Pun Words in Abd Alkhal' s Novel "Throwing Sparks" (A Theoretical Approach)

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ABSTRACT
Arabic pun is often considered as one of the most important rhetoric device which has been used frequently in many literary texts. This figurative of speech is often used to mislead the readers or the hearers in order to establish a confusion of the double senses in the word. This research aims at investigating the nature of the Arabic pun word in the novel "Throwing Sparks" by Abod Alkhal. Arabic pun is seen as an element that adds life to the texts. The differences between the Arabic and English pun words have been discussed thoroughly throughout the research. In order to achieve the best outcomes for this research, descriptive and theoretical approaches have been adopted. Then, the researcher suggested the use of Delabastia's (2004) strategies to facilitate the rendition of pun word from Arabic into English.

Keywords: Translation Strategies, Throwing Sparks, Arabic Rhetorical Devices, (Un)translatability.
1. Introduction

Generally speaking, The Arabic rhetorical word "تُرٔخ" has two meaning. The first one (not intended meaning) is to cover or hide some information from the readers/hearers. The second meaning is to deliberately hide a very subtle meaning from the hearers/readers in order to make it impossible for them to understand its hidden meaning. It is used to make the style of the Arabic texts more study and richer in meaning. For instance, the Arabic phrase "WARAH التراب" (disappeared) and this is the common meaning some people might understand from the phrase, but the intended meaning is "مَفْن " (buried). In both English and Arabic languages, pun is a type of figurative language that depart from conventional word order and meaning. For decades, it has played a major role in poetry and prose. Arabic and English puns differ in their scope of definition and potential usage. The translators of the literary work have to focus on the homonymous (words that are alike in spelling and pronunciation but are different in meaning) and polysemous (words have more than one sense) meaning of the words or phrases in the text. Cultural backgrounds might also be a big issue. As Benjamin (1996: 19-20) states that, “the task of the translator consists in finding that intended effect Intention upon the language into which he is translating which produces in it the echo of the original”. The concept of ambiguity is arising in this paper. Therefore, the translators of puns have to put in their minds the aim of the author of the source text. The reader must have a knowledge about this figurative of speech, and then detect the double meaning of the word intends to be translated.

Al-Qazwini:, for instance,(1975: 499-500) thought that "pun is a part of sublime framework" he goes further and define it as "an utterance which has two shades of meaning one of which is immediate and the other is remote". The Arabic writers, most of the time, play with words to make their stories deep in meaning. They use this technique to attract the attention of the readers/ hearers. Unfortunately, as it is mentioned previously, it contains an immediate or straight forward meaning (literal meaning which is not the intended meaning) and the remote meaning (the hidden meaning which is in this case is the intended meaning). There are some researches that have tackled the problem of translating puns from Arabic into English in translation. Most of them have dealt with the Quranic scripture.

2. Literature review

2.1. Translatability of Puns in Arabic and English Literature

Hatim and Munday in their book "Translation: An Advanced Resource Book“(2004: 15) defined translatability as "a relative notion that has to do with the extent to which, despite obvious differences in linguistic structure (grammar, vocabulary, etc.), meaning can still be adequately expressed across languages".
This definition can be supported by the claim made by Düttmann (1994: 32) when he stated that “nothing is untranslatable (…) Translation always manages to incorporate the untranslatable into communication”. Obviously, nothing is difficult for these translation theorists. Their studies revealed that translators can find solutions for their challenges when they are qualified and mastered the two languages at the same time. Thus, Nash (1985: 9) said that the translator "should understand the cultural and social facts and the shared believes and attitudes in order to grasp the essence of the joke". He was mainly concerned with humor or what is known as "wordplay". In western literature, the word puns mostly concerned with humor in literature. Regardless of all the obstacles constituted by this figurative of speech, the translation is possible. In one word, the translators have to have an adequate technique. For example, the idiom "put one's shoulder to the wheel" is often translated as to as "قُهِّنَتًّ". The literal translation of this idiom would be a mistake. So, the translators must be bicultural in order to catch the figurative meaning behind this idiom.

2.2. Untranslatability of Puns in Arabic and English Literature

The translation of puns is often regarded as a nightmare for translators. Vandaeele (2010: 150) argued that, "puns constitute a kind of communication in which not only meaning, but also form matters." Therefore, the translators have to focus on the intended effect (hiding meaning) of the puns and its fruitless production or translation. The form of the text is also crucial. More often than not, the pun is regarded as untranslatable. Roman Jackobson (1959: 238) was in favor of this notion, he said that, "The pun, or to use a more erudite, and perhaps more precise term –paronomasia, reigns over poetic art, and whether its rule is absolute or limited, poetry by definition is untranslatable. Only creative transposition is possible: either intra-lingual transposition –from one poetic shape to another or inter-lingual transposition – from one language into another or fully inter-semiotic transposition – from one system of signs into another." This dim view about the translation of puns was not leading to anywhere. Benjamin Walter in his book "The Task of the Translator" had a different point of view about the subject, he (1996:17) stated that, "languages are not strangers to one another, but are, a priori and apart from all historical relationships, interrelated in what they want to express". Language is considered as important tools for communication and expression. It has a deep impact on its users; it also shapes their experiences and helps them to a new weltanschauung or world-view.

2.3. Useful Devices for the Translating Puns

Arabic translators and theorists of translation, throughout history, have tried hard to have a glimpse on the methods of communication and knowledge of other nations in order to preserve their cultural heritage for the future generations. First things first, to satisfy the need of communication they focused heavily on language. In spite of the broad recognition among historians of culture of the major role translation has played
in the crystallization of national cultures, relatively little research has been carried out so far in this area (Chun, 1977:57).

2.4. Types of Puns in Arabic

Arabic and English languages belong to different family trees. This has great consequences on the production of the translators. The two quotations might shed a light on these differences. For instance, Peter Newmark (1988:217) defined puns as, “using a word, or two words with the same sound (piece/peace), or a group of words with the same sound (personne alitée/personnalité) in their two possible senses, usually for the purpose of arousing laughter or amusement, and sometimes also to concentrate meaning”. The great Arabic rhetorician Salah al-Din al-Safadi had his own view about this figurative of speech, he (1971:115) explained puns as an “Utterance produced by a speaker with two meanings the first of which is obvious whereas the second is not. The speaker utters the part of the text that contains the obvious meaning in order to misguide a certain receiver or a certain group of receivers and then he produces a linguistic trace through which he indirectly suggests a clue indicating that the intended meaning is the far-fetched one rather than the obvious one”. The abovementioned definitions set a clear cut distinction between the uses of puns in the two languages. Comparatively, Arabic puns deals with only one word which has two meaning. One is a direct meaning, and the other is an indirect meaning. The form or sound of the word is not important in Arabic language. In short, puns are words which have been applied in a witty way. While English puns (paronomasia) depends on the conception of repeating either the same lexical item or bringing in a word similar or near -similar to another in form.

Arabic rhetoricians divided pun into four types, and each one of these types has his own subtypes. Obviously, this figure of speech is very sophisticated in its texture and strongly limited in its semantic use. Pun is classified as follows: التورية المصدرة (stripped-off pun), التورية المرشحة (strengthened pun), التورية المبينة (clarifying pun), التورية المهيئة (preparing pun). This classification pun is administered and ruled by contextual logical semantic framework.

1- Stripped-off pun: is concentrated neither on the required punned with (the obvious meaning of the word) nor on the punned to (the far-fetched meaning of the word) which are mentioned in the sentence.
2- Strengthened pun: this type of pun required a lexical item to illustrate the punned with which have to be mentioned after or before the punned word.
3- Clarifying pun: as the term suggests, a lexical item should be provided for the punned word set either before or after the pun word.
4- Preparing pun: this type of pun is linked to a lexical item that comes either after or before the punned word. Sometimes, it comes as a phrase.
2.5. Research Question of the Study
The following research paper aims to answer the following inquiries:
1- What are the translation strategies that have been used by the students to translate a list of examples from Arabic into English?
2- Did students manage to render the meaning intended successfully?

2.6. Significant of the Study
This paper is an attempt to evaluate the translation of forty five students in the fourth year in the department of translation at al-Iraqia University. It might help the students to create their own strategies when they are asked to translate a pun from Arabic into English. Furthermore, the research is bound to be a great work in the subfield of Arabic rhetoric. To achieve the goals of this paper, theoretical and descriptive approaches have been applied. The data of the research were taken randomly by the researcher from the novel "Throwing Sparks" by Abdo khal. The students' translations were scrutinized based on Delabastia’s (2004) strategies for pun translation.

2.7. Statement of problem
As has been previously discusses, this figurative of speech overwhelmingly considered to be an incarnation of untranslatability. EFL students at al-Iraqia university in the department of translation are often faced a lot of difficulties when they translating it from Arabic into English. Leech (1969: 209) stated that pun in English is a “foregrounded lexical ambiguity which may have its origin either in homonymy or polysemy”. The problem is that the first part of this definition is closer to that what Arabic pun is, whereas the second part of this definition is not effective in Arabic language. The Arabic pun merely plays on the meaning level of the lexical item.

Cruse (2000:108) set a clear-cut definition for this figurative of speech and linked it to the term ambiguity, he stated that, “these words are multiple senses that exhibit the phenomenon that (we) call antagonism: you cannot focus your attention on two or more readings at the same time. For instance, when you utter or hear the sentence (We finally reached the bank), it is either the “financial institution” or the “river bank” sense that becomes active for the word bank. He adds that “the speaker will have one reading in mind, and the hearer will be expected to recover that reading on the basis of contextual clues: the choice cannot normally be left open”. He (ibid) went further and added that," the speaker will have one reading in mind, and the hearer will be expected to recover that reading on the basis of contextual clues: the choice cannot normally be left open." The students must first understand the meaning hidden behind the word which is applied in a various images mixed with certain degrees of vagueness, witticisms, collocations and illusions. Then, they have to render its meaning using suitable strategies which are made specifically for it.
The novel "Throwing Sparks" is considered as a work of art and it won the Arabic Booker Award. It is a shocking and satirical novel reconnoitering the outrageous impacts of endless wealth in Saudi Arabia. To show his creative technique in writing, the writer adopted very sophisticated style and rarely used words. For instance, the students encountered various challenges when translating the sound of Al athan, Athan Al eshaa and El Eid praying into English.

2.8. Strategies of Pun by Delabastita
Plenty of strategies were established by scholars of translation to help the translators effectively rendering the meaning of pun words. In this research, the researcher used the one that has been proposed by Delabastita (2004), they are:

1- Pun to pun: the source text pun has translated by a target language pun, which may be more or less different from the original wordplay in terms of formal structure, semantic structure, or lexical function.
2- Pun to non-pun: the pun has rendered by a non-punning phrase, which may salvage both senses of wordplay but in a non-punning conjunction, or select one of the meanings at the cost of suppressing the other; of course, it may also occur that both components of the pun have translated beyond recognition.
3- Pun to related rhetorical device: the pun has replaced by some wordplay related rhetorical device (repetition, alliteration, rhyme, referential vagueness, irony, paradox, etc.) which also aims to recapture the effect of the source text pun.
4- Pun to zero: the portion of text containing the pun has simply omitted.
5- Pun ST = pun TT: the translator reproduces the source-text pun and possibly its immediate environment in its original formulation, i.e. without actually translating it. For example, words that are used in both languages, such as (technology and telephone).
6- Non-pun to pun: the translator introduces a pun in textual positions where the original text has no pun, by way of compensation to make up for source text puns lost elsewhere, or for any other reason.
7- Editorial techniques: explanatory footnotes or endnotes, comments provided in translator’s forewords, the anthological presentation of different, supposedly complementary solutions to the same source text problem, and so forth.

2.9. Procedures
Numbers of procedures have been used to achieve the present paper objectives:
- Reading the original text and locating the pun words.
- Identifying the pun words in the novel.
- Comparing the given translated pun words not only with one another, but with the source text.
- Pinpointing the strategies which have been applied by the translator of the Arabic pun words.
- Giving a conclusion based on the abovementioned model.
3. Data analysis and Discussion

In this part of the research, strategies proposed by Delabastita’s (2004) were adopted by the researcher to classify the data collected in this paper and to compare between the translations of the students with the original text. Truth to be told, the study has limited the discussion of the sentences taking from the novel to seven examples. The following prominent examples are presented below:

1. لقلب خفقه واحدة في حياته بعدها نسوا كل الخفقات.
   In this poetic sentence, the pun can be existed in the lexical word (خفقة), the immediate understanding of this pun word by the reader would be (the heart has only one beat) which is the obvious or the visible meaning. It is the punned with meaning. The remote meaning of the pun word is (love or feelings); the far-fetched meaning which is the intended meaning meant by the writer. The writer always gives the reader a hint to complete the meaning of the sentence. The word (قلب) here completes the meaning of this lexical item for the reader.
   The majority of the students were unable to detect the hidden meaning behind the words. For example, some students translate the pun word to (one beat), others did not even translate it and only two students who have translated it successfully, and they used (real love) to render its meaning. Furthermore, literal translation has been used excessively.

2. كننا جرحى ليس شرطا أن تجد دماك تسيل على جلدك.
   The literal translation of this pun word is (real wound), and the remote meaning which is intended by the writer is (affectional, emotional or sentimental injury). The EFL students will not simply grasp the hidden meaning behind the pun word unless they are acquainted with this type of Arabic rhetorical devices. The word (دمبك) comes to set the mood of the sentence and gives a clarification for the word (جزد). The majority of students used their first image came to their mind and chose the first meaning. Only thirteen of them translate it to (emotional) and four of them translated it to (affection). Here, the readers could have grasped the real intention of the writer behind this word pun.

3. غدت المفتاح الضائع الذي يخرج كل من في القصر للبحث عنه.
   The pun here is found in the word (المفتاح الضائع). The literal translation of this phrase would be (the lost key) which is the obvious meaning intended by the writer. The hidden meaning meant by the writer is (fortunate person, victorious person and very important person). As previously mentioned the majority of the students didn’t catch the real meaning behind this pun word and translated it literally. In the Arabic culture, when someone is comparing himself or herself as (المفتاح الضائع) it means that he or she will receive good news or he or she will overcome their difficulties. Obliviously, students did not bother themselves to look for the meaning in the Arabic dictionaries and relied only on their memory about the subject. Besides their grammatical mistakes, disunity and incoherent were emerged.
In the analysis of this poetic sentence, the reader is in front a concise and beautifully designed sentence. It has a unique structure. The pun word or phrase in this sentence is 

4. غمَض عَينيَكَ عَنَ الموت لتَرى الحياة.

The students had two possibilities in front of them. The first one is the obvious meaning of this figurative of speech (to close your eyes from death). The second meaning is usually difficult to understand by the common reader. The far-fetched meaning is (to stop thinking about death). Truth to be told, the pun word here comes in the shape of phrase. All the students did not manage to convey the real meaning of this pun word. They misunderstood the meaning entirely and used literal translation to render its meaning.

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5. شَئٌ يَنكَسر حينما يَقْتَرَف الكَذِب وَنُوَهَم اخْتِرَاءِ الْخَيْرَ.

In this sentence, the word pun lies in the expression (شيء ينكسر). It is the punned with word. The literal translation of this figurative of speech is (fracture or broken of bone). The far-fetched meaning is (emotional, ethical or moral disappointment). The majority of students managed to convey the meaning intended by the writer. Only thirteen of them translated it literally.

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In the abovementioned poetic line, the style of the writer and the choice of the words put a lot of pressure on the students. The pun word here is implied in the two lexical item (تبادل الانكسار). The literal translation of this phrase would be (we gaze eagerly at each other) which represents the obvious or the visible meaning of this lexical item. The remote meaning is (frustration, sadness or even emotional breakdown). Some of the students used (eyes exchange the refraction) to translate its meaning into English, thirteen students translated it as (eyes are like the calmness of the mountains); other students failed to find an equivalent for the word pun and did not translate it. This sentence is filled with Arabic rhetoric devices. It is the voice that students hear when they read or listened to the text when they have read it for the first time.

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6. فَنَو فَنز فَخْ يَمَه ضَو عَه أَمَبوً اَيْخْبَصَ تَنْشَأ الحفرَ فِمْ مِهِتْق مِنَخْصَ عَه سطخ اَيْذَّح تصَوَّه اَيْصَْ.

The phrase (تنشأ الحفر) in the above poetic sentence might be referring to (the pits in the ground) which is the immediate or visible meaning of the text. It could also be indicating (creating hew). These senses are considered as the panned with meaning. The pun, here, is the lexical items (traps or temptations of life) which is the panned to meaning or what is intended by the writer. It is quite clear that unless the word (فخ) is mentioned in this sentence, the students will be unable to understand or detect the hidden meaning in the text. Half of the students managed to extract the far-fetched meaning behind this figurative of speech and translated it correctly into English. They used the word (trap). Some of them did not find an equivalent, and others they simply used literal translation to translate its meaning. To fully comprehend the giving sentence, the students have to be familiar with this type of texts first.
The following table shows the frequent use of the strategies and their percentage:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Examples and strategies</th>
<th>Pun to pun</th>
<th>Pun to non-pun</th>
<th>Pun to related rhetorical device</th>
<th>Pun to zero</th>
<th>Pun ST = pun TT</th>
<th>Non-pun to pun</th>
<th>Editorial techniques</th>
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The above table shows the recurrent use of strategies adopted by the researcher to help the students overcome their difficulties when they were translating this figurative speech from Arabic into English.

**4. Conclusion**

From the analysis, it can be realized that the occurrence of the pun in the Arabic literature generates a significant problem for the EFL students. Consequently, if the students are not aware of the factors that help them to capture the deep meaning, they will be unable to transfer the intended meaning effectively. Obviously, the analysis shows that the EFL students do not have a certain strategy in solving the problem of the Arabic pun words. Furthermore, it seems that relying on considerable remarks is a remarkable strategy to acquaint the meaning of the pun words, but this will confound the students even more. In some cases, there are several interpretations for one word or for one case in the novel. Consequently, it is recommended for the students to relay on at least two of the authorized commentaries and employ them. The selected students did not treat the problem of the pun in the novel carefully. They transferred most of the samples of the pun words into primary sense by using literal and formal translation.

Nevertheless, this paper has managed to find a number of findings, the utmost important are:

- The linguistic system and cultural features between the two languages show a lot of differences in terms of translating, classifying and analyzing pun word from source text (Arabic) into the target text (English).
- The Arabic pun word is based on the idea of having one word or phrase with two meaning. Whereas, the English pun word is often mixed with paronomasia.
- The pun word in Arabic and in English tells the reader or the hearer the integral side of the writer or the teller which reflects on his culture and life experiences.
- Pun word is considered as cultural specific term.
References


