

Translation of Political News Headlines from English into Arabic: A Perspective from Skopos Theory

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Abstract

Newspapers provide the population with up data news alone over the situation they live in. The headline is the most important elements of these newspapers. This paper aims to figure out the difficulties that encounter the translators while translating political news headlines from English language into Arabic language. Data has collected from the political headlines of Yemen Observer Newspaper which publishes weekly in the Republic of Yemen in English language version. 40 participants have contributed in the study. Data analyses was based on the Skopostheorie and Bayr's principles. The study revealed that there are many obstacles in translating political headlines.

Keywords:

Arabic language, English language, Headlines, Newspaper

Introduction

Headlines writing, thus, is the craft which makes news articles or even newspapers or magazines either successful among the audience or not. Newspapers have a significant role in our daily lives since they present many different information and events that take place in the world, locally, nationally and internationally. They are the most important element in newspapers with great impact on the readers. They inform and summary the whole story of a certain article. They make people read it or even buy the newspaper. English and Arabic headlines are different in many respects; they have specific features that are related to their language. In translating English headlines into Arabic, translators use different strategies, language styles and linguistic choices. This variation in the translation process may have an effect on the target reader. Therefore, the translation of news headlines has become a prime concern for translators. However, there have been few studies focusing on headlines translated from English into Arabic and vice versa. Most of the studies carried out focus on the characteristics of English headlines rather than Arabic headlines, without suggesting translation techniques employed in this process. From the perspective of functional theories, translation is conceived as a communicative act with an aim, whose product is a text, which is capable of functioning appropriately in specific situations and context of use.

Methods

The present study is a theoretical one. The related political headlines of the study have been collected from Yemen Observer Newspaper which publishes weekly in the Republic of Yemen.

Participants

40 participants were contributed in the study. They conduct their final year in the department of Translation. They study English language as a foreign language in the university premises rather than any other place. Their aged ranged between 21-24.

Data Analysis

Data collected from the political headlines of Yemen observer newspaper. A newspaper which publishes weekly in the Republic of Yemen. It is mostly, reading by many academicians and English followers. 30 participants contributed in translating the political headlines from English into Arabic. Their age range between 20-25. They study English language in the university premises rather than any other place. They have Arabic language as a native language and English language as a foreign language.

According to Bayar's. He mentioned that there are seven principles. They are as follows:

- 1- Optimum Translation
- 2- Near optimum Translation
- 3- Partial Translation
- 4- Mistranslation Translation
- 5- Zero Translation.
- 6- Poor translation
- 7- Weaker and stronger

Some of the participants meet the standard criteria of translation. From other hand, some of the participants did not meet the standard criteria of translation. However, some participants added and some participants deleted some information others were divergent from the translation. For example:

- 1- Humanitarian crisis worsening in Yemen.

1- أبشع أزمة إنسانية في اليمن.

Based on the norms by Bayar, some participants did not meet the first criteria, as they did not translate perfectly in Modern Standard Arabic (MSA).

Some participants did meet the MSA in their translation, which is considered a proper translation. For example:

- 1- Humanitarian crisis worsening in Yemen.

-أسوأ أزمة إنسانية في اليمن.

However, some other participants added some lexical terms to the translation in MSA such as the following example:

- 1- Humanitarian crisis worsening in Yemen.

-سوء الحظ الأزمة الإنسانية تدهورت في اليمن.

Furthermore, in the terms of optimum equivalence, some of participants met the standards of the translation as follow :

- 2- UN aid official criticizes lack of attention on Yemen.

-مساعد الأمم المتحدة يعبر عن قلقه بسبب الأوضاع في اليمن.

In case of near-optimum translation, it has found that some participants translate the text as follow :

- 2- UN aid official criticizes lack of attention on Yemen.

- وجهت الأمم المتحدة انتقاداً رسمياً بشأن عدم الاهتمام بقضية اليمن.

In case of partial translation, some of participants partially met the standards of the translation as follow:

2- UN aid official criticizes lack of attention on Yemen.

-وجهت الأمم المتحدة انتقادات رسمية بعدم الاهتمام باليمن.

In terms of zero equivalence, some of participants did not meet the standards of the translation as follow:

2- UN aid official criticizes lack of attention on Yemen.

-صرحت الأمم المتحدة أن اليمنيين بحاجة إلى الإغاثة.

Discussion

According to Bayar, it observes that there are such roles conform with some phrases that the students translate like:

- 1- Optimum translation
- 2- Near -Optimum translation
- 3- Partial translation
- 4- Zero equivalence / non-translation

It has noticed that the equivalence in translation is, therefore, one of most important step in translation, because some of the students translate the sentences in wrong way. As a result , they don't have such information about what they translate, about the grammar, because the news headlines have special roles. Therefore, most of the students fill in mistakes.

As a matter of fact, headlines have their own strategies either linguistically or technically. It's very common that the translators struggle to extend while translating the newspaper headlines from any language to another. The researcher used two major roles in the current study, the first one is skopos theory and the second one is Bayar's model in translation.

According to Reiss and Vermeer (2001), the present study met their expected terms of purpose, function and coherent. The participants meet the first criteria of the theory. They all understood the main purpose of the news headline which was political translation.

Coherent, for those participants, was the best performance. It's also lead to the high degree of equivalence, more particularly, those of optimum and near-optimum translation. Their performers met the criteria of coherent. Hereafter, the translation, according to coherent, should be rated in a sense that's coherent with the receiver's situation.

In the theoretical framework of Skopose theory, translation means producing another reason of the piece for the target readers or audience in the target language under the target cultural environment. Thus, the source text will be in the subordinating position (Nord,2001).

The final term of Skopos theory is the functionalism. The function of the theory meets Bayar's seven principle in many contexts. To be specific, the most important function of news headlines is to express the information. Thus, it must be translated correctly. The translators should pay attention to all the aspects in order to ensure that there is no mistake in the headlines .For example:

1- Humanitarian crisis worsening in Yemen.

1- اسوأ أزمة انسانية في اليمن.

In this example, the participants met the criteria of both Skopose theory as well as Bayar's principles.

In this content, however, the participants failed to meet the standard norms of translation. The major issue is that the lack of semantic knowledge rather than grammar. For example,

1- Humanitarian crisis worsening in Yemen.

1-سوء الحظ الازمة الانسانية تدهورت في اليمن.

Conclusion

Exchange of information among the population in the globe according to different cultures has become common. In this study, we do not intend to set as our objective the formulation of the rules of translation from English into Arabic; rather we intend to figure out the major issues while translating the political headlines of the newspaper from English language into Arabic language. The headlines of politics in any newspaper are, of truth, multifunctional segments containing different elements such as informative, ideological, and social. The multitude of the strategies of translation is the reflection of translation conceived as a means of merging or diverging the differences between two different cultures as well as the differences between two journalistic traditions. As it has noticed from the study that there are many issues in translating headlines. The major issue was that of the lack of equivalence in delivering proper terms in the subject matter of translation aspect.

The skopos theory is considered to be effective guidance to analyze the translation of the news headlines. Under the guidance of this theory, translators can tackle the problems with different methods, but with one spirit. The most important thing is to transfer and convey the original sense of the source language, not every single word, phrase and their combination. Translators are often confronted with more problems of culture than those of language itself. Headlines will continue to enhance the readability to receptors.

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