

## **Certain Applications of Linguistics to Translation and Lexicography**

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Within languages, the phonological level forms a strongly closed system in comparison to the semantic and morpho-syntactic levels, and the lexicon is open ended in a way that the morpho-syntactic level is not. Whereas the native speaker learns the grammar of his/her language by the age of five, he/she continues constantly adding new words to his/her vocabulary and uses of words through reading, occupation and other activities. His/her repertoire of lexical information is always undergoing development and modification (Leech 1974: 203), whereas there is comparatively little development of syntax in adult life: "The primary period of conceptual development is early childhood" (Richards 1980: 425).

This makes both the phonological and morpho-syntactic levels more amenable to exhaustive description and comparison than the lexical level. For that reason, contrastive studies lean heavily on the side of phonological relations, moderately inclined to syntax, but the area of vocabulary has hardly been touched at all.

Translators and bilingual dictionaries lexicographers can have mastery of pronunciation of the foreign language (FL) from which or to which they are translating and can have ways to establish usable control of basic patterns of phrase and sentence

structure and some insight into the relative importance of various aspects of the grammatical structure. However, "there is the inherent difficulty of mastering an adequate vocabulary in any language, including one's native language" (Twadell 1980:439-40).

Languages are not structurally the same, at least on the surface structure. There is divergence or convergence between the source language (SL) and the translation language (TL); "we speak of divergence when there are more structural elements in the translation language than in the source language, while the converse holds true in the case of convergence" (Van Els et al. 1984:40).

I present examples from the language pair, Arabic and English. There is one Arabic word /sæ9ah/ "ساعة" and there are three English words 'watch', 'clock' and 'hour'. There is the Arabic verb /jadrub/ "ضرب" and there are at least four verbs in English: 'hit', 'beat', 'strike', 'smite', 'bang', etc. the second personal pronoun 'you' in English is used for all persons, while in Arabic there are /'anta/ "أنت" (sing.masc), /'anti/ "أنت" (sing.fem), /'antum/ "أنتم" (pl.masc.) and /'antunna/ "أنتم" (pl.fem.).

Furthermore there may be lexical gaps in one of the languages. This is often the case with words which express socio-cultural or technical aspects typical of a particular language community which can be described with great difficulty in another language (ibid). For example, the words of Sudanese wedding such as /('e:la/ "4/بيلةsub?ja/ "5/بيلةsubhija/ "ari:ra"صحبة"/ "ضريبة", /qata9arrahat/" /"abbæ/ "قطع رحط", /"qata9arrahat/" etc. are untranslatable even into other Arabic colloquials.

Many problems of translating vocabulary are caused by the

lack of equivalence between the lexical items of the SL and the TL: "There is rarely a one-to-one correspondence between the meanings that the speakers of language A have for one of their words and the meanings that the speakers of language B have for any one of theirs" (Twaddel 1980:443). Vocabulary translation is learning to discriminate the relevant qualities and properties, which constitute the designatum, from the irrelevant ones. The translator must make most appropriate choices and the lexicographer should avoid the act of glossing. His dictionary must include the criterial properties of each word in the dictionary. That is to give its definition. Offering a translation equivalent does not give the meaning of the word. Both translator and lexicographer are "concerned with establishing criteriality, with the task to find what is criterial and what is not" (Zgusta 1971: 29). However,, "there is no repertory or inventory of criterial properties valid generally in all the languages. Some criterial features seem to be universal, but what seems an endless number of them varies from one language to another" (ibid). What is irrelevant in the SL can be relevant in the translation language and vice versa, Take, for an example, the English word 'table' and its nearest equivalent /ṭawla/ "طاولة".

'Table' (piece of furniture) has a vast number of qualities and properties. A table may be made of wood or metal. Brown or white, beautiful or ugly, expensive or cheap, antique or modern etc. The relevant qualities and properties to the definition of the word are 'any piece of furniture consisting of a flat roughly horizontal top on which other things are put and which is supported on one or more legs.' These qualities are criterial for speakers of both English and Arabic to decide whether to call the thing in the material

In physical world a 'table' in English or /tæwla/ "طاولة" in Arabic or not. The designatum can be visualized as consisting of these criterial qualities (op. cit). However, the purpose of /tæwla/ "طاولة" is not criterial in Arabic. It is used for eating or work or games or writing, while in English the designatum of English 'table' if used for writing it is 'desk'. Another example is the English word 'morning' and its Arabic equivalent? / abah "صباح". Both words refer to 'the early part of the day between dawn and noon' but in Swedish it is used in reference to the part of the day only up to 6 a.m.

Languages differ in the way they symbolically reflect the world. The same part of physical reality is differently organized and segmented into designata in different ways. To demonstrate very clearly the different patterns of lexical use in a language let us consider, as a further example, a rainbow or spectrum from a prism. The colour spectrum is a continuous gradation of colour from one end to another, lacking any physical boundaries. Yet American English has six basic colours: red, orange, yellow, green, black and white. British English has more hues: pink (from bluish red to red) and grey (a neutral colour ranging from white to black).

By contrast, speakers of other languages classify colours in much different ways. In Hanunoo (a language in the Philippines), there are only four basic colour terms: 'black', 'white', 'red', and 'green', perhaps better translated as 'dark' vs. 'light'. Russian makes a distinction between two kinds of blue which can perhaps be translated in English into 'dark blue' vs 'sky blue' (Crystal 1987: 106). In Shona (a language of Rhodesia), the speaker divides the spectrum into three major categories. He classifies the 'red' and 'purplish blue' as similar and refers to them by the term 'cips uka'.

He also uses one term 'citema' for the blue and bluish green, and one term for the green and yellow 'cicena'.

The Bassa speaker divides the spectrum into only two major categories; the 'red', 'orange' and 'yellow' or what artists would call 'warm colours' are referred to by the term 'ziza', and the 'green', 'blue' and 'purple' are referred to by the term 'hui' (Gleason 1953: 4,5).

In addition to the major colours languages, of course, have a number of terms for more specific colours. For example, in English there is 'vermilion' and 'scarlet' for bright reds, 'crimson' for any of purplish red, 'indigo' for a variable colour averaging closely to grey and 'beige' for a variable colour greyish yellowish brown. In Shona there are also three specific terms comparable to English 'crimson', 'scarlet' and 'vermilion'.

Sudanese women use a large number of terms for more specific colours in addition to basic colours in Arabic. They use five terms for varieties of 'red'; /f/

"A/ kabdi/ "C/ bambi/ "7 /cw:bi/ and /kækæwi/  
"C/ five terms for the varieties 'green' ; /le:mu:ni/ "D/ ze:ti/  
"B/ zar9i/ 2 "and /harjali/ "رحليا  
/ga(i/ "B/ "2  
"C/ /kibri:ti/ "C/ "E/ mascšrdi/ "E/ "bunni/ مستطرديا,  
/be:j/ "جى/ and /dhahabi/ "0  
"D/ samæwi/ "3  
"F/ "1/ ni:li/ ماديا,  
"A/ kabdi/ "كدي", "u:bi/ "طوي", and /kækæwi/ "كاكاي",  
"ze:ti/ "ليموي", /le:mu:ni/ "زبي",  
"ga(i/ "قتسى", /zar9i/ "زرعي", and /harjali/ "حرجلي",  
"masčardi/ "كسوي", /kibri:ti/ "كبري", "bunni/ مستطرديا", /be:j/ "بي",

and /dhahabi "ذمى". /However, they divide the blue into eight colours: /kuhli/ "كحلي", /labani/ "لبني", /samæwi/ "سماري", /ramædi/ "رمدادي", /ni:li/ "نيلي", /fidḏi/ "فدذي", /trikwæz/ "تركواز", and /loanze:nab/ "لوانزه نابت".

On the other hand, there are some languages which make a distinction between two colours (or more). They have one lexeme for both. For example, in Arabic there was one term /'zraq/ "أزرق" for both /'xḏar/ "أخضر" (green) and /'azraq/ "أزرق" (blue). Navahoo also makes no distinction between blue and green (Crystall, Ibid), and has one term for 'brown' and 'grey.'

The meaning of a word is its use in the language. Thus, the knowledge of the applicability of the single word is extremely important for both the translator and lexicographer. They should distinguish between what is an obligatory restriction and what is a preferential one. The translator should make the appropriate choice from two or more identical words. The lexicographer should treat the range of application of the word as a criterial property of the word and indicate that in a monolingual or bilingual dictionary.

Let us look at some identical words and see how they are used differently. In English the words 'between' and 'among' are identical. However, 'between' refers to two people or things. It can also refer to more than two, while, 'among' is restricted to cases where more than two subjects are referred to. The words 'good' and 'excellent' are identical. However, we say 'good day' but not 'excellent day'. In Arabic the grammatical words /l/, /D/, /lam/ "لا", /mæ/ "ما", /E/ "و" and /lan/ "لا" are all used as function words to express negation, yet each has a different range of application.

/læ/"D is used with the present form of the verb to indicate the imperative mood, /læ ta  
"/, "lam/, "م" /mæ/" and /lan "لن" /are all used as function words to express negation, yet each has a different range of application.

/læ/" is used with the present form of the verb to indicate the imperative mood, /læ ta'kul/ "لا تأكل" /don't eat'. /lam "لم" /is used with the present form and refers to the past verb tense, /lam ja'kul/ "لم يأكل" is either translated 'he didn't eat' or 'he hasn't eaten'. /mæ/" "ما" is used with the past form of the verb to refer to the past verb tense to refer to the past action /mæ 'akal/ "لم يأكل" /he didn't eat'. /lan "لن" /is used with the present form to refer to the future, /lan ja'kul/ "لن يأكل" /he will not/never eat.'

Words are not comprehensible solely in terms of their reference. The learning of a lexical word involves studying the complex and varied types of relations in which it enters with other words in the language. That is what is called 'its sense relationships' such as hyponymy, synonymy, polysemy and homonymy and so on. These are the relations that determine the semantic structure of the language (Wilkins, 1972: 124). Knowledge of lexical semantics of the SL and TL is extremely important for both translators and bilingual lexicographers. Lack of knowledge of 'sense relations', for example, results in mistakes such as translating the word 'plants' into the Arabic word /nabætæt/ "نباتات" in the sentence 'The RAF bombed the cities and the plants' , which was translated into /qaðafa arræf almudun wannbætæt/ "قذف الراف المدد والبيئات" husbandmen' into /azwaj "ازواج" /in 'In ancient Egypt there were craftsmen and husbandmen',

translated into /kæna fi: miʃr alqadi:ma hirafiju:n wa azwaj/(1) كان  
 "and the back translation made by the computer  
 of the Russian translation equivalent of English 'spirit', 'willing'  
 and 'weak' into 'vodka', 'good', 'meat' and 'bad', respectively. The  
 computer translated the English sentence 'The spirit is willing; the  
 flesh is weak' " into Russian and when  
 the computer was commanded to give back the translation of the  
 Russian sentence into English, the result was the sentence "The  
 vodka is good; the meat is bad".(2)

"The general lexicon of virtually every language contains  
 homonyms-different words that sound the same (one form) but  
 carry many unrelated meanings" (Clark 1973:113)". Homonymy  
 often causes translators and lexicographers problems. The  
 translator who chose /nab,t,t/

"F instead of /ma?\_ni9/ "E is definitely ignorant of the other  
 meaning carried by the same form 'plants' and the translator who  
 translated 'husbandmen' into/

" instead of /maʃæni9/ " is definitely ignorant of the other  
 meaning carried by the same form 'plants' and the translator who  
 translated 'husbandmen' into /'zwæj/ " did not know that the  
 compound constitutes a word different in meaning. 'Husbandman'  
 means, as we know, one that ploughs and cultivates land-a farmer'  
 /muzari9/ ".

Other examples are 'bank' (= an organisation that provides a  
 financial service /maʃraf/ " and 'bank' (= the land sloping up  
 along each side of a river or canal /aʃ/ " . In Arabic the  
 homonyms /fard/ " meaning, as a special term, 'an enjoined  
 obligatory duty' and the term /fard/ " meaning, 'portion of



inheritance', have always been confused. For example in the prophetic tradition "learn the division of inheritance and teach it to other men for it is half of science" (weak trad.) /fard/ has mistakenly been translated into 'the enjoined obligatory duty'. Similarly, /fadl/ " remainder and /fadl/ (grace or favour); /qard/ " قرض " (loan) and /næfiq/ " نافع " (saleable; in circulation) and /næfiq/ " نافع " (the dead animal) have always been confused.

Homonymy (where two roots that were unrelated historically: 'ear of corn' and 'ear to hear with' converge in form overtime' must be distinguished from polysemy which occurs when a word form carries more than one meaning. (Ulman 1962, cited in Clark 1993: 11, 12). Dictionaries usually base their decision on etymology, identical forms which are known to have different origins are treated as homonyms and given separate entries.

Some polysemous words are among the most frequent in the language. Polysemous words may pose difficulty to translators. For example, the Arabic word /'umma/ has many meanings dependent on the context

as in the Glorious Qur'ān, yet it is translated by some Islamic books translators into the English word 'nation'. /'umma/ " أمة may mean 'a long period of time' as in the Quranic verse /waddakara ba9da `ummatin...../ " واذكر بعد أمة... " and he bethought him after a long period of time. (Usuf:45). It may also mean a short period – a definite term as in the verse /wala'in 'axxarna 9anhum al9a9ba'ila 'ummatin.../ " وإن أخرنا عنهم العذاب إلى أمة " (Hu:d 8), or it may mean a model, an example as in the verse /'inna 'ibræhima kæna

'ummattan . . . / " -) " . . . إن ابراهيم كان أمة . . . (Annahl:120). It may also mean 'a group or company of men' as in the verse /walama warada mæ'a madjana wajada 9alaihi 'ummattan min annæsi . . . / " => " . . . and ولما ورد ماء مدين وجد عليه أمة من الناس . . . (Alqasas: 23/ 'umma/ " may also mean 'a religion' in the expression /kulu 'ummatin wa kafu:r/ " لكل أمة وكفور " => the people of a particular religion and the disbelievers).

An important notion connected with polysemy is the specialized sense. There are words in every language which are used as words of general use (expressing in this case the designatum) and, at the same time, used as special terms (expressing in this case the concept). The 'term' reveals itself in some specialized contexts, usually dealing with a branch of science, technology etc. It is most often that the specialized meaning has 'a terminological value; that the word in question is used in these contexts, as a term of the respective branch of knowledge; (ZGUSTA 1971:63). For example, there is a difference between the word /na(ara/ "F saw apart) and the term /na(ara/ "F شرآ which acquired a special meaning not covered by the designatum of the general word. It came to mean as a term "to ask someone (a woman) to sharpen her teeth and make them thin."The general word /sariqa/ " رقة "3?????

" (theft; stealing) means in Islamic law 'seizure or taking away of property' belonging to another by stealth, from a protected place (e.g. a house)'.  
'One word has sometimes more specialized senses which belong to different terminological sets; sometimes, the processes of specialization can be proved to have taken place in different epochs, and sometimes even the text in which the two senses

occur come from different epochs; but this is not always the case. (Ibid). The Arabic substantivized participle /h,ti if/ " ) shouting aloud) had the specialized sense, in the texts of older mystics, the unknown shouting voice, he who shouts (and is not seen). In contemporary Arabic, it is used to mean (inner voice), but as a term it has also the other specialized sense 'telephone' (op.cit). Thus, it is of great importance to lexicographer; who is sometimes forced to seek and indicate different equivalents for precise terms and concepts, to develop conceptual and terminological clarification.

Synonymy or 'the sameness of meaning' is another sense relation, which may constitute a source of problem to translators. The worst translations are those in which the translator makes the wrong choice from among two or more synonyms. In the back translation we got from the computer "vodka" was selected instead of "spirit". The computer made the choice because the word alcohol had been fed into it as synonym of 'spirit' and vodka is an alcoholic drink made especially in Russia and Eastern Europe. Similarly the replacement of 'flesh' by 'meat' was a wrong choice.

Some translators make a random choice from among synonyms without investigating the subtle linguistic distinctions between synonyms and without taking into consideration the range of application of each synonym. For example, the Arabic word /ahwa/ " شهوة" has, in English, the translation equivalents the synonyms: (appetite, desire, wish, lust, passion, urge, want, crave, covet.....). The translators of Al Qaradawi's book "Al Halal Walharam" " الحلال والحرام" (=) chose the word 'appetite'; meaning (=of the instinctive desires to keep organic life, esp. the desire to eat) which is not the meaning intended by the

author, as a translation equivalent of /شهوة (ahwa) /However, the most suitable word here is 'lust' which means 'violent desire to possess something' e.g. sexual desire (for); passionate enjoyment (of).

In literary translations random choice of synonyms may result in poor and odd language. Examples taken from Khurshid (1985:53) are the translations of 'forehead' into /jabha/" ,instead of /jabi:n/ ربي؟ الخيال "E", the translation of 'jam of fiction' into /muraba alxayal/ " instead of /hulwa alxajæl/ " sweetness of imagination) in the expression "the novel is a statement embellished by jam of fiction, "and the translation of 'naked' 'white', 'fresh' into /9urjanan/ "9/ "abja" instead of /jabi:n/ "جبن" /the translation of 'jam of fiction' into /muraba alxayal "مرى الخيال" /instead of /hulwa alxajæl/ " sweetness of imagination) in the expression "the novel is a statement embellished by jam of fiction, "and the translation of 'naked' 'white', 'fresh' into /9urjanan/ "عرباناً" /abjadān/ " and zajan , "طارحاً" /respectively, in the translation of some of Ibrahimn Zaki Kurshid's students of the verse "the day comes to us, every morning, naked, white, fresh as a flower". Kurshid's students translation of the whole verse was as follows: /jazharu annahæru kulla şabæhin 9urjænan 'abjadān țæzajan kazzuhu:ri/" . يظهر النهار كل صباح أبيضاً طارحاً كالزهور .

We certainly agree with Khurshid that such translations are absurd, ridiculous and not literary translations in any respect. The literary translation of the verse, suggested by Khurshid runs: /jaʔl9u 9alajna annahæru kulla şabæh sæfiran mu(riqan fi: nadrati azzahri/ " يظهر علينا النهار كل صباح سافراً مشرقاً في نضرة الزهر . "

We have so far discussed the relations between lexical items on

paradigmatic axis. Let us now turn to the relations between words occurring in sequence, or to put it in other words, to syntagmatic relations in lexical structure.

In every language there are words which co-occur, such words are said to collocate. For example, in the back translation we got from the computer when 'spirit' was replaced by 'vodka' and 'flesh' was replaced by 'meat' the adjective 'willing' was changed into 'good' and 'weak' was changed into 'poor' because in each case the semantic features of the adjective and the noun seem incompatible.

Words which co-occur in the source language (SL) may not co-occur in the translation language (TL). The English word 'white' whose

Arabic translation equivalent is /'abjad/ "بيضا" (sing.masc.) and /bajðæ/ "بيضاء" (sing.fem) collocates with 'coffee'. However, it does not collocate with the Arabic equivalent of 'coffee'. Thus, we do not say /qahwatun bajðæ/ "قهوة بيضاء" 'fresh' in its second meaning (not altered by processing; having its original qualities unimpaired) collocates with 'fruit', 'fish', 'meat', 'milk' and 'flowers' are translated into Arabic respectively as: /fækihatun tæzijatun/ "فكهة طازجة", /lahmun tæzijun/ "لحم طازج", /hali:bun tæzijan/ "حليب طازج", /zahrun nadi:run/ "زهر ناضر" or /zahrun næðirun/ "زهر ناضر" fresh flowers.

Translators should be acquainted with semantic features which make it possible to collocate certain words and with collocational restrictions imposed on other words. Lexicographers should indicate what collocate with what words in monolingual as well as bilingual dictionaries.

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