Translating Figurative Language **of Shakespeare's** *Sonnets* in the Light of Skpos Theory

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Abstract:

This paper tackles the difficulties faced by four translators rendering figurative language in two shakespearean sonnets and to what extent the translation choices adopted by the translators under study fulfill the adequate intended meaning. In addition, the study sheds light on the process of translation and how the translators manage to overcome the translation problems in terms of skopos theory in order to fulfill the function the translation is intended for in the target culture and accordingly, the target text's intra-textual coherence and the inert-textual coherence between the source and target texts.

Key words: Shakespeare, *Sonnets*, Skopos Theory, figurative language.

1- Introduction:

The relation between literal and figurative language is a matter of complementation not of discrepancy. Figurative language and literal language are "two ends of a scale, rather than clear-cut categories" (Leech, 1969, p. 147). In this sense, it does not imply on any account that they are two conflicting kinds. On the contrary, they are, as Nietzsche maintains, "the ideal poles of a continuum"(Cantor, 1982, p. 72). According to Nietzsche, literal and figurative languages are not the opposite kinds of language but they are two extremes of the same spectrum. In this sense, Cantor (1982) argues:

Our notion of literal meaning reflects the tendency of language to harden into fixed form, as figures of speech lose their vitality through common use. Our notion of figurative meaning reflects the power of creative artists to revive the energy of language by using words in novel ways and contexts. All language is a mixture of the literal and the figurative, since every linguistic utterance has some element of the customary in it and some element of the novel. Only the fact that speeches tend to emphasize the customary at the expense of the novel, or vice versa, leads us to distinguish literal from figurative language. (p. 72)

Hence, a distinction between literal and figurative discourse is fundamental not for the two kind's separation but for their proper assessment and appreciation. Aristotle provides a distinction between literal and figurative speech where he points out that "impressive and above the ordinary is the diction that uses exotic language (by "exotic" I mean loan words, metaphors, lengthenings, and all divergence from the standard). (Halliwell, 2005, p. 109). In the process, some scholars reduce literal language to express truth statements while the figurative to convey the emotive or non-cognitive speech. In this sense, figurative language doesn't communicate reference but used to express or incite feelings and attitudes.

Commenting on Aristotle's view, Richards considers figurative language as "something special and exceptional in the use of language, a deviation from its normal mode of working, instead of the omnipresent principle of all its free action" (C. K. Ogden & I. A. Richards, 1923, p. 153). This restricted the ability to appreciate the operation and importance of figurative language. By contrast, John Locke was an opponent to the previous distinction regarding figurative language in general and metaphor in particular where he (1996) maintains:

But yet, if we would speak of things as they are, we must allow, that all the art of rhetoric, besides order and clearness, all the artificial and figurative application of words eloquence has invented, are for nothing else but to insinuate wrong ideas, move the passions, and thereby mislead the judgment; and so indeed are perfect cheats: and therefore, however laudable or allowable oratory may render them in harangues and popular addresses, they are certainly, in all discourses that pretend to inform or instruct, wholly to be avoided; and where truth and knowledge are concerned, cannot but be thought a great fault, either of the language or the person that makes use of them. (pp. 214-215)

Regardless of the previous distinction, "figurative language is language which doesn't mean what it says"(Hawkes, 1972, p. 1). In other words:

Language which means (or intends to mean) what it says, and which uses words in their 'standard' sense, derived from the common practice of ordinary speakers of the language, is said to be literal. Figurative language deliberately interferes with the system of literal usage by its assumption that terms literally connected with one object can be transferred to another object. The interference takes the form of transference, or "carrying over" with the aim of achieving a new, wider, "special" or more precise meaning. …The various forms of "transference" are called figures of speech or tropes, that is, "turnings" of language away from literal meanings and towards figurative meanings. (Hawkes, 1972, p. 2)

According to *The Dictionary of Literary Terms*, figurative language means "Language which uses figures of speech; for example, metaphor, simile, alliteration. Figurative language must be distinguished from literal language". For example, "'He hared down the street' or 'He ran like a hare down the street' are figurative (metaphor and simile respectively)". Hence, "'He ran very quickly down the street' is literal"(Cuddon, 1999, p. 320). The different forms of used to transfer figurative language are called figures of speech which "turn the language away from the literal meaning towards the figurative one" (ibid.). Accordingly, figurative language includes a great deal of figures of speech. Hawkes (1972), for example, regards simile, synecdoche and metonymy as the major versions of metaphor. Mooij (1976, p. 39) points out that euphemism, hyperbole, irony, metaphor, simile, metonymy and synecdoche are among the most important figures of speech prominent in traditional rhetoric. Moreover, Hatch and Brown (1995, p. 84) consider simile, metaphor, synecdoche, metonymy, allusion,and personification as the main constituents of figurative language. Consequently, translating these figures of speech is not the easy task since they represent linguistic and pragmatic translation problems requiring convenient background and linguistic competence from the translator in order to overcome the relating errors rising when handling such problems, and further,to achieve the intended skopos of the translation.

From the previous assumptions, the main purpose of the study is to present a comparative analysis of rendering the figurative language in four Arabic translations of the Shakespearean *Sonnets* in the light of Skopos theory: Badr Tawfeeq's (1988), Kamal Abou-Deeb's (2010), Tawfeeq Ali Mansour's (2011), and Mohammed Enani's (2016). The following part of the study is to be offering a comparative analysis of two examples of figurative language varying from macrocosm and microcosm synecdoche in the four Arabic translations under study. The aim is to show practically how the four translators overcome the linguistic and pragmatic

translation problems in the light of skopos theory and which Arabic version is the most adequate to fulfill the skopos intended.

2- The Analysis:

Shakespeare in sonnet (12) sheds light on the influence of time and how it changes everything in this world especially the beauty of his friend which will one day fade away. He believes the only solution to keep his name in life is by getting married and begetting children of his own. In this sense, Paul (1997) argues:

> Everything declines and comes to an end with the passing of time.
> The beauty of the poet's friend would also decline and come to an end
> one day. However, the poet's friend can continue to live after his
> death if he gets married and produces children. The feeling, which
> prompted this sonnet, is once again that of love, which Shakespeare
> felt for his friend, the Earl of Southampton. (p. 58)

On the figurative level, Shakespeare resorts to several images in the following lines. He, for instance, uses synecdoche which is "a figure of speech in which the part stands for the whole, and thus something else is understood within the thing mentioned"(Cuddon, 1999, p. 890). Synecdoche operates in the same way of metonymy, but restricted to elements belonging to the same whole of something in one of the two types: 1) the "microcosm" synecdoche where a phrase or a part is used to signify a larger whole, 2) the "macrocosm" synecdoche where the larger whole is used to signify smaller collection of parts. The second of which is somewhat uncommon and the context always determine the overall meaning for such usage. It should be noted that synecdoche and metonymy are considered sub-types of metaphor and they are basically indexical as they depend on proximity of function or

experience, or they are part of the same whole. Hence, synecdoche and metonymy are mainly indexical while metaphors are mainly symbolic.

In line (7): "***And summer's green all girded up in sheaves,***", Shakespeare uses a macrocosm synecdoche phrase "***summer's green***" which, in this context, stands for the bounty of crops. The poet uses this image to convey his idea in a figurative association where he refers to all the different crops produced in summer. This represents a cultural translation problem according to the Skopos theory. The four Arab translators transferred this synecdoche as follows:

When lofty trees I see barren of leaves,

Which erst from heat did canopy the herd,

And summer's green all girded up in sheaves,

Borne on the bier with white and bristly beard: (Burrow, 2002, p. 405; S. 12, L: 5-8)

بدر :

عندما أري الشجر الوفير الثمرات عاريا من الورق ،

الذي كان من قبل يظلل قطيع الماشية من الهجير ،

وحنطة الصيف وقد طوقت جميعها في حزم

حملها علي عربات الحصاد ذو اللحية البيضاء الخشنة الشعر ؛   **(Tawfeek, 1988, p. 28)**

كمال:

عندما أبصر الشجر السامقات و قد خلعت ثوب أوراقها الناعسه

التي كانت الأمس وارفة و تجير القطيع من القيظ في حضنها

و أري خضرة الصيف تغدو قماطا من العشب في رزم يابسه

و هي تحمل في العربات بأشواكها الواخزات و تبدو كمثل اللحي البيض في لونها   **(Aboudeeb, 2010, p. 134)**

منصور:

و تنفض أوراقها الأشجار   و تصبح قاحلة خاوية

و كانت وارفة في الظلال   و تؤوي القطيع بوقت الزوال

وتحصد خضرة فصل المصيف   في حزم هشة قاحلة

و ينقلها الكهل الأشيب   علي عربات إلي المخزن   **(Mansour, 2011, p. 67)**

عناني :

حين أري الأشجار الفارغة و قد عريت و غدت أفنانا جرداء

من بعد حمايتها لقطيع الماشية من الحر بظلة أوراق خضراء

و أري أغصان الصيف و قد ربطت في حزم عجفاء

و سيقت في نعش ذي عجلات بالأهداب البيض الغبراء   **(Enani, 2016, p. 107)**

As shown above,Tawfeek translates the line as "**و حنطة الصيف وقد طوقت جميعها في حزم**" where he renders the synecdoche as "**حنطة الصيف**". He doesn't reach the figurative meaning intended by the poet as he reverses the type of the synecdoche. He transfers the English macrocosm synecdoche "***summer's green***" into an Arabic microcosm one "**حنطة الصيف**", meaning "summer's wheat", where he reduces all the crops of summer indicated by the English phrase into one crop "wheat". Aboudeeb and Mansour transfer the line respectively as "**و أري خضرة الصيف تغدو قماطا من العشب في رزم يابسه**" and "**وتحصد خضرة فصل المصيف... في حزم هشة**" where they respectively transfer the synecdoche literally as "**خضرة الصيف**" and "**خضرة قاحلة فصل المصيف**". Owing to their literalness, they both distort the intended meaning of the source text and overlook the figurative associations of the English trope. On the contrary, Enani translates the line as "**و أري أغصان الصيف و قد ربطت في حزم عجفاء**" where he transfers the macrocosm synecdoche into an Arabic macrocosm one "**أغصان الصيف**" which is in harmony with the paraphrase of Larsen (2014): ""Sommers greene," the growing produce in its freshness, harvested in autumn"(p. 69).

In brief, the four translators have done their best to render this trope properly. Enani is the only who succeeds to retain both the trope's figurative meaning and the type of synecdoche. He is the only who manages in presenting the most adequate translation as he overcome the

cultural problem by reaching the intended skopos after achieving the inert-textual coherence or fidelity between the two texts.

Moreover, sonnet (116) is considered a special contemplation of human's love and what could be of integrity and fidelity in its conflict with Time's destructive powers. In this sense, Paul points out that "true love never undergoes a change. True love is constant like the northern star which used to serve as an infallible guide to ships on the sea in olden days. True love never changes with the changings times" (Paul, 1997,p. 287). On the figurative level, Shakespeare uses several images in the following lines, For instance, in line (7): "***It is the star to every wand'ring bark***", he uses a microcosm synecdoche where the smaller part "***bark***" meaning "the external covering of the woody stem, branches, and roots of plants" signifies a larger whole "ship" as it is the main material in its manufacture. Here, the phrase "***wand'ring bark***" is the synecdoche which, in this context, stands for the sailing ship. The poet, in these lines, indicates that "True love may be compared to the northern star which remains fixed in the sky at one place and which, in olden days, used to serve as a guide to ships sailing on the sea and sometimes getting lost"(Paul, 1997, p. 287). Hence, according to the Skopos theory, this represents cultural and pragmatic translation problems. The Arab translators transferred this synecdoche as follows:

O no, it is an ever fixed mark

That looks on tempests and is never shaken;

It is the star to every wand'ring bark,

Whose worth's unknown, although his height be taken. (Burrow, 2002, p. 613; S. 116, L:

5-8)

بدر :

أواه ، لا ، إنه علامة أبدية الثبات

تنظر للعواصف ولا تهتز ابدا ،

انه النجم لكل السفن الهائمة ،

النجم الذي لا يعرف الانسان قدره رغم معرفة ارتفاعه **(Tawfeek, 1988, p. 140)**

كمال:

آه ، لا . بل إن الحب علامه

راسخة ومؤبدة . لا يتبدل أو تخمد جذوته .

الحب يطل على العاصفة الهوجاء تهب ولكن أبدا لا يهتز ، ولا تعروه سقامه .

نجم يهدي الملاح التائه في أي بحار أبحر. يدرك قدر علوه ، لكن لا تعرف قيمته. **(Aboudeeb, 2010: 154)**

منصور :

كلا فما الحب إلا كطود   قواعده دائما راسخة

إذا داهمته العواصف يوما   واجهها بصمود وصبر

وما هو إلا كنجم الشمال   تراه قلوع تجوب البحار

وقيمته غير معلومة   ولو أنه شاهق الارتفاع **(Mansour, 2011, p. 275)**

عناني :

كلا ! فالحب منارة شط ثابتة أبدا راسخة الأركان

تسخر من عصف العاصفة ولا يهتز لها بنيان

والسفن الخيري تنشد فيه النجم الهادي الرائع

قد تجهل قيمته لكن تعرف كم يرتفع الضوء الساطع **(Enani, 2016, p. 218)**

As seen above, Tawfeek and Enani translate the line: "***It is the star to every wand'ring bark***" respectively as "والسفن الخيري تنشد فيه النجم الهادي الرائع " and "انه النجم لكل السفن الهائمة" where the renders the synecdoche as "السفن الخيري" and " السفن الهائمة". Hence, they both attain the figurative meaning of the trope. Aboudeeb translates the same line as " نجم يهدي الملاح التائه في أي بحار أبحر" where he renders the synecdoche as "الملاح التائه " meaning "straying sailor or seaman" . He manages to reach the figurative meaning in addition to form it in an Arabic microcosm synecdoche where the smaller part " sailor " meaning " الملاح " signifies a larger

whole "ship". Aboudeeb's translation is in harmony with the paraphrase of Larsen (2014): "Every "*wandering bark*" is both every ship and person travelling without direction"(p. 391). Mansour translates the line as " وما هو إلا كنجم الشمال ... تراه قلوع تجوب البحار" where he renders the synecdoche as "قلوع تجوب البحار " meaning "sails roaming in seas". He succeeds in retaining the figurative meaning in an Arabic microcosm synecdoche where the smaller part " قلوع" meaning "sails" signifies a larger whole "ship". All the four translators manage to reach the figurative meaning of the synecdoche where they are in accordance with the explanation of Paul (1997): "*To every wandering bark* --To every ship which has lost its way on the sea. The word 'bark' is here used in the sense of a 'vessel', 'ship' or a 'boat'" (p. 287). Furthermore, Enani is the only who has the distinctive quality of musicality because of the rhythm in his lines owing to his addition of two groups of rhyming words: "الأركان،بنيان" and "الرائع،الساطع". In short, all the four translations are adequate to the skopos intended where the translators manage to solve the cultural and pragmatic translation problems by retaining the inert-textual coherence or fidelity between the two texts.

3. Conclusion:

The study concludes that the relation between literal and figurative language is of coordination not of discord where they are two ends of a scale. They are not conflicting opposite kinds rather they are two extremes of the same spectrum. On the functional level, figurative language is something special and exceptional operating with inclination away from the normal literal use of language. It includes different kinds of figures of speech constitute an obstacle when being translated since they represent linguistic, cultural and pragmatic translation problems in terms of skopos theory. Moreover, handling the eloquent figurative language of Shakespeare requires sufficient background and linguistic competence by the translator for the sake of overcoming such problems arising in an endeavor to fulfill

the function the translation is intended for in the target-situation-in-culture. Furthermore, among the four translations under study, Enani's is the adequate as he overcomes the different problems by reaching the intended skopos after achieving both; the target text's intra-textual coherence and the inert-textual coherence between the source and target texts.

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ملخص البحث:

تتناول هذه الورقة البحثية الصعوبات التي يواجهها أربعة مترجمين خلال نقل اللغة البلاغية لسونِيَتيْنِ شكسبيريَيْنٍ و إلى أي مدى تفي خيارات الترجمة التي اعتمدها المترجمون قيد الدراسة بالمعنى المقصود المناسب. بالإضافة إلى ذلك ، تلقي الدراسة الضوء على عملية الترجمة وكيف يتمكن المترجمون من التغلب على مشاكل الترجمة من خلال نظرية الغرض من أجل الوفاء بالوظيفة التي تهدف إليها الترجمة في الثقافة الهدف ، و من ثَّم ، تحقيق التماسك النصي الداخلي و الترابط النصي بين النص المصدر و النص الهدف.

الكلمات المفتاحية: شكسبير ، سونيتات، نظرية الغرض، اللغة البلاغية