

## أهمية تحليل المعنى الإيحائي في ترجمة رسالة الكاتب.

### The Importance of the Connotative Meaning Analysis in Translating the Writer's Message.

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## الملخص:

لنقل معاني النص الأصلي بطريقة تضمن ما أمكن التعبير عن أفكار منتج النص وتحقيق أثر مماثل في المتلقي، يجب على المترجم تحليل المعنى الإيحائي. ويساهم هذا البحث في إظهار أهمية التحليل المعنى التلميحى و المعنى المنعكس لتحديد معنى ودلالات الكلمات والعبارات، ومنه تحقيق المعنى العام للعمل الذي أراده صاحب النص. ومن أجل ذلك اعتمد البحث على رواية "حضرة المحترم" لنجيب محفوظ وترجمتها إلى اللغة الإنجليزية. انتقيت عينات من المدونة المختارة، وقمت بمقارنتها بالترجمات المقترحة، ثم انتقلت إلى عملية التحليل لشرح مدى نجاح الترجمة في بعض النماذج وإخفاؤها في البعض الآخر، وفي هذه الحالة اقترحت ما رأيته أنسب. وأثبتت النتائج أن ترجمة النص الروائي تقتضي تحديد مقاصد الكاتب في توظيف معاني المفردات والعبارات ومنه وإيجاد علاقة معانيها مع معنى العمل الأدبي الذي يعكس المعاني التي أراد منتج النص التعبير عنها وإيصالها للمتلقي.

**كلمات مفتاحية:** أنواع المعنى، ترجمة المعنى، تحليل المعنى، نجيب محفوظ.

## Abstract:

To guarantee conveying the writer's thoughts and produce the same effect on the reader, the translator should analyse the connotative meaning. This research aims to demonstrate the importance of the discourse analysis of a novel to determine the words' meanings and confirm their role in shaping the writer's targeted general meaning. To achieve this goal, we relied on Naguib Mahfouz novel's : "The Respected Sir" and its translation into English to discuss the use of allusive meaning and reflective meaning in building the main character and the meaning in Mahfouz's work. Finally, the samples selected from the corpus were compared to their suggested translation before being analysed to explain to which extent the translators succeeded in the transfer of some samples and failed in others. In this case, a more appropriate translation was suggested. The results obtained confirmed that the translation of a novel requires the analysis of the connotative meaning, to transfer the literary work meanings. The latter reflects the writer's intended meanings and what he/she wants to convey to the reader.

## 1. Introduction

In his novel, the author embodies the issues he wants to address, employing main and secondary characters, all of whom reflect the author's ideas and serve the meaning of the novel. Each character has a specific function that the author describes to us and brings to life through their dialogues with other characters. (قويدر، الأيوب، بركة، 2002)

The translator must analyze the characters in the novel being translated and understand their implications in light of the novel's meaning and significance, so that the translation of the author's description of the characters or the translation of the characters' dialogues is an objective translation that conveys the meaning of the novel. The analysis of characters and their dialogues can reveal for instance the social status of each which appears through the use of different levels of language( the use of foreign and colloquial words). (بو عنيقة، 2023).

According to Jaber (جابر، 2005) semantic translation is concerned with preserving the distinctive communicative and expressive characteristics of the narrative text, so that the form and content of the text are unified, i.e., the writer's particular way of using language to express themes, describe characters, time and place, and narrate events. The novel thus reflects the writer's personality and the human values he believes in, as well as the image of his society and cultural environment, in addition to the literary school to which he belongs. For example, Naguib Mahfouz's description of the nights he spent visiting **Othman Bayoumi** to **Qadriya**, the prostitute, as the **behemia** nights, reflects the influence of naturalism in the novel, even though it is classified as existential realistic novel. Naguib Mahfouz wants to highlight **Othman's** pursuit of his instincts despite his lofty spiritual goals in serving his sacred profession, as he is a victim of these instincts

and society. Thus, the word **bahimiyya** becomes a key word, corresponding to **bestial** in all specialized critical writings on naturalism, but the translator chose the word **animal** despite his specialization in literary criticism and his numerous writings on the works of Naguib Mahfouz.

Analyzing a novel before translating it is a necessary step in determining its style, theme, and impact, as it allows the meanings of the text to be identified through the connotations of its words. Some words are related to time and place, while others are related to characters, themes, and narrative. The translator-critic stands before the novel and works to reveal the relationships between its elements and the meanings that distinguish its content and style. The translator must use the tools of literary criticism to extract different meanings and draw on existing critical and literary studies of the novel to arrive at accurate interpretations.

Rashid El-Enany's translation, "**Respected Sir**", was based on his analysis and critiques (El-Enany, 1993), which helped us to explain his translation strategies. He took into account: the author's style, the cultural and social background of certain words and phrases, and how he constructed the overall meaning of the novel. His translation was not literal and did not rely heavily on direct translation techniques, but rather on linguistic and semantic equivalents that reflected the literary translator's sensibility and creative ability to present the novel and its Arabic background in English. However, through our analysis we try to shed the light on some translation choices that could be perfected to reflect Naguib Mahfouz's meanings and messages.

## 2. Meaning in "**Respected Sir**"

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Naguib Mahfouz's career, as a civil servant, provided him with authentic models for the construction of his novels' heroes. He portrayed the world of work in many novels, but the most complete model of **The Employee** is in "**Respected Sir**". He wrote the novel after his retirement in 1975 to represent the essence of his 37 years in government and to transform the job from an administrative task into a spoken philosophy through

the tragic hero **Othman Bayoumi**, who embodies the psychology of the Egyptian employee “the monk in the temple of the sacred government position” (1995، النقاش).

The author portrayed the absurdity of existence in “**Respected Sir**” and answered existential questions such as who am I, what is the purpose of existence, and why am I here? He did so through the main character, **Othman Bayoumi**, and his journey from the eighth to the first grade on the sacred path of government position. Othman spends his life hoping that his government position, his commitment, and his competence in the temple of the state will intercede for him in the afterlife. Othman believes that the state is God's temple on earth and that his position in this world and the next will be determined by his diligence in serving it. The son of a cart driver from a poor neighborhood wants to rise from his humble social status by climbing the career ladder and becoming a general director after sacrificing everything that gives life meaning. He sacrificed his first love, **Anisa Ramadan**, his friendship with **Saafan Bassiouni**, and his family life when he married a first time a sterile, unhappy woman and then a young, ambitious woman, whom he married in his old age, was unable to bear him a child who would carry his name and the true meaning of life. On his deathbed, he discovers that Death is a moment of separation and revelation of truth and falsehood. He finally achieved his goal and rose to the position of general director, but he finds that his salary did not make him special at death and that his position did not help him when his existence on earth ended. He sees himself as an old man from a poor background, an employee who holds the position of general director, alone and unable to cope with human weakness. Death reveals the truth to Othman, and he understands that what he wasted his life on was nothing but the illusion of the sanctity of government position.

### 3. Translating Connotative Meaning in “**Respected Sir**”

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The author mixed realism and existentialism; through his depiction of Egyptian neighborhoods and alleys, he was able to present his philosophy of life. The character of Othman is full of contradictions and presents a realistic human model in his psychological conflicts and existential crises. **Othman** is a religious man who prays with the people, cares about his reputation, and keeps clean his administrative file, which he

sees as a record of the good and bad deeds of employees. He tries not to violate it by committing administrative taboos, but at the same time he hides his relationship with **Qadariya**, his drinking, and the moral crime he committed against **Assila**. His hypocrisy is reflected in his constant and repeated use of religious terms.

### The Samples:

| The Target Text                                                                                                                      | The Source Text                                                                         |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| -I've got news<br><br>- <u>I hope it's good news</u><br>(Respected Sir)                                                              | -عندي خبر<br><br>- <u>خير إن شاء الله</u> . ( حضرة المحترم ص 660)                       |
| My suit is very old <u>anyway</u> , replied Othman.<br>(Respected Sir p5)                                                            | فقال عثمان: بدلتني قديمة جداً <u>والحمد لله</u><br>(حضرة المحترم ص 652)                 |
| <u>Forgive me</u> , sir, said Othman apologetically...<br>(Respected Sir p36)                                                        | فقال باستماتة: <u>عظم الله قدرك</u> (حضرة المحترم<br>...ص 663)                          |
| It's thanks to you and your help, he said gratefully.<br>(Respected Sir p36)                                                         | فقال بامتنان: <u>بفضل الله</u> وفضلكم (حضرة<br>المحترم ص 663)                           |
| -you are an excellent young man as everyone<br>says...<br><br>- <u>I do not deserve the compliment</u> , sir. (Respected<br>Sir p36) | - أنت شاب ممتاز كما يقال عنك<br><br>- <u>أستغفر الله</u> يا أفندم. (حضرة المحترم ص 663) |
| I'll do my best. (Respected Sir p58)                                                                                                 | <u>ربنا يوفيق</u> . ( حضرة المحترم ص 671)                                               |

We note that the translator has suggested semantic equivalents in most cases, abandoning the emotional or sentimental meaning that reflects the religious character.

Religious vocabulary is very important in this novel, and abandoning it in the English text results in a significant loss of meaning. El-Enany has previously pointed out this importance in his analysis of this novel (2022، العناني)، emphasizing the importance of irony. However, the translator did not give it importance in his translation, and therefore he failed to convey the meaning expressed by Naguib Mahfouz through the character of Othman. Naguib Mahfouz is convinced that Othman has failed to achieve salvation because of his bad morals despite his commitment to his work. To preserve this irony, we suggest adding a religious reference to El-Enany's translation as follows:

### First sample:

| The Target Text                                   | The Source Text                           |
|---------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------|
| -I've got news                                    | -عندي خبر                                 |
| - <u>I hope it's good news</u><br>(Respected Sir) | -خير، إن شاء الله. ( حضرة المحترم ص 660 ) |

We suggest using the Arabic phrase إن شاء الله , so that the example becomes: Inshallah, it's good news,  
as it is commonly used in English, or using a biblical expression for instance to preserve the writer message using an equivalent phrase such as God willing

### Second sample:

| The Target Text                                                           | The Source Text                                                     |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------|
| My suit is very old <u>anyway</u> , replied Othman.<br>(Respected Sir p5) | فقال عثمان: بدلي قديمة جداً، <u>والحمد لله</u> (حضرة المحترم ص 652) |

We suggest an explanatory translation that reflects the phrase **thank God**, Othman's patience with his social status, and his asking God for the strength to be patient:

My suit is very old anyway, May Allah grant me patience and strength, replied Othman.

**Third sample:**

| The Target Text                                                              | The Source Text                                              |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------|
| It's thanks to you and your help, he said gratefully.<br>(Respected Sir p36) | فقال بامتنان: <u>يفضل الله</u> وفضلكم (حضرة<br>المحترم ص663) |

This sample reflects the sanctity of the general manager, whom Othman places on the same level as God Almighty. We suggest a religious equivalent:

With God's blessings! Thanks to you and your help, he said gratefully.

**Fourth sample:**

| The Target Text                                                                                                                | The Source Text                                                                           |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| -you are an excellent young man as everyone says...<br><br>- <u>I do not deserve the compliment</u> , sir. (Respected Sir p36) | - أنت شاب ممتاز كما يقال عنك<br><br>- <u>أستغفر الله</u> يا أفندم. (حضرة المحترم<br>ص663) |

The phrase expresses humility, to which we suggest to add the word God with an exclamation mark!

- God! I do not deserve the compliment, sir

**Fifth sample:**

| The Target Text | The Source Text |
|-----------------|-----------------|
|-----------------|-----------------|

We suggest the following explanatory translation:

May God guide me to success/ May God help me

We note that we can replace the word God with the word **Allah** to preserve the flavor of Islamic culture, i.e., the milieu in which the novel was written and the environment in which the author lived and was inevitably influenced.

## 4. Conclusion

We conclude that character analysis helps the translator identify the connotative meaning of the words and their interrelation in the construction of the characters that contribute to the overall meaning of the novel. Therefore, ensuring that the meaning of the novel is conveyed accurately and objectively.

Translation remains a challenging task, an interdisciplinary act in which the translator has to use the various latest scientific literary, linguistic, social research contributions. These tools remain key elements to reach Meaning in literature.

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