

Translation Procedures Used in Translating Dialogue into Arabic in George Orwell's Animal Farm

ترجمة الحوار في رواية مزرعة الحيوان لجورج أرويل للغة العربية والأساليب الترجمة المستعملة

Fergani Chahinez¹

University of Algiers 2, chahinez.ferguani@univ.alger2.dz

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Abstract:

This article aims to assess the translation of dialogue, noting that it represents an important part of a literary text. For the translator, translation of dialogue is considered a challenge due to the interconnection between linguistic, cultural, and contextual dimensions. Therefore, the success of the translation process depends not only on meticulous language transfer, but also on the ability to preserve the rhythm, tone, emotion, and weight of the dialogue (role) in the original text.

The study was based on comparing two translations into Arabic and the use of translation procedures used in translating dialogue in order to preserve the intended meaning.

Keywords:

Dialogue- Literary translation- translation procedures- characters- novel.

ملخص:

يهدف هذا المقال لتقييم ترجمة الحوار خصوصاً لأهميته الكبيرة في تركيبة النص الأدبي، فنجاح العملية الترجمة للحوار يشكل تحدياً للمترجم وذلك لترابط عدّة عوامل منها الدلالية والثقافية وكذلك النصية، لهذا لا ينحصر نجاح هذه العملية فقط بالتحكم الدقيق لنقل اللغة من وإلى لغة أخرى، بل أيضاً يعنى بالقدرة على الحفاظ على نفس سمات الحوار من الإيقاع والحالة الشعورية وتقل الحوار (دوره) داخل النص الأصل.

لهذا، استندنا في هذا المقال بدراسة مقارنة لترجمتين للحوار الأدبي نحو اللغة العربية وكذا الأساليب الترجمة التي تمت الاستعانة بها لترجمة مادة الحوار من أجل نقل معناه الحقيقي للنص الأصل.

كلمات مفتاحية: الحوار، الترجمة الأدبية، الأساليب الترجمة، الشخصيات، الرواية.

1. Introduction:

Literary translation is the most nuanced translation. It seeks to transfer literary works, such as novels, short stories, plays, and poems, into the target language,

capturing the essence of the source text and retaining the structural and aesthetic elements that are strongly manifested in literary works. Dialogue is one of these elements that requires attention and awareness.

The importance of dialogue in literary works, mainly novels, stems from its role in shaping the entire narrative. It helps to set the atmosphere of the story and contribute to the harmony of all the ingredients used by the author. Thus, an essential component of novels serves as a tool in character building, plot unraveling, and tone setting.

For this reason, translating dialogue is a complex endeavor and is viewed as a challenging responsibility that demands a certain balance between fidelity to the source and acceptability of the translated version. Therefore, Translators should adopt some strategies that facilitate the rendering of dialogue translation and preserve the harmonious interconnection between linguistic, cultural, and contextual dimensions.

Part of these endeavors is recognizing the intention of the source dialogue and decoding its aspects.

Hence, Understanding could not be isolated from the intention, guiding the translator to uncover the deeper purpose behind a text, affecting how this text will be understood (Newmark, 1988), especially when the dialogue has a pivotal role in the construction of the plot and the development of characters in the story.

This article aims to identify the translation strategies employed in translating dialogue. To do that, two original excerpts from George Orwell's novel "Animal Farm" were selected. Similarly, two different translations of the source dialogues were selected. We analyzed and compared the renderings of both translators to determine the strategies they applied in their translations of dialogue.

This study focuses on identifying these strategies and putting them under scrutiny. Consequently, the study asks the following questions:

- To what extent have the translators succeeded in preserving the intended meaning of dialogue in the target text?
- What are the most adopted procedures employed by both translators when translating dialogue?

2. Methodology

This study follows a qualitative comparative approach. It consists of an analysis of both source and target texts. Our data were collected purposively targeting richly layered dialogue. It included two excerpts from George Orwell's novel *Animal Farm* with two versions of their Arabic translations.

The core of this study was analyzing each excerpt aside and comparing it with the source text to detect the strategies used by each translator to transfer the nuanced elements of meaning in Arabic language. The results of each analysis were compared at the end.

3. The Corpus

Animal Farm is a novella that tells the story of a group of farm animals who revolt against their owner, hoping to build an equal society where every animal can be free and independent.

The story begins when Old Major, a wise old pig, gathers the rest of the animals in the stall and tells them about a vision he had in which animals live freely apart from human oppression. The old pig then incites the animals to rebel and start a revolution.

The progression of events in this novel is closely tied to exchanges between the different characters in the story. These exchanges in the form of dialogue advance the story, forming the beginning, the plot, and the ending. Thus, dialogue here not only shapes the story but also reveals the personalities and roles of each character, which explains the mix of language registers from the formal speech of the leaders (the pigs) to the simpler language of the workers (the other animals) (Orwell, 2015).

4. Definition of Dialogue: Role, Form, Characteristics

In a broader context, the Cambridge Dictionary defines dialogue as a conversation that is written for a book, play, or film. (Cambridge, 2025). However, dialogue in a general sense does not point to the full reality. In fiction, for instance, we have an altered version of dialogue. Fictional dialogue is often highly stylized, and what passes for an accurate reflection of "real speech" may be simply the product of a "linguistic hallucination" (Fludernik 1993).

Drawing on Fludernik's words, dialogue in fiction doesn't reflect reality as it is, which means the author might add elements that do not necessarily exist in real-life conversations or omit other components that do exist in natural speech. This explains why dialogue is described as monolithic, non-negotiable, and non-egalitarian, subject to the absolute control of the novelist, whereas conversation is the product of the immediate context (Thomas, 2012, p. 39). This is reasonably accurate in terms of form.

In terms of function and effect, however, Dialogue tends to be associated with mimesis, which refers to "showing", that is, displaying the action and revealing the feelings in the story, as opposed to diegesis, which means "telling", namely, narrating and informing about the action and the characters. Mimesis or showing suggests that the narrator is less involved, so the presence of the narrator is minimized, and it appears as though the characters' speech is almost unmediated. (Thomas, 2012, p. Preface).

This means that dialogue, as a tool of mimesis, reflects how characters speak, act, and react to each other without intervention. It is a full representation of the grand picture that demonstrates details to the reader without the need to put them into words. Correspondingly, Genette's (1980) suggests that the concept of 'scene', for instance, points to the equivalence between story time and discourse time, which implies a direct association between dialogue and 'showing' rather than 'telling',

allowing the reader to have direct and immediate access to events without the intervention of a 'teller' (Thomas, 2012, p. 16).

In the same context, dialogue as a tool of mimesis has a significant role in shaping life in the story through what characters say, which enables the reader to understand the structure of the story, its world, environment, and culture. Dialogue not only explains; it helps characters appear, showing, for instance, how they think and interact through conversing. The vital role of dialogue resides in advancing the plot, informing the reader about the actions of characters, and providing what 'action' there may be in the guise of important revelations, disputes, and discussions. (Thomas, 2012, p. 74). Therefore, dialogue is central in narrative, and it would be almost impossible to carry on a story without it.

In the context of translation, a translator should be aware of the role dialogue plays in a narrative. Any neglect of the tiny details hidden in the lines of dialogue might affect the meaning, and so his rendering of the original text in his target language.

Following the role of dialogue is the form, which is not less important than the role. The translator should distinguish the dialogue in a text to be able to translate it accurately. Norman Page (1958) demonstrates how early novelists took their cue from theater, setting out the speech of their characters much as in a dramatic script. (Boase-Beier, 2014, p. 51).

Ubiquitously, quotation marks have become universal and more flexible in terms of blurring boundaries between speech and thought and between character speech (Thomas, 2012, p. 19).

Lambert, a professor of linguistics, mentioned that the shape of dialogue has changed significantly in the 19th century. Previously, the speech of more than one character could be incorporated into a single paragraph. However, the preference shifted to using a new paragraph to denote each change of speaker (Thomas, 2012, p. 20). Thus, over the years, the form of dialogue evolved into paragraphing, which serves an organizational function by structuring the meaning of a piece of writing (Yakhontova, 2019). Some novelists utilize paragraphing because it facilitates organization, making the text readable, visually pleasing, and clearly denoting a change of speaker without explicitly labeling them.

Lambert also suggests that certain speech tags, such as "return" and "continue," can help create a sense of interaction between characters (Thomas, 2012, p. 22). This method effectively captures the reader's attention.

5. Dialogue samples from the corpus “Animal Farm” and its two translations **مزرعة الحيوان**

5.1 First example from the text source

He cleared his throat and began:

“Comrades, you have heard already about the strange dream that I had last night. But I will come to the dream later. I have something else to say first. I do not think, comrades, that I shall be with you for many months longer, and before I die, I feel it

my duty to pass on to you such wisdom as I have acquired. I have a long life, I have had much time for thought as I lay alone in my stall, and I think I may say that I understand the nature of life on this earth as well as many animal now living. It is about this that I wish to speak to you.

• **The 1st translation of Mahmoud Abdelghani**

تنحني العجوز ميجر ثم بدأ بهذه الكلمات:

«أيها الرفاق، لقد سمعتم من قبل عن الحلم الغريب الذي رأيته الليلة الماضية. غير أنني سأعود إليه بعد قليل. هناك شيء آخر أريد أن أحدثكم فيه. لا أنوي، أيها الرفاق، قضاء شهور أخرى بينكم. لكن قبل أن أموت أريد أن أقوم بواجب، لأنني أرغب في أن أجعلكم تستفيدون من الحكمة التي أعطيت لي. طيلة وجودي الطويل، كان لي، في هدوء زريبة الخنازير، وقت فارغ للتأمل. أعتقد أنني في مستوى الإقرار به: أنا أملك، عن طبيعة الحياة في هذا العالم، الكثير من الضوء مثلي في ذلك مثل أي حيوان آخر. هذا ما أرغب التحدث فيه معكم.»

• **The second translation of Shamel Abadha**

أيها الرفاق، لقد سمعتم بالطبع بالحلم الغريب الذي أتيت لي في الليلة الماضية والذي سأقص عليكم فحواه فيما بعد، إذ أن عندي الخطير من الأمور التي رأيتم أن أقدمها لكم، أولاً: إنني كما تعلمون قد بلغت من العمر أزدله، وربما لا تمتد حياتي شهوراً طويلة قادمة، وقد رأيتم لزاماً علي أن أحدثكم بخلاصة حكمتي وتجاربي وما زال في العمر بقية! لقد أتاح لي عمري المديد الذي قضيت شوطاً طويلاً منه وحيداً بمخاطبتي في تفكير متصل لأن أصل إلى أسرار الحياة فوق هذا الكون، وذلك هو محور حديثي الذي أزمع أن أقدمه إليكم.»

The dialogue's translation in the version of Mahmoud Abdelghani was an accurate and faithful translation from the LS to the TL. The translator respected the redundancy of the vocative case (two times) "comrades" rendered into "الرفاق".

The translator has succeeded in transferring the same spirit of the dialogue from the source text, proceeding with the equivalence procedure and adding the vocative marker "يا" (أداة النداء) to attract the readers and remind them of the beginning of the dialogue. He also opted for the transposition procedure in: "I shall be with you", a sentence composed of subject + auxiliary + main verb + prepositional phrase, indicating the future tense. In parallel, in the translation, the sentence was translated by a noun: "قضاء" (اسم).

The version of Shamel Abadha used an eloquent language in a classical Arabic style, marked by a strong rhetorical tone when using expressions such as "خلاصة حكمتي"، and "وتجاربي، أزدله، أتيت لي"، and the style of the chosen words is characterized by Arabic rhetorical flourish more than fidelity to the original text.

The translator used equivalence by adding a speech tag at the beginning of the dialogue: "قائلاً"، and by adding the vocative marker in "أيها الرفاق".

He omitted the second "comrades" mentioned in the source text in order to make the understanding of the dialogue implicit, by adapting the adverb "first" from the original text "I have something else to say first" to "أولاً", which completely changed the meaning of the LS. The original indicated priority in order or rather, "before I continue, I have something else to say", whereas the TL version conveyed a meaning of enumeration, thus altering the spirit of the idea.

5.2 Second example from the text source

The stupidest questions of all were asked by Mollie, the white mare. The very first question she asked Snowball was "will there still be sugar after the Rebellion?"

"No," said Snowball firmly. "We have no means of making sugar on this farm. Besides, you do not need sugar. You will have all the oats and hay you want.

"and shall I still be allowed to wear ribbons in my mane?" asked Mollie.

"Comrade", said Snowball, "those ribbons that you are so devoted to are the badge of slavery. Can you not understand that liberty is worth than ribbons?"

• The 1st translation of Mahmoud Abdelghani

أما الأسئلة الأكثر سخافة فتلك التي طرحتها المهرة البيضاء "موللي". لقد بدأت في مساءلة «سنوبول»:

- « بعد الثورة، هل سيكون السكر متوفراً؟! »

- لا، أجابها «سنوبول»، بنبرة قاطعة. ليس لنا في هذه المزرعة الوسائل لصناعة السكر. على كل حال، السكر شيء غير

ضروري. سنوفر لك العلف والخرطال الذي تحتاجين إليه.

- هل سيسمح لي بوضع شرائط في عرقي؟

«أيتها الرفيقة»، أجاب «سنوبول» بسرعة، «هذه الشرائط التي تتعلقين بها هي شعار عبوديتك. ألا يمكنك أن تتصورى أن الحرية

ثمنًا أعلى من هذه الزينة التافهة؟»

• The second translation of Shamel Abadha

وربما كانت أكثر التساؤلات غباءً وسطحية – هو سؤال المهرة مولي: هل ستحظى بعد الثورة بقطع السكر؟ وهل ستتمكن من أن

تزين معرفتها بالأسرطة الملونة؟ فقاطعها سنوبول وعنفها بحدة على ملاحظاتها السخيفة، وذكر أنه ليس لدى الثورة المقدرة على

جلب السكر، كما لا تعني بذلك، ويكفي ما لديها من حنطة ودريس؟ أما بخصوص الشرائط فقد وجه سنوبول حديثه لجميع

الحيوانات محذراً منها؛ فهي في رأيه رمز للعبودية والتبعية، وإن الحرية تستحق من الحيوانات التضحية بمثل هذه المظاهرة التافهة!

The translator used a mix of translation procedures in this passage, such as the transposition when Mollie, the white horse, asked Snowball: بعد الثورة، هل سيكون السكر

متوفراً؟! , the translator chose to start his sentence with inversion of the prepositional

phrase (شبه جملة that functioned as an adverbial phrase).

In the same sentence, the translator applied the adaptation procedure which is evident in the use of the word 'الثورة', the equivalent of 'rebellion', revealing the influence of Arab culture with the word 'الثورة' instead of 'التمرد'. Though, the Cambridge dictionary defines the word 'rebellion' as violent action organized by a group of people who are trying to change the political system in their country, the translator preferred a figurative meaning of rebellion which is revolution, because it aligns more closely with the novel's deeper themes of defending rights, reclaiming land, and restoring the dignity of the oppressed.

Another modulation is used by transferring a concrete word in: the badge of slavery to an abstract one, which is 'شعار'.

In his translation, Shamel Abadha chose to use indirect speech, avoiding quotation marks and paragraph breaks, while preserving the sense of dialogue between the two characters. He adapted the speaking character, Molly, by replacing her direct speech with the pronoun "she" (هي) and using the feminine form. In this passage, the translator exercised a degree of freedom, relying on adaptation—for example, the word *firmly* in the source text is rendered as وعنفها بجدة على ملاحظاتها السخيفة amplifying the emotional or expressive strength of the original word or phrase when translating it.

6. Results analysis

After comparing the two translations using the examples given above with the original passage in the source text, we concluded the following:

- Both translations succeeded in keeping the story alive by maintaining the characters' dialogue. This highlights that the characters are not merely speaking figures, but—as George Orwell intended—they are tools to portray the depth of manipulation and oppression presented in the novel, which clearly reflects the society image's.
- Each translator employed various translation procedures to convey the dialogue in both form and content, as it appears in the source text.
- Modulation, transposition, literal translation, and equivalence were predominant in the Arabic version translated by Mr. Mahmoud Abdelghani. This choice reflects his strong commitment to preserving the meaning, form, and ideas of the original dialogue.
- Adaptation, in particular, was the primary strategy used by Shamel Abadha, the second translator. He drew inspiration from the source text while also modifying it, through additions, substitutions, or explanatory notes in certain passages.
- Mahmoud Abdelghani's translation was characterized by the consistent use of direct speech, including quotation marks, punctuation, and paragraphing.

- Shamel Abadha's translation combined both direct and indirect speech including speech tags and narrative restructuring.

7. Conclusion:

This was a qualitative, comparative study conducted to detect some of the translation procedures used in translating dialogue. The analysis included two samples of dialogue from George Orwell's Animal Farm and two versions of their Arabic translations. The analysis results revealed a variety of translation strategies employed by translators to preserve the intended meaning and to achieve the same effect as the source text. Out of these strategies, Modulation, transposition, literal translation, equivalence, and adaptation stood out. However, each translator chose a specific set of procedures that comply with their own style and overall method of translating.

The point was to preserve both the meaning and effect of the original text, which, according to the renderings of both translators, was quite valid since it did not distort the meaning or minimize the resonance of the original.

Moreover, it is worth noting that translating dialogue requires a skill that goes beyond mere mastery of the language; it requires imagination, comprehension, and the ability to preserve the rhythm, tone, emotion, and weight of the dialogue (role) in the original text.

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