Wordplay in English –Arabic Translation

Dr. Osama Misbah Mahmod
osama.m@uomosul.edu.iq
ORCID: 0009-0008-6805-7480

University of Mosul/ College of Arts
Dept. of Translation

Abstract:

Wordplay is a literary technique and a form of wit in which words used become the main subject of the work, primarily for the purpose of intended effect or amusement (Green : 1991). As for Sheriden) (1998) states that wordplay is the activity of joking about the meanings of words especially in an intelligent way. According to Oxford Dictionary, it is also called play on words which means the witty and cleaver use of words. It uses technical and literary devices like spelling, rhyme, pun, slang, idiom, and acronym. It is quite common in cultures as a method of reinforcing meaning. Wordplay was found in languages with or without alphabet based scripts such as homophonic puns in Mandarin Chinese.

As for Salingar (1976) states that wordplay includes polysemy and it is the ability to evoke the ambiguity. He adds that wordplay is variant repetition that requires the similarity of sound and variation which means the different meanings of words with the same sound. Kabergs and Ausloos (2012) states that wordplay is "a specific play and a reciprocal interaction between sound patterns brought up by the variation in morphological structures, on the one hand, and meaning defined by the use of a word in a specific literary context on the other hand. They emphasize that "wordplay can only fulfill its function within the literary context when there is an interaction between sound and meaning.The main problem is that without the understanding the meaning of the utterance, one can't get the appropriate intention of the speaker which will lead to ambiguity.

Keyword (Wordplay, Translation, Structure, Pun)

ترجمة التلاعب بالألفاظ من الانكليزية الى العربية

ملخص البحث:

ان فن التلاعب بالألفاظ هو أسلوب أدبي وشكل من أشكال الذكاء حيث تصبح الكلمات المستخدمة هي الموضوع الرئيسي للبحث بغية اظهار المقام الأول لغرض التأثيرات المقصودة أو التسلية.

و قد ذكر شيردين أن التلاعب بالألفاظ هو نشاط المزاح حول معاني الكلمات بطريقة ذكية و يطلق عليه أيضًا اللعب بالكلمات الذي يعني الاستخدام الذكي .كما يتم استخدام الأدوات التقنية والأدبية مثل التهجئة، والقافية، والتورية، والعامية، والمصطلح، والاختصار. ويعتبر شائع جدًا في الثقافات كوسيلة لتعزيز المعنى.يمكن القول بأن التلاعب بالألفاظ يشمل تعددية المعاني بمعنى القدرة على إثارة

الغمـوض. ويضـيف أن التلاعـب بالألفـاظ هـو تكـرار متنـوع يتطلـب تشـابه الصــوت واختلافــه ممــا يعنــي اخـتلاف معــاني الكلمــات التــي لهــا نفـس الصوت.

الكلمات المفتاحية: التلاعب بالألفاظ .الترجمة. السياق

1. Aims of study

1. Translating ambiguous sentences which has more than one pronunciation into Arabic.

2 . Showing the type of wordplay according to its use.

3. Evaluating the translation which depending on the proposed criteria.

4. Proposing a new rendering in case of subject failure.

2. Hypothesis

1. Translating English wordplay into Arabic in order to see the similarities and differences between languages.

2. In spite of many differences between English and Arabic, there is no obstruction to translate wordplay into Arabic.

3. Procedure and Data Collection

1. A theoretical background of wordplay was given.

2. Eight different structures were selected from semantics as well as stylistics as a data for the research in question.

3. These different structures were given to three subjects (M.A students in the dept. of Translation, College of Arts).

4. Introduction

The study of wordplay is considered one of the most important subjects in grammar, semantics, syntax, pragmatics and literature. The utterances which have the same pronunciation can be understood in different ways by different people via there listening to the speaker (Noeegel

:2021). Generally speaking wordplay can be defined as a literary technique and a form of wit in which words used become the main subject of the work, primarily for the purpose of intended effect or amusement (Latta 1999). It also can be defined as the activity of joking about the meanings of words, especially in an intelligent way. It has many types namely, acronym, acrostic, alliteration, homophone, pun, rhyme, anagram, oxymoron and tautology (Sheriden, R :1998).

5. Types of Wordplay

According to Drink Delabastita (1996) says that there are many types of wordplay in English, namely:

1. Acronym: They are words which formed by the first letters of a word. They always can be happened in slang. Example: (LAN). Local Area Network.

2. Acrostic: It is a composition where a specific letters from a new words. It can be found in puzzle when forming a clue.

> **T** thoughtful
> **E** energetic
> **A** amazing
> **C** caring
> **H** helpful
> **E** encouraging
> **R** responsible

3. Alliteration: It is the repetition of an initial consonant sound in words that are closed to each other.

Example : Harry hurried home to watch film on TV.

4. Homophone: It means that two words have the same sound but different meaning. The most uses of homophones

are (to), (two) and (too).

Example: Peace talks.
Pea stalks.

5. Pun: It can be found in spoken language as well as written language. It relies on homophone which means different meaning with same sound.

Example: Speaker A: Iam afraid minors.
Speaker B**:** Iam not miner.

6. Rhyme: It is the repetition of identical sounds at the end of two or many words.

Example: Ask ...Mask.. Task.

7. Anagram: It means that taking the letters of specific words and scrambled them in order to create a new word.

Example: Noter... Toner... Tenor.

8. Oxymoron: They are phrases or expressions that use two contradictory words. They can be used for dramatic effect.
Example: Friendly Fight.

9. Tautology: They are texts which all their words start with the same letter. They are often used in poems. In grammar, it means to use different words to repeat the same idea.

Example: In my opinion , I think ....

10. Spoonerism: It happens when two letters in a word or phrase are switched together.

Example: butterfly .....flutter by.
 It occurs when a person speak too fast and the brain doesn't have time to keep up.

6. The Importance of Wordplay

Wordplay's use extends far beyond jokes and humor. It makes language more unique, more interesting, and more witty and amusing than using standard words and phrases. It has had an important role in rhetoric going as far back as the classics of literature and philosophy, from Plato to Shakespeare(Allan:2016).

Added to these it is a huge part of all languages and cultures around the globe, used not only by talented writers, speakers, and storytellers, but by all people of all ages. As soon as kids start telling jokes, they starting using wordplay.

7. The Roles of Wordplay

According to Francisco, J (2018) states that wordplay has many benefits:

1. Wordplay grabs attention.
2. Wordplay is more fun.
3. Wordplay changes mind.
4. Wordplay makes reader taking extra time to understand the utterance better.

Translation, Data Analysis and Discussion

SL Text (1)

I like to read the tale about the horse with a long tail.

In this example we have two words (tale and tail) have the same sound which will make the hearer misunderstand the meaning of the sentence. This phenomenon belongs to wordplay and it occurs when two words have the same sound but different meaning.

TL Texts

الترجمة الاولى : أحب قراءة قصة الحصان ذو الذيل الطويل.

الترجمة الثانية : أحب قصة الحصان مع القصة الطويلة.

الترجمة الثالثة : أحب قراءة الذيل التابع للحصان مع قصته الطويلة.

As we see that, the first translation is accurate because the translator heard the sentence in an accurate way (I like to read the tale about the horse with a long tail).

According to second one the translation is inaccurate because the translator heard the sentence (I like to read the tale about the horse with a long tale). As for the last one, it is inaccurate because the translator heard the sentence (I like to read the tail about the horse with a long tale. So, the appropriate rendering for this sentence is

أود قراءة قصة الحصان ذو الذنب الطويل.

Translation, Data Analysis and Discussion

SL Text (2)

I saw a nice toy in the market.
In this example, one can hear more than one sound, which will make the hearer misunderstand the meaning of the sentence:

a. I saw a nice toy in the market.

b. I saw an ice toy in the market.
So, there is a wordplay because we have two structures with the same sound but different meaning. Another note that the verb saw has more than one meaning. The first one is the past of see whereas the second one is a present of sawn (ينشر, يقطع).

TL Texts

الترجمة الاولى : رأيت لعبة جميلة في الاسواق.

الترجمة الثانية : رأيت لعبة جليدية في الاسواق.

الترجمة الثالثة : أقطع اللعبة الثلجية في الاسواق.

As we see that, the first translation is appropriate because the translator heard the sentence as the speaker means (I saw a nice toy in the market). According to second translation, the rendering is inaccurate because the translator heard the sentence (I saw an ice toy in the market.). As for the last one, it is also inaccurate because the translator heard thought that saw means (يقطع) and (a nice toy) is (an ice toy).

So, the appropriate rendering for this sentence is

رأيت لعبة جميلة في الاسواق.

Translation, Data Analysis and Discussion
SL Text (3)
She sells seashells by the seashore.
In this example, one can see a type of wordplay, which is anagram and means that taking the letters of specific words and scrambled them in order to create a new word with closing to each other. The hearer will confuse what the sender means and for this reason, it will make the hearer misunderstand the meaning of the sentence.

TL Texts

الترجمة الاولى : انها تبيع أصداف السلحفاة بالقرب من الشاطى .

الترجمة الثانية : تبيع السواحل بالقرب من اصداف السلحفاة .

الترجمة الثالثة : تبيع اصداف السلحفاة بالقرب من الساحل.

As we see that, the first translation as well as third one are appropriate because the translator heard the sentence as the speaker means whereas the second translation is inaccurate because the hearer confused the meaning according to (anagram) which is taking the letters of specific words and scrambled them in order to create a new word which is a type of wordplay.

 So, the appropriate rendering for this sentence is

<div dir="rtl">

انها تبيع اصداف السلاحف بالقرب من الشاطى.

</div>

Translation, Data Analysis and Discussion

SL Text (4)

I love ewe.

In this example we have a word likes another word in sound but with different spelling as well as meaning. So, according to this context, a man told his wife (I love ewe). The word (ewe) has the same sound with the word (you) with different meaning and spelling and for this reason she thought that he said (I love you). This phenomenon belongs to wordplay and the hearer confused the accurate meaning.

TL Texts

<div dir="rtl">

الترجمة الاولى: أحبكِ.

الترجمة الثانية: أنا أحبكم.

الترجمة الثالثة: أحب النعجة.

</div>

As we see that, the first two translations as well are inaccurate because the hearer heard the sentence according to logic which means that already a husband loves his wife whereas the third translation is accurate because the hearer

knew that the sender played with the word which is belong to a phenomenon called wordplay.

So, the appropriate rendering for this sentence is

أحب النعجة.

Translation, Data Analysis and Discussion

SL Text (5)
Harry hurried home in order to play tennis.

In this example, one can see a type of wordplay, which called (alliteration), and it is the repetition of an initial consonant sound in words (Harry and Hurry) that are closed to each other. So, the hearer will confuse what the sender means and for this reason, it will make the hearer misunderstand the meaning of the sentence.

TL Texts

الترجمة الاولى : أسرع هاري الى البيت ليلعب كرة التنس

الترجمة الثانية : أسرع أسرع الى البيت لتلعب كرة التنس.

الترجمة الثالثة : هاري هاري ..الى البيت لتلعب التنس.

As we see that, the second and third translations are inaccurate because the hearer confused to hear the exact utterance because of a type of wordplay which called (alliteration) and it is the repetition of an initial consonant sound in words that are closed to each other.

So, the appropriate rendering for this sentence is

أسرع هاري في وصوله الى البيت ليلعب كرة التنس.

Translation, Data Analysis and Discussion

SL Text (6)

My sister and my brother had a friendly fight.

In this example, one can see a type of wordplay, which called (oxymoron) and it means that they are phrases or expressions that use two contradictory words. They can be used for dramatic effect. So, the translator will confuse the accurate meaning because of the two contrary words.

TL Texts

الترجمة الاولى : لدى اخي و اختي لعبة الصداقة.

الترجمة الثانية : يمتلك كلا من اخي و اختي لعبة الصداقة.

الترجمة الثالثة : يتشجارون اخوتي شجار المحبة و الاصدقاء.

According to this example, one can see that both first and second sentences are inaccurate because of using a type of wordplay which called (Oxymoron) and it occurs when there are phrases or expressions that use two contradictory words. As for the third translation, it is accurate because the translator was taking into consideration the wordplay.

So, the appropriate rendering for this sentence is

يتشجارون اخوتي شجار المحبين والاصدقاء.

Translation, Data Analysis and Discussion
SL Text (7)
I saw it with my own eyes.
In this example we can see that it has tautology (type of wordplay) which means that a person uses different words or expressions to repeat the same idea. So, already one can't see anything with other's eyes.

TL Texts

الترجمة الاولى : رأيتها بعينيَّ.

الترجمة الثانية : رأيته بعينيَّ.

الترجمة الثالثة : رأيتها بأم عينيَّ.

According to this example, one can see that all translations are perfect but actually, we have acceptable translation as well as more acceptable. So, the more acceptable rendering is the last one.

So, the appropriate rendering for this sentence is

رأيته بأم عيني.

رأيتها بأم عينيَّ.

Translation, Data Analysis and Discussion
SL Text (8)
Marriage is a fine institution, but I am not ready to this institution.

In this example one can see that the word (institution) appears twice and each one of them has a different meaning. So, the speaker utters this sentence using wordplay. For this reason it may have more than one meaning.

TL Texts

الترجمة الاولى : الزواج مؤسسة جيدة ولكنني لست مستعدا لها.

الترجمة الثانية : الزواج مؤسسة جيدة ولكنني لست مستعداً لهذه المؤسسة.

الترجمة الثالثة : الزواج عمل جيد ولكنني لست مستعدا لهذا العمل.

According to this example, one can see that both first and second sentences are inaccurate because of using a type of wordplay by the speaker, which led the first two translators to translate word for word. As for the third translation, it is accurate because the translator was taking into consideration the wordplay and he knows that the word has no meaning without context.

So, the appropriate rendering for this sentence is

الزواج عمل جيد ولكنني لست مستعدا لهذا العمل.

Conclusions

Wordplay is a literary technique and a form of wit in which words used become the main subject of the work, primarily for the purpose of intended effect or amusement. The study of wordplay is considered one of the most important subjects in grammar, semantics, syntax, pragmatics and literature. The utterances which have the same pronunciation can be understood in different ways by different people via there listening to the speaker.

Wordplay's use extends far beyond jokes and humor. It makes language more unique, more interesting, and more witty and amusing than using standard words and phrases. It has had an important role in rhetoric going as far back as the classics of literature and philosophy, from Plato to Shakespeare. According to Drink Delabastita (1996) states that there are many types of wordplay in English, namely: acronym, acrostic, alliteration, homophone, pun, rhyme, anagram, oxymoron, tautology and spoonerism.

Finally, wordplay has many benefits namely, (a) grabs attention, (b) it is more fun, (c) it changes mind and (d) it makes the reader taking extra time to understand the

utterance better. Last but not least, wordplay is a device that can via it serve all purposes across many kinds of styles and genres which used by writers and speakers. It never stops changing of meaning and for this reason it is an important part of language in both English and Arabic.

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