalent contents used.

1.3 The Hypothesis

It is hypothesized that:

- 1-The items 'khuttar' and 'guest' are transferred in the two cultures via different linguistic devices like; pun, metaphor, simile, etc.
- 2-The translation of the Arabic text has different mistakes in transferring words in the Iraqi accent into English.
- 3-Items like 'بس' have translated to a not accurate equivalent.

1.4 The Limits

This study is limited to analyze the item 'khuttar' in an Arabic poem by Aziz Al-Semawi.

2. The Literature Review

2.1 'Khuttar' and 'Guest'

It is well-known in the English and in the Arabic culture that the 'guest' is a person who is invited (or sometimes comes without invitation) to visit the house of or to take part in a function or a social event organized or prepared for. He or she is a person whose hospitality is extended (Merriam Webster Dictionary). Add to this, in English, there are about 49 synonyms and related words for this item like; visitor, caller, client, inmate, etc. (www.thesaurus.com/browse/guest). He is a person that is staying with you, or a person you have invited to a social occasion, like a meal or a party(Cambridge Dictionary).

2.2 The Status of the Guest

Honouring and offering hospitality to the guest is one of the essential morals in different communities. It is a quality that is possessed by prophets and messengers. It is a characteristic of honourable men and whoever is well-known for his hospitality is also known for honourable and high status.

2.3 The linguistic devices

Linguistic, poetic, rhetorical and aesthetic devices are utilized to form the final images that are used in any literary text. In this section, a review of some devices is recorded, hence they are used to support the final outline of this work. The devices are selected according to the language used by the two poets (Al-Semawi and the translator) that are under this study.

2.3.1 Metaphor

A form of figurative language where one thing or one idea is spoken in terms of another (Ritchie, 2013:3). "It is a species of figurative language which needs explaining, or explaining away. It is a kind of anomaly of language, one which must be dispelled in order to clear the path for a general theory or reference or meaning (Ortony ed., 1993:8-11).

2.3.2 Simile

Simile has the function of adding an aesthetic value due to its ability to extract the unseen issues from the obvious ones. It also accesses the far significance by using the near one. It also provides the meaning with clarity and clearness (AL-Hashimy, 1999:247). It is a figure of speech that compare directly two things. Simile, when compared with metaphor, it highlights the similarities between things via using items like "like" and "as". On the contrary, a metaphor creates an implicit comparison.

2.3.3 Hyperbole

It is an extravagant exaggeration of a certain fact. It might be added for what is comic or serious matters. It is another figure of speech and a literary device that creates a heightened effect through deliberate exaggeration. It adds emphasis with having no intention of being literary true. It is used for serious, comic or ironic effects in literature or rhetoric (web source 1).

2.3.4 Paradox

A situation or statement that seems impossible or is difficult to understand because it contains two opposite facts or characteristics, e.g;

It's a curious paradox that drinking a lot of water can often make you feel thirsty. It is defined by the American philosopher Willard van Orman Quine as: "just any

conclusion that at first sounds absurd but that has an argument to sustain it" (Bagger, 2007:9)

Examples of paradox; *Save money by spending it. , This is the beginning of the end. , If I know one thing, it's that I know nothing.*

2.3.5 Euphemism

Another poetic device that adds another test to poetry in specific and all written and spoken discourse, in general, is a euphemism. It is not an offensive expression that is used in place of a blunt one that is felt not to be agreed with or it might be embarrassing(Abrams,1999:83). It is " an expression that refers to something that people hesitate to mention lest it causes offence, but which lessens the offensiveness by referring indirectly in some way" (Cruse, 2006: 57). An example: we say "*passed away instead of died*"

2.4 The Poetic Language of Al-Semawi

Al-Semawi is a renewed poet, who added many artistic and aesthetic transformations to the Iraqi popular poetry. He had established a dialogue for its premises and a diagnosis of its effective symbols in the poetic scene. He was a good defender of them all because his poems were related to people and their essential concerns, nerves and daily lives (web source:2).

The poet has written his poignant verses in the prison in Iraq. He was always wondering if he will be freed or to stay prisoned all his life? All these questions were repeated in his unusual poems.

Al-Semawi was titled the '*poet of impossible happiness*' since his happiness had never been achieved. He is a different poet as he has unusual poetic images. When is a broken-hearted, he seems happy. He has the experience of prison, loneliness and alienation. He believes that home and poetry are two parallels, both in path and in feelings. Success, he asserts, is for home and the poet himself as well (Al- Abdallat,2016:1).

3. Data and Analysis

3.1 Data

The data under investigation is a poem by the famous Iraqi poet Aziz Al Semawi(1941- 2011). It is entitled '*KHUTTAR*'. It is a milestone in popular Iraqi poetry. It is a turning point that has changed the poetry's path between antiquity and modernity. Al Semawi is a Darwish in this verse. He is telling the story of his childhood that is stored in his memory. This poem is one in his masterpiece collection (أغاني الدرويش 1998).

3.2 The Model of Analysis

The model used by the researcher in the analysis of the selected data is

(*Juliana Hauses's model:1997*) that is very general and can be adopted to different types of discourse assessment. This model is based on comparing the source translation with the target translation. She emphasizes the *mismatches* in the translation of the two texts (House:1997:159, cited in Munday 2012:140). She involves, in her model, the earlier categories of the Hallidian register.

The model consists of:

1-Field: it refers to the subject matter besides social action. It also deals with lexical items.

2-Tenor: it includes the temporal, geographical and social provenance of the addresser. In addition, it covers his or her intellect, emotions, and personal point of view.

3-Mode: it is related to whether the channel is written or spoken. It also measures how the individuals participate (ibid:141-2).

House intentionally, adds register to her model to make the assessment easier and more applicable.

House has also added what is known as *cultural filter*. It is defined by (Munday, 2012:143) as being the need that is applied by the translator in order to modify cultural components and to give the impression that the translated text is purebred.

3.3 Text Analysis

Text 1 : Joy might visit us unexpectedly... hang the lit candles.

It might pass through this way... spray the way with tears.

Oh, my heart, where is sorrow...I hid it away from the joy's path. You always whine...you wail with tears of a distressed (the heart talking).

Your shadow is a mere lying hope... above the heavens lifted.

خطر عدنه الفرخ .. اعلق صواني اشموع
خافن يمر بالعكد .. رش العكد بدموع
يا قلبي وبين الحزن .. حدر الحدر مرفوع
دومك تون وتتك .. تبجي بدمع مفجوع
طيفك امل كذاب .. فوق السما مرفوع

In these lines, we can find many poetic devices. Metaphorically, the poet compares joy and happiness with the guest (khuttar), as s/he comes unexpectedly. Or s/he is waited for with longing, so he lits candles to welcome him. He also compares joy and happiness with a false hope (طيفك امل كذاب .. فوق السما مرفوع). Another metaphor is used when the poet compares the sprayed path to a tradition that we spray unpaved paths with water in order not to stir dust-up), but now the poet is spraying the path with his tears,(hyperbole). A second hyperbole is used when the poet compares the level of his sadness with a flood (يا قلبي وبين الحزن .. حدر الحدر مرفوع). A very amazing image used by the poet (hyperbole), is when he lights a great number of candles(اعلق صواني اشموع).

Assessment

1. Field: the ST (source translation) and TT (target translation) are completely similar because both the source and target are poems. And the translator does not neglect musical devices like rhyme and rhythm as possible.

Both ST and TT deal with the same subject. Both of them are literary texts. The level of Field reflects the kind of audience. The choices of lexical items attract the audience and readers as well.

2. Tenor: this level deals with the kind of author and the audience and the relationship between them. The author is a poet and the audience is a translator. The poet is interested in literary works, while the translator might be interested in translation or studying or specialized in the field of translation. He also neglects to translate the Arabic word (خطار). In this level, we can also see, the translator translates the Arabic word (الزقاق الضيق: العكد) as (way) and it is better to be put in words as (path). Another mismatch in these lines is when the translator translates the word (أوقد أو) (أشعل: أعلق) as (hang: يعلق) that is completely wrong. In the third line, the translator adds the pronoun I which is not found in the ST.

3. Mode: It is the third level of Houses' model. It shows the channel of communication between the addresser and the addressee. The ST is written to be read or heard, whereas, the TT is written to be read, mostly. At this level, we can find a number of lexicogrammatical realizations like 'word order'. Mismatches in this field, can be investigated in word order when the translator changes the NP (خطار عدنه الفرح) into a VP (joy might visit us. The translator also adds the adverb unexpectedly in the first line that is not found in the ST.

Text 2:

*Even your prison-guard at night got angry... be careful not to wake up at night,
burying the glimpse of hope...do not let the star Canopus sleep.*

(the heart tells him to welcome joy in silence and with the star light).

And the train has passed and is gone...the train is none of your business

(the heart tells him that time has passed him, and the prisoner responded it's not of your concern)

Put a bonfire of burning coal...increase the blaze of longing and grief

Melt all the candles until they go out... put more of all the cardamom in the coffee

(the prisoner asks his heart to put all the candles and cardamom he has for the guest 'joy')

Do this so the time does not steal my life away from joy...for time is quick.

Joy might visit us unexpectedly... hang the lit candles.

شكبان ليلك غضب .. بالك تفز بالليل
دافن بصيص الأمل .. مسهّر نجوم سهيل
والريل فات وجزا .. مالك شغل بالريل
حطلنا موقد جمر .. زؤد سعير الويل
نؤب شموع الوصل .. فرهد حبابي الهيل
بس لايبوق العمر .. طيف العمر ملسوع
خطار عدنه الفرح .. اعلق صواني شموع

In this part of the poem, Al-Semawi has used many poetic devices. They are led off with hyperbole (شكبان ليلك غضب) as he compares his sadness with a great and huge quantity. Second, he uses a metaphor when he compares his impossible hope with a buried dead body (دافن بصيص الأمل). Then, he returns back to hyperbole, when he says that he stays all the night wake up waiting for this hope. Even the star 'Canopus' is

staying up with him. Third, he uses euphemisms in two situations. First when he asks his heart, softly, to melt all the candles lit for the khuttar/ guest and to spread all the cardamom he has as a kind of welcoming. He says so and begs time not to steal his life away from joy (khuttar). Finally, he uses a very strange metaphor, comparing the time that passes quickly with someone who has been stung, when he jumps and moves fast.

Assessment

1. Field: both the ST and TT deal with the same subject and the same idea. Both of them express the same agony, sadness, hope, prison, etc. both of them are literary texts. The simple items, on one hand, and complicated images and poetic devices, from another hand, attract the audience, listeners and readers as well. The ST and TT are both poems, keeping rhyme and rhythm.

Mismatches in this text are found according to the lexicogrammatical realization that is related to certain terminology. The translator translates the item (شكبان), which means: a great quantity of something) in a wrong way. He also translates (الويل التي تعني :) (*great sorrow of distress*) to longing and grief. When it is better to be translated into; (woe, distress, disaster, etc.).

2-Tenor: in this level, we can find that the author of ST is a poet. On the other hand, the author of TT is a translator. The audience of the ST might be interested in such kind of genre, whereas the audience of TT could be interested in translation or a specialized in this field. Matches at this level are so much accurate and precise that lead to the idea that the translator is very aware of the cultural content. Mismatches can be investigated in many lines in this part as the translator has added many details that could be not accurate (*Even your prison-guard at night got angry... /... شكبان ليك غضب*).

He also adds the phrase (*in the coffee*) that is not found in the ST. This is a mismatch in lexis, but it might be accepted pragmatically since both of the texts might transform the same meaning and the same idea. He tries to alleviate the lexis in the ST in a way to make it more acceptable by the target reader. S/he tries to manipulate the emotive effects of the TT addressee. On the contrary, the translator has neglected the item (الوصل) and does not adds a translation for it in the TT (نُوب شموع الوصل) to (*melt the candles until they go out*).

3-Mode: there is mismatching in the system of lexis. The translator, sometimes, mistranslates items like; (شكبان ليك غضب) . He interpreted it as (*even your prisoner-guard at night got angry...*). From a linguistic point of view, that can be considered a mismatch. Besides, the translator can be excused (metaphorically) as differences in both cultures might lead him to such uses. Add more, the Translator is free with Loss and Gain concepts to make his TT more identical to the ST.

This level also reveals another mismatch that is related to the channel of participation and degree of participation between speaker and hearer. The ST is written to be read or heard, while TT is written to be read, in any case.

4. Conclusions

It is concluded that:

- 1-The items (guest/ khuttar) are well culturally translated with different images. The translation of ST was successful, but with mismatches. They are due to the fact that the text is not written in a formal language. Besides the two cultures are different.
- 2-Non- equivalent contents are used. Not precise lexical- choices are found. It seems that the translator his /herself had done their best in reaching an identical translation that matches the ST.

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