مقاربة تداولية لترجمة الأفعال الكلامية في الخطاب الديني

نسائم مهدي العادلي ١

١-جامعة بابل/ كلية التربية للعلوم الإنسانية/ قسم اللغة الإنجليزية، العراق؛nasaem_rose_i@yahoo.com

دكتوراه في اللغة الانكليزية / أستاذ مساعد

ملخص البحث:

تستقصي الدراسة الحالية العلاقة بين البراكماتية التي تعنى بدراسة المعنى المقصود للمتكلم والترجمة التي تعنى بتحويل النص من اللغة الأصل الى اللغة الهدف. تبين الدراسة أهمية المعنى التداولي في عملية الترجمة وخصوصا في ترجمة الأفعال الكلامية في النصوص الدينية العربية. تعتبر الدراسة الحالية محاولة لتسليط الضوء على دور البراكماتية في ترجمة الأفعال الكلامية وأظهار كيف أن بناء الجملة ودلالتها غير كافيين للحفاظ على المعنى المراد من الجملة. بالأضافة الى ذلك تبين الدراسة أن ترجمة النصوص الدينية ليس فقط مسألة أتباع التركيب النحوي للجملة ودلالتها وأنما مسألة التأكيد على المعنى البراكماتي إذْ يعتبر المعنى المقصود في سياق معين عنصر مهم للحفاظ غلى المعنى الحقيقي. لذلك فالهدف هو التركيز عل مستوى معين للترجمة ألا وهو المستوى البراكماتي.بالتزامن مع هذا الهدف تفترض الدراسة بأن ترجمة النصوص الدينية العربية يشتمل على عقبات في المستوى البراكماتي إذْ إنَّ هناك مشاكل من المهم تجنبها على مستوى ترجمة الافعال الكلامية وهذه المشاكل تشتمل على (١) يساء ترجمة الدلالة البراكماتية لبعض الجمل (٢) لايوجد تمييز واضح بين الأفعال الكلامية التي تدل على الجماعة والأفعال الكلامية التي تدل على شخص معين (٣) ترجمة بعض الأفعال الكلامية التي تعود الى مجموعة معينة من الأفعال وكأنها تنتمي الى مجموعة أخرى. بمعنى اخر، هناك لامحدودية في ترجمة الأفعال الكلامية وهذه اللامحدودية يمكن تجاوزها بالأشارة الى التنظيم الشامل للنص. لأجل تحقيق هدف الدراسة، تم أختيار بعض المقتطفات من نص ديني عربي مترجم وتم تحديد مشاكل تخص ترجمة الأفعال الكلامية ومن ثم تحليلها وترجمة هذه المقتطفات وفقا للمقاربة التداولية المقترحة والتي تعتبر أكثر جوهرية من المقاربة الدلالية.

A Pragmatic Approach to Translating Speech Acts in Religious Discourse

Nesaem Mehdi Al-Aadili[1]

1- Department of English/College of Education for Human Sciences/University of Babylon, Iraq; nasaem_rose_i@yahoo.com

PhD in English Language / Assistant Professor

Abstract

The present study investigates the relationship between pragmatics, as the study of the intended meaning of the speaker, and translation, as the process of transferring texts from a source language to a target language. It shows how pragmatic meaning is outstanding in the process of translation, particularly the translation of speech acts in Arabic religious texts. It is an attempt to highlight the role of pragmatics in translating speech acts and to show how syntax and semantics are not enough to preserve the real intended meaning. Moreover, it demonstrates that translating religious texts is not only a matter of following the common linguistic categories of morphology, syntax, lexis, and semantics, but it is also a matter of pragmatic meaning where the intended meaning in a particular context is an essential factor that preserves real meaning. Thus, the aim is to address an important level of translation, namely the pragmatic level. In accordance with this aim, it is hypothesized that translating Arabic religious texts involves problems at the pragmatic level where there are hurdles that should be overcome in the area of speech acts. These include the following as far as the topic and the data of the study are concerned: (1) the illocutionary force of some utterances is mistranslated, (2) no clear distinction is drawn between isolated and group speech acts, and (3) a speech act of one class is translated as another speech act belonging to another class; in other words, there is sometimes indeterminacy in translating speech acts and this indeterminacy can be resolved by reference to the global organization of the text. To this end, extracts from some translated Arabic religious texts are selected and the problems, as regard speech acts, are specified and analyzed. Then, the extracts are translated according to the suggested pragmatic approach which is more essential than the semantic approach.

1. Introduction

Translating religious texts is an essential element in circulating the divine message throughout history. Also, it is significant in teaching and transferring the basics of religion and mirroring the beauty of faith and morality around the world. As such, it should be as accurate and precise as possible and must be in accord with sound belief. Yet, translating religious texts is portrayed as a difficult process due to the fact that religious texts embody a specific ideology which should be adhered to. Therefore, the content of those texts should be preserved so as to stick to the real and intended meaning of the text. To this aim, translators must understand the original source text (and transfer it faithfully, accurately, and integrally into the receptor's language without adding or omitting any of its original content.

One of the challenges that religious texts pose for translators lies in transmitting the terminology and cultural values of the source language into the target language and to explain how fidelity to the source text impacts target text reliability. In this regard, deeply embedded religious and cultural values may be understood through translation since there is an undeniable connection between language and way of life. Thus, the translator of a religious text from Arabic to English, as far as the present study is concerned, must take into account several factors, especially when translating sensitive texts. Many questions are raised in this respect as far as the present study is concerned: Can the spirit of the original text be adequately conveyed in translation? Or is something essential lost? What are the notable failures in translating speech acts? How is pragmatics essential in transferring the intended meaning? Accordingly, this study attempts to highlight the role of pragmatics in translating speech acts and to show how syntax and semantics are not enough to preserve the real intended meaning. It shows that translating religious texts is not only a matter of following the common linguistic categories of morphology, syntax, lexis, and semantics, but it is also a matter of pragmatic meaning where the intended meaning in a particular context is an essential factor that preserves real meaning. Thus, the aim is to address an important level of translation, namely the pragmatic level, which is common to all translation. In accordance with this aim, it is hypothesized that translating Arabic

religious texts involves problems at the pragmatic level where there are hurdles that should be overcome, particularly in the areas of speech acts. These include the following, as far as the topic and the data of the study are concerned: (1) the illocutionary force of some utterances is mistranslated, (2) no clear distinction is drawn between isolated and group speech acts, and (3) a speech act of one class is translated as another speech act belonging to another class. In other words, there is sometimes indeterminacy in translating speech acts and this indeterminacy can be resolved by reference to the global organization of the text. To this end, extracts from some translated Arabic religious texts are selected and the drawbacks, as regard speech acts, are specified and analyzed. Then, the extracts are translated according to a pragmatic approach which is suggested to be more essential than the semantic approach.

2. Theoretical Perspective on Translation

Translation is generally considered as a means of bridging the gaps between languages and cultures. Moreover, it is a communicative process which transfers the message of a source language text to a target language. It is generally defined as being neither a creative art nor an imitative art, but stands somewhere between the two. It is crucial for cross-cultural understanding as it reveals ideologies, policies, and social experiences[1]. According to semanticists, it is a discipline that gives much importance to structure and meaning[2]. Therefore, the translator, as Bassnett[3] asserts, should take heed of both the structure and the meaning of the text before translating it. She[4] states that translation involves "the rendering of a source language text into the target language so as to ensure that the surface meaning of the source language will be preserved as closely as possible but not closely that the target language structures will be seriously distorted."

Leo[5] mentions that cross-linguistic translation is notoriously problematic and fraught with difficulty. Likewise, Basil and Mason[6] argue that translation is a com-

---

1 Baker, Mona. In Other Words: A Course Book on Translation, 1st ed. (London: Routledge, 1992), 41.
2 Leo,H The Pragmatics of Translation. Topics in Translation (Philadelphia: Multilingual Matters, 1998), 9–10.
3 Bassnett, Susan. Translation Studies, n. e. (London: Routledge, 1954), 2.
4 Bassnett, 2.
5 Leo, The Pragmatics of Translation. Topics in Translation, 10.
6 Basil, I. Mason,H. Discourse and the Translator, 1st ed. (London: Longman, 1990), 92.

plicated process where the role of the translator is that of constructing a model of intended meaning of source text and of forming judgements about the probable impacts of source text on intended receiver. That is why translators should find the appropriate words and expressions in order to convey the exact meaning. Their basic task is to formulate a new text in which they express their intended meaning. For this aim, they have to be very effective in their judgements in order to create an impact on readers.

One problem that faces translators is equivalence. Translators should be attentive if they want to succeed in producing relevant translations which produce similar effects to those achieved by the original texts. In other words, they should work within the core of the target culture and know the rules of the target language community so as to find appropriate equivalents to achieve pragmatic competence which consists of the rules of language use besides linguistic knowledge[7].

2.1. The Notion of Equivalence

Equivalence is a very important and outstanding element in translation. De Beaugrande et al[8] define it as "the correspondence of effects: those of the original on the source language audience versus those of the translation on the target language audience." The most important types of equivalence are formal, functional, ideational, and dynamic equivalence. The formalists are much more interested in the linguistic forms that ought to be arranged in an appropriate way, whereas the functionalists stress the importance of natural languages by attaining basic communicative acts.

De Beaugrande et al.[9] add that translators should take into account the notions of acceptability and adequacy before translating a particular text. In this regard, Bassnett[10] points out that "equivalence in translation should not be approached as a search for sameness, for sameness cannot even exist between two target language versions of the same text."

---

7 Olshtain, E and Blum Kulka, S "Cross Cultural Pragmatics and the Testing of Communicative Competence," Journal of Pragmatics 12, no. 1 (1996): 16.

8 De Beaugrande, R A Shunnay, and M Heliel, Language, Discourse and Translation in the West and Middle East (amsterdam: john benjamins publishing company, 1994), 56.

9 De Beaugrande, Shunnay, and Heliel, 56.

10 Bassnett, Translation Studies, 29.

3. Pragmatics and Translation

Depending on Austin's[11] views, Leo[12] mentions that when using language, people perform actions and reflect intentions; they usually do things in contexts. Part of the context in which they communicate consists of the knowledge, beliefs, and assumptions of all concerned. Thus, for Austin, as mentioned by Leo[13], pragmatics has focused on the conditions which permit speakers and writers to achieve what they want to achieve by bringing about certain modifications in the behavior, knowledge, attitudes, or beliefs of others. *It studies what language users mean, as distinct from what their language means*, the rules and principles governing their use of language, over and above the rules of language itself, grammar or vocabulary, and what makes some uses of language more appropriate than others in certain situations.

This stands in opposition with semantics-based approaches which focus on referential meaning and the truth and falsehood of statements. Pragmatic approaches, on the other hand, attempt to explain translation procedure, process, and product from the point of view of what is done by the original author in the text, what is potentially done in the translation as a response to the original, and how and why it is done in that way in that context. Precisely, they focus on the intention of the speaker/author[14].

In this regard, one of the contributions of pragmatics to translation addresses questions such as what original texts and their translations are intended to achieve and how they attempt to achieve it. A major concern, here, is speech acts and illocutionary function. Hervey[15] argues that sentence building is the process of "endowing a meaningful linguistic unit with an illocutionary function." He[16] explains that although illocutionary functions can be understood across cultural boundaries, their cultural relativity makes it difficult to transfer them in translation. Thus, sensitive handling of the illocutionary functions of sentences as speech acts is an essential aspect of skill in translating and interpreting.

---

11 Austin, J.I, How to Do Things with Words, 1st ed. (London: clarendon press, 1962).
12 Leo, The Pragmatics of Translation. Topics in Translation, 3.
13 Leo, 3.
14 Leo, 5.
15 Hervey, S "Sentences and Linguistic Data," La Linguistique 26 (1990): 17.
16 Hervey, 17.

3.1. Speech Acts Theory

Leech[17] argues that Austin leads himself away from the question of "what do sentences mean?' towards the question of "what sort of act do we perform in uttering a sentence?" Thus, he defines a speech act as the speaker's intention in using a proposition. He argues that the issuance of an utterance is in fact the production of three simultaneous kinds of acts: locutionary acts (which are roughly equivalent to uttering a certain sentence with a certain sense and reference), illocutionary acts (which are conventional social acts recognized as such by both speaker and hearer), and perlocutionary acts (which refer to the effects of the utterance on the listener, i.e., the change in the mind or behaviour of the listener as a result of producing locutions and illocutions). In other words, locution is what was said, illocution is what was meant, and perlocution is what happened as a result. For example, in the utterance "Is there any salt?" (said by someone at the dinner table), the locutionary act is to ask a question about the presence of salt, the illocutionary act is the meaning conveyed, i.e., "Please give me some salt", the perlocutionary act is the actual effect, that is to cause somebody to hand over the salt.

Havertake[18] introduces "allocution" as a fourth component of the speech act (SA). To him, an allocution refers to "the selection by the speaker of those linguistic devices which he thinks optimally serve the purpose of eliciting from the hearer a positive reaction to his speech act. Allocutionary acts, therefore, determine the strategy of verbal interaction." The following figure clarifies the components of speech acts (after Havertake)[19]:
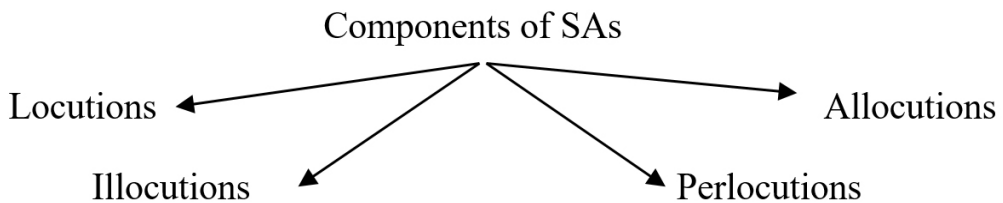

Figure (1): Components of Speech Acts

---

17 Leech, G Semantics (Penguin Books, 1987), 321.

18 Havertake, H Speech Acts, Speakers and Hearers: Reference and Referential Strategies in Spanish (amsterdam: john benjamins publishing company, 1984), 45.

19 Havertake, Speech Acts, Speakers and Hearers: Reference and Referential Strategies in Spanish.

Searle[20] attempts to develop the theory of SAs by adding further ideas. One of his major contributions is the development of rules governing the felicitous performance of illocutionary acts. These rules, called felicity conditions (FCs), represent norms for producing SAs, according to which one can determine whether the utterance is a successful SA or not. Furthermore, they are used as means for distinguishing a certain speech act from another. Another contribution is his classification of speech acts into five major classes each of which is composed of a host of sub-classes. These major classes include:

1. Assertive (speech acts that commit a speaker to the truth of the expressed proposition.

2. Directives (speech acts that are to cause the hearer to take a particular action).

3. Commissives (speech acts that commit a speaker to some future action).

4. Expressive (speech acts that express on the speaker's attitudes and emotions towards the proposition).

5. Declarations (speech acts that change the reality in accord with the proposition of the declaration).

A third contribution is his differentiation between direct and indirect speech acts. Following Searle[21], a direct speech act is performed through a sentence type usually associated with it. In two-illocutionary force utterances, the additionally performed SA is called indirect SA. Such acts occur when a sentence that contains the illocutionary indicators for one kind of illocutionary act can be uttered to perform another kind of illocutionary act. Thus, whenever a sentence type conveys an illocutionary force other than the one usually associated with it, the result is an indirect SA.

Moreover, Searle differentiates between monologic and group speech acts in addition to SAs-in-sequence. The former are those in which the speaker expresses his communicative intentions only. Conversely, the latter are those which originate in more than one person at the speaking end. The distinguishing feature of

---

20 Searle, John R., Speech Acts: An Essay in the Philosophy of Language., 1st ed. (united kingdom: Cambridge University Press, 1969), 33.

21 Havertake, Speech Acts, Speakers and Hearers: Reference and Referential Strategies in Spanish.

group SAs is the use of "we" as in "We find the defendant guilty" (as announced by a jury foreman). As regards SAs-in-sequence, speakers sometimes as in debates resort to issuing a sequence of SAs to achieve their goals. The first act provides a good justification for producing the second one which stands as a sub-goal as in "We are in a church. Don't talk so loudly"[22]. For Brown and Levinson[23], the recourse to justification for issuing SAs is usually considered as a sign of politeness. To recapitulate, the following figure will summarize what has just been said:
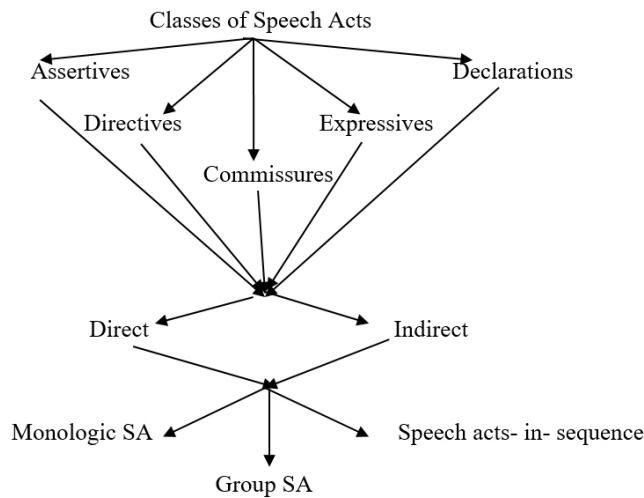

Figure (2): Classes of Speech Acts (After Searle)

The major difference between Austin and Searle, as Coulthard[24] points out, lies in the assignment of illocutionary force (IF). Austin conceives it as the speaker's intention while Searle considers it as a product of the listener's interpretation. Generally, each utterance has an IF, i.e., "the speaker's intention in producing that utterance. An illocutionary act is an instance of a culturally-defined speech act type, characterized by a particular illocutionary force. For example, in uttering the utterance "It is cold in here", the speaker might have different illocutionary forces: he might intend to describe the room in which case the illocutionary force would be that of describing, or he might intend it as a request to

---

22 Havertake.

23 Brown,S. levinson, P. "Universals in Language Usage: Politeness Phenomena". In E. Goody (Ed.) Questions and Politeness, n. e. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1979), 194.

24 Coulthard, Margaret, Introduction to Discourse Analysis, 2nd ed. (London: Routledge, 1985), 22.

someone to close the window. Searle calls the performance of a certain speech act by means of another as an indirect speech act.

As far as illocutionary force is concerned, Searle[25] argues that there are various devices used to indicate how an illocutionary force must be interpreted. For example, "Open the door" and "Could you open the door?" have the same propositional content, that is "Open the door", but they represent different illocutionary acts: an order and a request respectively. These linguistic elements that indicate the illocutionary force of an utterance are referred to as "illocutionary force markers" or "illocutionary force indicating devices" (IFID). Consequently, each utterance has an IF and an IFID. Bach and Harnish[26] believe that speech acts should be studied in terms of communicative purposes or intentions. Successful issuance of an illocutionary act requires that these intentions be recognized by others.
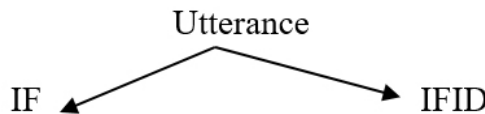

Figure (3): Each Utterance has an IF and an IFID

According to Havertake[27], each speech act has a strategic dimension called "allocutionary act". This dimension is tackled as involving strategies adopted by the speaker to issue the illocutionary act. Thus, an illocutionary act involves the selection of strategies which, in turn, involve the selection of the procedure with which the SA is accomplished and the linguistic realization this procedure takes. Consequently, a distinction is made between: explicit, implicit, and hedged performatives.
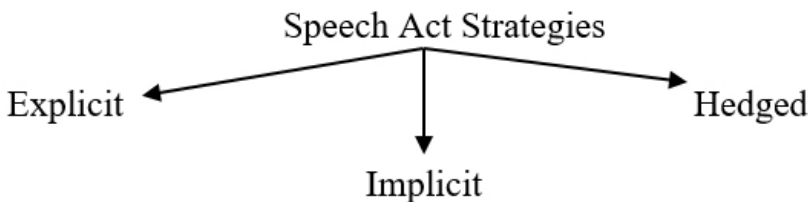

Figure (4): The Strategies of Expressing Speech Acts

---

25 Searle, Speech Acts: An Essay in the Philosophy of Language., 32.
26 Bach, Kent and Harnish, Robert M, Linguistic Communication and Speech Acts, n. d. (London: cambridge M.I.T. press, 1979), 3.
27 Havertake, Speech Acts, Speakers and Hearers: Reference and Referential Strategies in Spanish, 46.

To cut a long story short, the following figure is a representation of all that has been surveyed about SAs, as one of the ingredients of pragmatics:
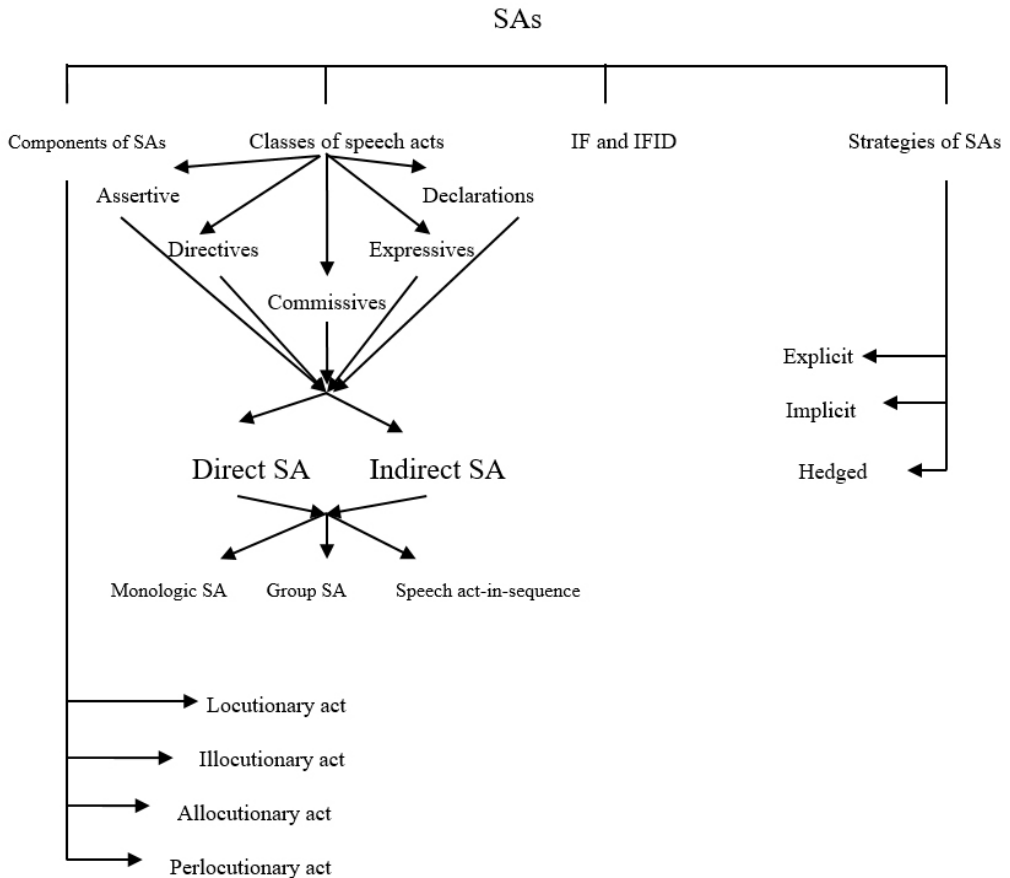

Figure (5): The Whole Survey of Speech Acts

3.2. Speech Acts in Translation Methodology: A Pragmatics-based Approach

Blum-Kulka[28] argues that one way of looking at translation is through speech-act theory which is based on a functional view of languages. It assumes that the use of language is an integral part of social interaction. Blum-Kulka[29] asserts

---

28 Blum-kulka, S. "'The Study of Translation in View of New Developments in Discourse Analysis: The Problem of Indirect Speech Acts'.," Poetics Today 2 (1981): 89.

29 Blum-kulka, 89.

that a speech-act theory of language use might be applied both to the theory and study of translation. This approach assumes that the act of translation itself can be viewed as an attempt at the successful performance of speech acts. In this vein, any utterance or text performs three acts simultaneously: locutionary, illocutionary act, and perlocutionary. In trying to achieve sameness in meaning, translation is, thus, an attempt to re-perform locutionary and illocutionary acts that will have in the target language the same perlocutionary force or effect on the hearer.

The pragmatics-based approach to translating speech acts sees all utterances in terms of the dual function of stating and doing things and of having a meaning and a force. In this view, an utterance has (1) a sense or reference to specific events, persons, or objects, (2) an illocutionary force, and (3) an overall effect or consequence which may or may not be of the kind conventionally associated with the linguistic expression or the functional force involved. For example, (Open the window) is an imperative that could carry the force of a request, which in turn could be used simply to annoy the hearer.

As far as interpreting is concerned, cases of communication breakdown due to misinterpretation of speech acts are obvious. A practical example is the following: a Tunisian Minister has been asked about the contents of the letter he handed to King Fahad. He responded saying "This is a matter solely for the Saudis to consider". Unaware of the pragmatic meaning involved, the translator rendered the original Arabic sentence literally as "This matter concerns the Saudis". The statement was obviously intended to carry the pragmatic gloss "Don't pursue this line of questioning any further"[30].

In an attempt to apply speech act theory to translation and interpreting, translation theorists became aware of the fact that a text is not a one-dimensional, linear succession of elements glued one to the other evenly; rather, it is a complexly constructed edifice with some elements enjoying a higher communicative status, some a less prominent one, within an emerging, evolving hierarchical organization[31]. It

---

30 Hatim,basil. and Mason,Ian. The Translator as Communicator, 1st ed. (London: Routledge, 1997), 40.

31 Hatim and Mason, The Translator as Communicator.

is the claim of a pragmatics-based approach that texts do not have meanings, but rather that in producing texts, people intend meanings. Thus, a text can only be approached through interpretation. That is to say, the translator attempts to understand the author's intent in creating the source text for the original audience and then creates that intent for the target audience using the target language[32].

This pragmatics-based approach focuses on providing interpretations of a text that insure a coherent account of the intent behind the text. Such an approach relies heavily on the representations of the beliefs and other mental attitudes such as expectations, hopes, likes, and dislikes of the participants in the communicative process. Accordingly, it has been demonstrated that the interpretation of speech acts depends crucially on their position and status within sequence. The variation in status which underlies the interrelationship of speech acts within sequences leads to the notion of the illocutionary structure of a text, determining its progression and defining its coherence[33].

It is now accepted in translation studies that what needs to be relayed in the normal course of events is this overall picture and not a series of unstructured sequences whose equivalence in the target language is determined piecemeal (i.e. speech act for speech act). This sequence-oriented view of the force of action has been made possible by the emergence in pragmatics of the notion of the text act. Here, the force of a given speech act is assessed not only in terms of its contribution to the local sequence in which it is embedded, but also in terms of the contribution it makes via the local sequence to a more global sequence enveloping the entire text. A major issue that confronts translators is the indeterminacy which a particular speech act can exhibit and which can only be resolved by reference to the global organization of the text.

3.2 Pragmatic Failure

Hatim and Mason[34] argue that when pragmatic rules are violated, ambiguities are often caused. This leads to misunderstandings and miscommunications. This should be kept abreast within pragmatic interpretations. Utterances may seman-

---

32 Hatim and Mason, 1–40.

33 Hatim and Mason, 1–40.

34 Hatim and Mason, 57.

tically mean something but pragmatically convey a totally different thing. Hatim and Mason[35] confirm that pragmatic meaning would provide the translator with insights into intentionality (the intended meaning).

Munday[36] mentions that English and Arabic belong to different language families. Thus, they exhibit gaps. The field that is expected to bridge the gaps and secure communication is translation. As far as speech acts are concerned, two important points are significant in translation between English and Arabic. First, the two languages often use different structures to perform certain speech acts. This is problematic in translation. English normally tends to use a greater degree of indirectness realized by grammatical devices, while Arabic prefers directness. English, for instance, makes use of a question to issue a request which would normally be rendered as a declarative or imperative in Arabic as in: "Can I have two kilos of sugar?" and "أريد كيلوين من السكر" or "أعطني كيلوين من السكر". These three utterances are equivalent since they perform the same speech act, namely that of request.

Second, English makes frequent use of implicit primary performatives, whereas Arabic tends more to explicit performatives. This means that translation would involve a shift from implicit to explicit performatives or vice versa depending on the direction of translation. For example, both (I'll be there at seven o'clock) and (أعدك بأني سأكون هناك في الساعة السابعة) express a promise which is rendered implicit in English but explicit in Arabic[37].

This directness of Arabic is observed by many linguists and rhetoricians such as Emery[38] who states that Arabic tends to be more explicit than English. Thus, if the English request "Can you pass me the salt, please?" is rendered into Arabic using the interrogative form (which is less common than the imperative and declarative), the translator, then, will establish what is called a pragmatic failure.

4. Religious Texts

Religious texts are those texts which are considered by various religious traditions to be sacred. They may be used to "evoke a deeper connection with the di-

---

35 Hatim and Mason, 57.
36   Munday, J. Introducing Translation Studies: Theories and Applications (London: Routledge, 2001), 49.
37 Munday, 49.
38 Emery, P. "Aspects of English Arabic Translation: A Contrastive Study" 4 (1987): 178.

vine, convey spiritual truths, foster communal identity, and guide individual and communal spiritual practice" Dickens et al.[39] mention that "the subject matter of religious texts implies the existence of a spiritual world that is not fictive, but has its own external realities and truths. The author is not understood to be free to create the world that animates the subject matter, but to be merely instrumental in exploring it."

Religious texts are very difficult to translate because they embody a specific ideology which might be distorted or misshapen in translation. Therefore, the translator of such a text ought to be faithful to the text and the reader as well. He should respect the text by preserving its content and taking account of the basic ethics of the religion that the intended text embodies. He should show fidelity to the source text wherein this fidelity impacts target language reliability.

As far as Arabic is concerned, it is regarded as a complicated sacred language. It favours the use of a great number of words to mean one thing and to achieve stylistic decorativeness or embellishment, while English qualifies this as redundant and irrelevant. Besides, some expressions do not actually have the same lexical equivalents in the target language. What is more, Arabic has its own syntactic structure which renders it different from English. Therefore, translators of Arabic religious texts into English should take heed of these facts.

5. What do Pragmatic-based Approaches Assume?

Depending on what has been surveyed in the previous sections, it is obvious that pragmatic-based approaches assume that:

1. Translation is a means of bridging the gaps between languages and cultures. Thus, semantic-based approaches, focusing on structure and meaning, are not sufficient in rendering the spirit of texts. Rather, the adoption of pragmatic-based approaches is more influential in translating texts from one language into another. Thus, the role of translators lies in constructing a model of intended meaning focusing not on what sentences mean but on what sort of act performed in these sentences.

2. Translators should work within the core of the target culture and know the

---

39 Dickins, J. Sándor G. J. Hervey, and Ian Higgins, Thinking Arabic Translation: A Course in Translation Method : Arabic to English., N.E (Psychology Press, 2002), 178.

rules of the target language community so as to find appropriate equivalents to achieve pragmatic competence which consists of the rules of language use in addition to linguistic knowledge.

3. One way of looking at translation is through speech-act theory which is based on a functional view of languages. Speech acts reflect the intention of the speaker in uttering utterances. Pragmatic-based approaches aim to uncover this intention and to translate it appropriately taking cultural differences into consideration.

4. Although illocutionary functions can be understood across cultural boundaries, their cultural relativity makes it difficult to transfer them in translation. Thus, sensitive handling of the illocutionary functions of sentences as speech acts is an essential aspect of skill in translation.

5. Illocutionary acts are important in translation; therefore, they should be focused on. In semantic-based approaches, illocutionary acts may be misrepresented in translation (i.e., translating one illocutionary act into another). An illocutionary act is an instance of culturally-defined speech act type, characterized by a particular IF.

6. Indirect speech acts are problematic in translation.

7. There are various cases of communication breakdown due to the misinterpretation of some speech acts. Thus, SAs should be studied in terms of communicative purposes or intentions. Successful issuance of an illocutionary act requires that these intentions be recognized by others.

8. Pragmatics should be kept in the forefront when translating texts. Since sentences may semantically mean something but pragmatically convey a totally different thing. Pragmatic meaning, thus, would provide the translator with insights into the intended meaning.

9. Interpretation is a term often employed in pragmatics to describe the sense and force of speech acts. Thus, knowing language is knowing how to translate mentalese (i.e., what is in the mind) into strings of words.

6. Illustrative Examples

In this section, some translated extracts from a sermon by Al-Sayida Fatimat Al-Zahra'a are selected. These extracts were translated according to a seman-

tic-based approach focusing on structure as well as referential meaning. The aim is to show how speech acts are mistranslated and misrepresented in this se-mantic-based approach and to suggest an alternative pragmatic-based approach which focuses on the intention of the speaker in producing these acts.

6.1 Khutba of Fatimat Al-Zahra'a Demanding Fadak

(١) "وكنتم على شفا حفرةٍ من النار.... فأنقذكم الله تبارك وتعالى بمحمد (صل الله عليه واله) بعد اللتيا واللتي وبعد أن مني بهم الرجال وذؤبان العرب ومردة أهل الكتاب كلما أوقدوا نارا للحرب أطفأها الله أو نجم قرن الشيطان أو فغرت فاغرة من المشركين قذف أخاه في لهواتها فلا ينكفىء حتى يطأ جناحها بأخمصه ويخمد لهبها بسيفه مكدودا في ذات الله مجتهدا في أمر الله قريبا من رسول الله سيدا في أولياء الله مشمرا ناصحا مجدا كادحا.... وأنتم في رفاهية من العيش وادعون فاكهون.... وأن جهنم لمحيطة بالكافرين فهيهات منكم وكيف وأنى تؤفكون وكتاب الله بين أظهركم وأموره ظاهرة وأعلامه زاهرة وقد خلفتموه وراء ظهوركم أرغبة عنه تريدون أم بغيره تحكمون بئس للظالمين بدلا ومن يتبع غير الأسلام دينا فلن يقبل منه وهو في الاخرة من الخاسرين.... أنتم الان تزعمون أن لا أرث لنا، أفحكم الجاهلية تبغون ومن أحسن من الله حكما لقوم يوقنون أفلا تعلمون"

"…. And indeed Hell surrounds the unbelievers. How preposterous! What an idea! What a falsehood! For Allah's Book is still amongst you, its affairs are ap-parent; its rules are manifest…. yet, indeed you have cast it behind your backs! What! Do you detest it? Or according to something else you wish to rule?[40].

Al-Sayida Fatima Peace be upon her is addressing those who have snatched Fadak from her asserting that Almighty Allah will punish the unbelievers. She also asserts that Hell surrounds unbelievers. She uses the expression "فهيهات منكم وكيف وأنى تؤفكون" to assert that it is impossible or far for them to achieve what they intend. The speech act of assertion is mistranslated in the English version. It is translated as an exclamation indicating another meaning rather than that which is intended by Al-Sayida Fatima. The utterance is translated as "How preposter-ous!". Accordingly, an assertion is translated as an exclamation which is an expres-sive speech act, where "preposterous" means "nonsensical, irrational, or foolish". A pragmatic-based approach to translation highlights the importance of under-standing the speech act before translating it because misunderstanding causes the loss of the speaker's intended meaning. Such an approach sees all utterances in terms of the dual function of stating and doing things and of having a meaning

---

40 Fatima Al-Zahra, "Duas," n.d., https://www.duas.org/downloads/Fatima Demanding Fadak. pdf.

and a force. In this respect, Al-Sayida Fatima is not only stating; she is also doing something (in the present situation, she is asserting something). Such an approach suggests that SAs should be studied in terms of communicative purposes or intentions. Thus, successful translation of an illocutionary act requires that these intentions should be made clear. In the previous extract, the translator misunderstands the speaker's intent. Thus, a better suggested translation would be:

"And indeed Hell surrounds the unbelievers. It is far for you to achieve what you intend! (snatch Fadak) What an idea! What a falsehood!"

(٢) فقال أبو بكر "صدق الله وصدق رسوله وصدقت أبنته معدن الحكمة وموطن الهدى والرحمة وركن الدين وعين الحجة لا أبعد صوابك ولا أنكر خطابك هؤلاء المسلمون بيني وبينك قلدوني ماتقلدت وبأتفاق منهم أخذت ماأخذت غير مكابر ولا مستبد ولا مستأثر وهم بذلك شهود"

Abu Bakir said "Surely Allah and his Apostle are truthful, and so has his daughter told the truth. Surely, you are the source of wisdom, the element of faith, and the sole authority. May Allah not refute your righteous argument, nor invalidate your decisive speech. But these are the Muslims between us-who have entrusted me with leadership, and it was according to their satisfaction that I received what I have. I am not being arrogant, autocratic, or selfish, and they are my witness"[41].

In the previous extract, the illocutionary force of the utterance"هؤلاء المسلمون بيني وبينك قلدوني ماتقلدت وبأتفاق منهم أخذت ماأخذت is mistranslated. Abu Bakir intends to say that it is not his will to take Fadak, but it is the will of all Muslims. He justifies his doing by saying that it is according to people's satisfaction and for the benefit of all Muslims that he has taken it. Yet, this intention is not clarified in the translated text since "أخذت ماأخذت" is translated as "I have received what I have". Since Fadak is snatched from Fatima Peace be upon her without her desire and satisfaction, the illocutionary force of the utterance will be clearer if the utterance is translated following a pragmatic approach according to which translators should be attuned not primarily to the sentences they translate but to the illocutionary forces those utterances are used to perform. Such illocutionary forces are staples of the communicative intentions intended in the text. A better translation is one in which "have received" is substituted with "have taken"

"These Muslims are between us. They have entrusted me with leadership, and in accordance with their agreement, I have taken what I have taken"

---

41 Al-Zahra.

(٣) "أنا فقدناك فقد الارض وابلها وأختل قومك فأشهدهم فقد نكبوا..وقد رزينا بما لم يرزه أحد من البرية لاعجم ولا عرب.. ضاقت علي بلادي بعدما رحبت وسيم سبطاك خسفا فيه لي نصب..تجهمتنا رجال وأستخف بنا أذ غبت عنا فنحن اليوم نغتصب"

"I missed you as sorely as earth would miss its rain; your folks lost balance, see how from the creed they did refrain; I like no others have suffered affliction; unlike all Arabs or others from among Allah's creation. My homeland is now narrow after its great expanse indeed, both your grandsons have been wronged so my heart is grieved; men assaulted and slighted us when you became far away; so, now what rightfully belongs to us is being taken away"[42].

In the previous extract, Al-Sayida Fatima Peace be upon her is complaining near her father's grave (Muhammad's Peace be upon him grave). She is expressing her deep grieve concerning the loss of her father arguing that they are lost after his death. Thus, she is performing a group speech act. However, the group speech act is mistranslated in the English version. That is, it is not made clear whether Al-Sayida Fatima Peace be upon her is reflecting her own feelings alone or that of Ahlul-Bayt and other Muslims (i.e., it is not clear whether she is speaking on her part alone or on others including her). At the beginning, she says "أنا فقدناك فقد الارض وابلها"and "وقد رزينا بما لم يرزه أحد من العرب أو العجم". Here, the speech acts are not isolated; rather, they are group speech acts because it is obvious that Al-Sayida Fatima Peace be upon her includes herself and other Muslims including Ahlul-Bayt. Yet, the group speech acts in the Arabic version are translated as isolated speech acts in the English version "I missed you as sorely as earth would miss its rain" and "I like no others have suffered affliction; unlike all Arabs or others from among Allah's creation". That Al-Sayida Fatima, at the beginning means Ahlul-Bayt and other Muslims including herself is justified because she, then, says "ضاقت علي بلادي بعدما رحبت"where she is referring to herself alone.

A pragmatic-based approach to translation focuses on the distinction between isolated and group speech acts in translating texts from one language into another. In this vein, an isolated speech act exists in one source at the speaking end so that the speaker expresses his own communicative intention only, while a group speech act originates in more than one person at the speaking end; it is

---

42 Al-Zahra.

distinguished from an isolated speech act by the use of "we". Consequently, the following translation would sound more accurate and would show that pragmatic meaning is outstanding in translation:

" We missed you as sorely as earth would miss its rain; your folks lost balance, see how from the creed they did refrain; we like no others have suffered affliction; unlike all Arabs or others from among Allah's creation. My homeland is now narrow after its great expanse indeed, both your grandsons have been wronged so my heart is grieved; men assaulted and slighted us when you became far away; so, now what rightfully belongs to us is being taken away".

This pragmatics-based approach focuses on providing interpretations of utterances that insure a coherent account of the intent and the reference behind the utterance

6.2. Conclusion

The study highlights the essentiality of a pragmatics-based approach to translation, particularly translating speech acts, so as to reflect the intended meaning of the speaker/author and the real illocutionary force of the utterance. It shows that pragmatic translation is a faithful translation in that the translator's aim is to convey the speaker's intention, i.e., what the speaker/author is intending to communicate as faithfully as possible into another language. It uncovers important points that should be taken into consideration, as far as speech acts are concerned, when translating utterances. This includes (1) interpreting and making explicit the illocutionary force of the utterance so as to transfer what is really intended and meant by the speaker/author, (2) distinguishing between isolated and group speech acts while translating and making this distinction explicit and clear to the target language reader to avoid distorting on which part the speech act is performed, (3) apart from cultural differences, paying cordial attention to the classes of speech acts while translating utterances so as not to go astray, in other words, avoid translating a speech act of a particular class, say an assertion for example, into a speech act of another class, say an exclamation.

References

Holy Quran

Al-Zahra, Fatima. "Duas," n.d. https://www.duas.org/downloads/Fatima Demanding Fadak.pdf.

Austin, J.l. How to Do Things with Words. 1st ed. London: clarendon press, 1962.

Bach, Kent, and Robert M Harnish. Linguistic Communication and Speech Acts. N.d. London: cambridge M.I.T. press, 1979.

Baker, Mona. In Other Words: A Course Book on Translation. 1st ed. London: Routledge, 1992.

Basil, H and Mason, I. Discourse and the Translator. 1st ed. London: Longman, 1990.

Bassnett, Susan. Translation Studies. N.e. London: Routledge, 1954.

Beaugrande, R De, A Shunnay, and M Heliel. Language, Discourse and Translation in the West and Middle East. Amsterdam: John Benjamins publishing company, 1994.

Blum-kulka, S. "The Study of Translation in View of New Developments in Discourse Analysis: The Problem of Indirect Speech Acts". Poetics Today 2 (1981): 89–95.

Brown, P and Levinson, S. "Universals in Language Usage: Politeness Phenomena". In E. Goody (Ed.) Questions and Politeness. N. e. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1979.

Coulthard, Margaret. Introduction to Discourse Analysis. 2nd ed. London: Routledge, 1985.

Dickins, James, Sándor G. J. Hervey, and Ian Higgins. Thinking Arabic Translation: A Course in Translation Method: Arabic to English. N.E. Psychology Press, 2002.

Emery, P. "Aspects of English Arabic Translation: A Contrastive Study" 4 (1987): 107–72.

Hatim, Basil, and Ian Mason. The Translator as Communicator. 1st ed. London: Routledge, 1997.

Havertake, H. Speech Acts, Speakers and Hearers: Reference and Referential Strategies in Spanish. Amsterdam: John Benjamins publishing company, 1984.

Hervey, S. "Sentences and Linguistic Data." La Linguistique 26 (1990): 17–27.

Leech, G. Semantics. Penguin Books, 1987.

Leo, H. The Pragmatics of Translation. Topics in Translation. Philadelphia: Multilingual Matters, 1998.

Munday, J. Introducing Translation Studies: Theories and Applications. London: Routledge, 2001.

Olshtain, E and S Blum Kulka. "Cross Cultural Pragmatics and the Testing of Communicative Competence." Journal of Pragmatics 12, no. 1 (1996).

Searle, John R. Speech Acts: An Essay in the Philosophy of Language. 1st ed. united kingdom: Cambridge University Press, 1969.