Perlocutionary Equivalence in Drama Translation from English into Arabic[(*)]

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Abstract

This research examines how Perlocutionary equivalence is attained in drama translation from one language into another. In this regard, drama translation is handled from a linguistic perspective and in particular in the light of the Speech Act Theory. This theory views reception as a web linking the text (locution), the addresser's intentions (illocution), and the effect triggered in the receptor and his/her responses (perlocution). In addition, this paper focuses on how the original perlocutionary effects and the receptor's responses to locutions and illocutions, which depend on the deliberate manipulation of the source language and/or the source culture specific potentialities, can be transferred to a different audience whose language and culture may not hold similar characteristics and may not allow similar manipulations as well. Moreover, an overview of the Speech Act Theory and the major three acts; locutionary, illocutionary, and perlocutionary is included. Accordingly, the present work can aid drama translators to achieve honesty, adequacy, and acceptability, not only in

dealing with the original meaning of the source text (ST), but also in conveying what was originally meant and then render it in the target text (TT).

Keywords

Perlocutionary equivalence, Drama Translation, Speech Act Theory

الملخص

يتناول هذا البحث دراسة كيفية تحقيق المقابل الكلامي في الترجمة المسرحية من لغة إلى أخرى. وفي هذا الإطار، يعتمد هذا البحث على دراسة الترجمة المسرحية من وجهة نظر الدراسة اللغوية بشكل عام ونظرية المقابل الكلامي بشكل خاص. وتتركز هذه النظرية على التعامل مع استقبال (تلقي) الجمهور على أساس أنها حلقة (شبكة) تضم كلًّا من:

أولًا: "النص المسرحي"، وثانيًا: أهداف أو نوايا "كاتب النص المسرحي"، وثالثًا: التأثيرات وردود الأفعال المراد إثارتها في جمهور المتلقين. بالإضافة إلى ذلك، يتركز هذا البحث حول المقابل الكلامي الأساسي في النص الأصلي لدى جمهور المتلقين في اللغة والثقافة المنقول منها واللغة والثقافة المنقول إليها؛ حيث يختلف إدراك المفاهيم والأفكار نتيجة لاختلاف اللغة والثقافة. كما يشمل هذا البحث عرضًا لنظرية المقابل الكلامي وأنواعه. وبناء عليه، يهدف هذا البحث إلى تقديم العون لمترجمي النصوص المسرحية لتحقيق الأمانة والدقة ليس فقط فيما يتعلق بترجمة المعنى الأصلي في اللغة المنقول منها وإنما أيضًا فيما يتعلق بترجمة المعنى المقصود والتأثيرات الأساسية التي كان يعنيها كاتب النص الأصلي في اللغة المنقول إليها.

الكلمات المفتاحيه

المقابل الكلامي، الترجمة المسرحية، نظرية المقابل الكلامي

Introduction

The main concern of this research is to tackle the translation of dramatic texts from a linguistic perspective; the study and analysis of the perlocutionary equivalence from one language into another. It is noteworthy

that rendering a dramatic text from one language into another is totally different from any other literary text. Unlike poetry and prose, works of drama require special treatment on being transferred from one language into another due to the uniqueness of the genre. It goes without saying that plays involve performance, since in essence they are written to be acted on stage and watched by an audience. In this sense, drama translation implies a dual nature that combines language to performance. Thus, this study seeks to examine drama translation from a linguistic perspective and in particular in the light of the Speech Act Theory.

1. Drama Translation and Theatre Translation

Generally, literary translation is considered as a challenging discipline of translation. This is due to the fact that the translator's task is not only to produce an informative, accurate, and communicative translation, but also s/he should produce a text that transfers the same literary pleasure of the original text. If the translator fails to accomplish this mission, the literary text would lose its distinctive aspect that distinguishes it from other types of translations.

Rendering a dramatic text is totally different from translating any other literary text. This is due to the fact that the translator has to consider some elements that distinguish dramatic translation from any other text. First, 'playability' which Bassnett (p. 120-121) states as "*the added criterion of playability as a prerequisite" that requires the translator to "do something different from the translator of another type of text*" (Bassnett: 121). Second, 'performance' or 'performability' , which is described as "*that living experience that creates a unique relationship between the audience and the stage*" (Sehsah:84). The translator has to consider the fact that his/her major task is to produce a text that will not only be 'read', but can be 'spoken' and/or 'performed' on the stage as well. This reflects that the translator "*has unseen collaborators: in order for the meaning to journey from paper to spoken word or gesture, the translator must provide the extra textual clues through explanatory notes*" (Landers:105). Third, the role of the 'audience' is essential in the process of translating dramatic texts as they are performed on the stage. In other words, the translator has to bear in mind the various types and backgrounds of audience/ readers, s/he is addressing, especially if the play s/he is working on is meant to be performed on stage.

Despite the fact that a large number of studies tackled issues regarding the translation of literary works, drama translation is still one of the neglected areas in the field of translation studies. In 1980, Lefevere wrote: "*there is practically no theoretical literature on the translation of drama as acted and produced*" (Lefevere, 1980: 178). He attributed the absence of related studies on this subject to the fact that at that time the concept of 'pragmatics' has not yet been discovered, and also to the fact that literary analyses of dramatic texts have usually concentrated on drama as a read literary text.

2. The Speech Act Theory

The speech act theory is a theory of language initiated by J.L. Austin in his famous book, ***How to Do Things with Words***, (1962). After his death in 1960, Austin's ideas were further developed, refined and systematized by his pupil the American philosopher J.R. Searle. The Speech Act Theory is essentially based on the fact that language is as much, if not more, a mode of action as it is meant to convey information. As Huang (2007: 93) states it clearly "*the uttering of a sentence is, or is part of, an action within the framework of social conventions*".

A speech act is generally defined as "*an action performed by the use of an utterance to communicate in speech or writing, involving reference, illocutionary force and effect*" (Hatim, 2001: 233). This definition involves the pragmatic analysis of speech where utterances are seen in the dual function of 'stating' and 'doing things'.

In this analysis, an utterance is said to include: (a) a sense or a reference to a person, an object, an event…; (b) a force which can override literal sense relaying additional effects to it such as those seen in admonition; and (c) an overall effect or the final consequence. Speech acts and meaning "*do cohere since the meaning of the utterance is composed of the illocutionary role and the propositional content*" (Grewendrof and Meggle (eds.) 2002: 69).

2.1. Locutionary, Illocutionary, and Perlocutionary Speech Act

Believing that all utterances perform specific act via the specific communicative force of an utterance, Austin (1962: 101) divides the

linguistic act into three major categories; locutionary, illocutionary, and perlocutionary acts.

First, a locutionary act is "*the act of saying something*" in a speech situation. In other words, it has meaning as it produces an understandable utterance. Austin explains it as the utterance of certain noises, certain words in a certain construction, and the utterance of them with a certain sense and a certain reference. Locutionary act is the literal meaning of the utterance, that is the meaning of the utterance which is carried by the words in the utterance and their arrangement or their structure of words (Wagiman, 2008: 69)

Second, an illocutionary act refers to "*the performance of an act in saying something as opposed to the performance of an act of saying something*". In other words, illocutionary act has force; it is informed with a certain tone, attitude, feeling, motive, or intention. In this context, Huang (2007: 102) notes that when we say something, we usually say it with some purpose in mind. Illocutionary force is frequently referred to by what Searle (1969: 32) called an illocutionary effect.

Third, a perlocutionary act, which is the focus of the present thesis, refers to the fact that "*saying something will often, or even normally, produces certain consequential effects upon the feelings, thoughts, or actions of the audience, of the speaker, or of the persons*." Thus, a perlocutionary act has an effect upon the addressee. Austin (1962: 109) describes it as "*What we bring about or achieve by saying something such as convincing, persuading, deterring, or even, saying, surprising, or misleading*". Perlocutionary acts would include such effects as persuading, embarrassing, intimidating, boring, irritating, or inspiring the hearer.

These three categories, then, are not altogether separable, as Austin remarks:

> "*we must consider the total situation in which the utterance is issued-- the total speech act—if we are to see the parallel between statements and performative utterances, and how each can go wrong. Perhaps indeed there is no great distinction between statements and performative utterances.*"

Inspired by Austin, Davis (1980: 39) distinguishes between the perlocutionary act, the perlocutionary cause, and the perlocutionary effect. For him, the perlocutionary act means the speaker is causing the hearer to do

something or something to be done to the hearer. The perlocutionary cause is indeed what the speaker says to the hearer, and the perlocutionary effect is what the hearer does in consequence or what happens in, on, or to the hearer.

It is worth mentioning that there are two major distinctions between illocutions and perlocutions. Firstly, illocutionary acts are intended by the speaker, while perlocutionary effects are always produced by the utterance. Secondly, illocutionary acts are totally controlled on part of the speaker, while perlocutionary effects are not.

2.2. Locutionary versus Perlocutionary Equivalence (Translation)

In relation to the above mentioned discussion, George Grace (1978) distinguishes between locutionary and perlocutionary translations. Locutionary translation refers to the matter of designing a linguistic expression in the target language which is equivalent in meaning to a given source language expression. The alternative to locutionary translation is perlocutionary translation which aims at equivalence of effect between speech acts rather than equivalence in meaning between linguistic expressions.

The goal of perlocutionary equivalence is an expression to serve the vehicle of a TL speech act which will serve the same purposes that the original speech act was intended to serve. Perlocutionary translation does therefore mean totally or partially abandoning the literal, propositional or locutionary level, while maintaining the illocutionary act as far as possible and focusing strongly on the perlocutionary effect.

3. Theory of Dynamic Equivalence (Nida's Receptor- Oriented Approach)

Introduction

Of all the equivalence theories developed within the field of translation, the present work examines the validity of the work of the American scholar and Bible translator, Eugene Nida, as an attempt to prove whether Nida's Theory of Dynamic Equivalence is in fact a framework for attaining perlocutionary equivalence. Nida has developed his views concerning translation and equivalence from his own practical work in biblical translation. Such views have taken concrete form in his two major works in the 1960s: ***Towards a Science of Translating*** (1964), and the co-

authored; ***The Theory and Practice of Translation*** (Nida & Taber: 1969). These two works have contributed to moving translation studies into the realm of science and in demonstrating the value of linguistics as a potential tool for translation practice and research.

In Nida's book, ***The Theory and Practice of Translation***, he defines translation as "*Translating consists in reproducing in the receptor language the closest natural equivalent of the source-language message, first in terms of meaning and secondly in terms of style*" (Nida & Taber1969: 12). This definition encompasses three essential concepts in the process of translation: (1) equivalence which refers to the source (original) language; (2) natural which refers to the target (receptor) language; and (3) closest which refer to the link between both SL and TL. To elaborate, dynamic equivalence means to select the translation which is closest to the SL on a natural basis. The translator's task is to focus more on the meaning and the spirit of the ST, rather than to strictly adhere to the structure, form, and content. In this sense, dynamic equivalence is different from the traditional formal equivalence as it requires the TT to reflect the ST as perfect as possible in a different language structure.

3.1. Formal Equivalence Versus Dynamic Equivalence

In his two major works, Nida makes a clear distinction between Formal equivalence (correspondence) and Dynamic equivalence. On the one hand, Formal equivalence is mainly source-oriented as " it focuses attention on the message itself, in both form and content" (Nida 1964: 159). In this case, the translator's major concern is to reproduce a TL text that matches as closely as possible all linguistic levels of the SL text; especially the grammatical and lexical ones, in order to achieve equality of form and content. By adopting such a means of rendering, the translator is obliged to make use of a large number of supplementary material including footnotes and marginal notes to assist TL readers to have complete understanding of the various linguistic, stylistic and culture- specific aspects of the SL text. The situation is more complicated if a play is intended to be rendered from one language to another to be performed on theatre; stage translation. In such a case, the use of Formal equivalence, including supplementary material, would be meaningless since the translator's vital task is to allow his/her audience/ receptors to have full as well as instant understanding of the play that is performed. Thus, Formal equivalence is discarded by Nida

who states that "formal correspondence distorts the grammatical and stylistic patterns of the receptor language" and hence "distorts the message, so as to cause the receptor to misunderstand or to labor unduly hard" (Nida& Taber 1969: 201)

On the other hand, Dynamic equivalence is basically based on equivalence of effect and naturalness. It is a receptor- oriented approach as the original message is rendered in a way that looks as natural as possible to the TL text readers. The "message" is defined as "the total meaning or content of discourse, the concepts and feelings which the author intends the reader to understand and perceive" (Nida& Taber 1969: 205). He adds that "It is the quality of translation in which the message of the original text has been so transported in to the receptor language that the response of the receptor is essentially like that of the original receptors". In this context, Nida discards the idea that only the lexical/semantic levels should be the translator's main aim. This is attributed to the fact that in Dynamic equivalence, other factors such as pragmatics, cultural differences, contextuality, intentionality, and acceptability should be considered on part of the translator.

It is noteworthy that in later years, Nida distanced himself from the term 'Dynamic equivalence' and preferred the term 'Functional equivalence'. This new term does not just suggest that the equivalence is between the function of the ST in the source culture and the function of the TT in the target culture, but also suggests that 'function' can be thought of as a property of the text. In this case, functional equivalence is likely to be associated with how people interact in different cultures.

In a nutshell, Nida's theory proves to be theoretically satisfying and practically acceptable in the field of drama/ theatre translation. Thus, Dynamic equivalence can be judged as an effective means of reproducing perlocutions in theatre translation for three reasons. Firstly, as a result of the discussion of Nida's theory of Dynamic equivalence, it is obvious that the quest for Dynamic equivalence is indeed a quest for perlocutionary equivalence, if the linguistic concept is applied. Perlocutionary effect has much in common with Nida's Dynamic equivalence: perlocution is closely related to the concept of intentionality and response, in other words, what the speaker intends to say and how the receptor responds. In this context, Leo Hickey (1998: 220) considers the retention of perlocutionary effect as

the main criterion for attaining perlocutionary equivalence and effecting a faithful translation.

Secondly, drama translation is primarily a literary translation and the validity of Nida's equivalence theory in literary translation is yet acknowledged by Nida himself as well as by other translation scholars. Nida considers "the emotional tone" which reflects the point of view of the author in literary works as part of the equivalent effect he seeks, regarding theme reflection, character portrayal, and language use, through Dynamic equivalence.

Thirdly, naturalness forms one of the main principles of Dynamic equivalence whose goal is defined by Nida as seeking "the closest natural equivalent" to the SL message. Dynamic equivalence thus guarantees a natural rendering of the text along with a full retention of all the intentions of the playwright and the effects he has sought to trigger in his receptors whether through linguistic or extra linguistic means.

Conclusion

This research focuses on the direct association among drama, translation, and linguistics. It investigates how perlocutionary equivalence is attained in drama / theatre translation from one language into another. It is noteworthy the present work represents an undeniable challenge to the drama translator / scholar for the following reasons.

First, it is vitally occupied with tackling drama / theatre translation from a linguistic perspective, speech act theory and perlocutions.

Second, it is also concerned with the concept of reception. Among the major occupations of the Speech Act Theory is the study of the notion of reception. It is a web linking the text (locution), the addresser's intentions. (illocutions), and the effects triggered in the receptor and his/her responses.

Thus, this research does not only examine perlocutionary equivalence in drama / theatre translation, but also seeks to assist drama translators to bridge the gaps between the ST and the TT that might negatively affect the audience's reception of the playwright's meanings, intentions, and implications.

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