

Translating Jordanian Dysphemizers into English

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Received on: 25-9-2024

Accepted on: 26-2-2025

Abstract

This study examines the cultural and linguistic challenges in translating dysphemisms, used to offend someone, from Jordanian Arabic into English. The main objective is to investigate the cultural and linguistic challenges in translating these dysphemisms. To conduct the study, the researchers use nine examples of Jordanian dysphemisms in specific social contexts to show how they are practically employed to offend others. After the dysphemisms are linguistically, socially, and culturally probed, the study highlights the difficulties of conveying their negative connotations when translating them into English. The study concludes that Jordanian dysphemisms, rooted in religious, literary, and social context, are challenging to translate directly due to cultural specificity. And as such, it is not simple to find equivalents for them with the same negative connotations in a distant language and culture like English.

Keywords: Dysphemizers, Translation, Culture, Arabic, English.

1. Introduction

The functional power of language lies in the practical and influential role it plays in various aspects of human life. Language is a means of conveying information and an effective instrument for expressing social relationships and shaping social reality. Through language, people can show their perspective, understanding of the world of experiences, education level, and character. Thus, language becomes a mirror of its speakers, nation, and individuals. Basically, it has a variety of functions performed in the light of the user's needs, i.e., as a tool for self-expression, to organize social integration in the environment or circumstances and for social control (O'Neill 2008).

According to Halliday (1985), language serves as a means of social interaction and communication; its primary function is to enable individuals to engage in social activities and achieve their social goals. He adds that language choices, such as vocabulary, grammar, and discourse patterns, are influenced by

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* Doi: <https://doi.org/10.47012/jjml.18.1.10>

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and reflect the social context in which communication occurs. It enables individuals to communicate their attitudes, emotions, intentions, and social power. Some scholars such as van Dijk (2008) emphasize how language is used to create and divert opinions, maintain dominance, and control social interactions. Besides, Bourdieu (1991) sheds light on how language proficiency and usage can be a form of social use, control and inequality. Tannen (1990) further explores how language choices, conversational styles, and communication strategies can contribute to power dynamics and influence interactions between individuals.

Although dysphemism is cross-culturally thought of as inherently negative, it can be considered a form of social interaction performed by language. That is because it serves specific communicative and social functions within a given context. Euphemizing is used by speakers as a substitute for one viewed to be too harsh or blunt when referring to something unpleasant or embarrassing. Dysphemizing, however, is substituting a disagreeable, offensive, or disparaging expression for an agreeable or inoffensive or neutral one. According to Darwish (2010, 195) dysphemism is “euphemism in reverse. While euphemism is employed to make negative or offensive things sound less offensive or neutral, dysphemism is employed to make things sound euphemistically offensive or negative”.

Moreover, dysphemisms are expressions or words with negative or derogatory connotations that are often used to criticize, insult, or offend someone. Interlocutors purposefully opt for these linguistic tools to convey their disapproval or to create a negative perception. For example, in English the term “shrink” is used to refer to mental health professionals including therapists, psychologists and psychiatrists. Using euphemizers and dysphemizers in everyday communication sheds light on the close connection between various modes of communication, especially in the daily practice of social interaction between individuals and groups. Heavily dependent on cultural norms and social behavior, the language which people use is bound to be influenced by where they live and the ethnic neighborhoods around them.

Although it is a globally conventional view that pleasure in others' misfortune is severely condemned and considered immoral, people across different cultures are likely to break this ethical rule for a variety of reasons. For example, dysphemistic expressions may also serve as in-group markers to signal closeness despite being employed to shock or offend. Besides, some euphemistic dysphemizers are soft expressions used without offending. Likewise, dysphemistic euphemizers can be used as a mockery between close friends without causing any animosity either. According to Terry (2020, 57) these two in-between terms can be defined as follow “a dysphemistic term that is supposed to be offensive while the illocutionary force is euphemistic- in other words, the intention of the speaker is not to be offensive; by contrast, a euphemistic dysphemism is a euphemistic term in which the illocutionary force is dysphemistic”.

This study draws a set of dysphemistic expressions from the Jordanian setup. The examples under discussion are analyzed in terms of the functions they perform in everyday interactions in addition to their translatability.

2. Statement, Purpose, and Questions of the Study

Almost no aspect of human experience is free from euphemism nor dysphemism. People use them in their everyday interaction to express their emotions and understand others. How speakers of different languages articulate their emotions, whether it is joy, sadness, anger, or love differs cross linguistically and culturally. Euphemizing and dysphemizing are just one realization or manifestation of how language enables us to share our inner experiences with others, fostering empathy and emotional connections or otherwise. Translating Arabic dysphemistic expressions, as is the case in many other languages, might pose serious challenges.

As stemmed and inferred from the discussion above, language and culture are inseparable. That is because the former cannot be fully understood in isolation from the latter of which it is a part and the social relation which it mediates (Hammerly 1983). For instance, cross-culturally, different slang terms are used for dysphemistic functions in one culture; on the other hand, they might have a totally different meaning in other cultures. Within this vein, Nida (1964) states that translating is difficult to discuss in abstraction from the cultures of respective languages since languages are themselves very key components of culture. Translation theorists and linguists attribute this type's difficulties to linguistic gaps between languages under translation, the source language (SL) and target language (TL). As stated above, dysphemizers are culture-specific and thus can pose a real challenge to translators. Like any other culture-related difficulty, the problem of finding equivalents for dysphemizers in the source language is caused by the cultural discrepancies between the two languages in question, Arabic and English. Within this context, Gonzalez (2004, 1) further adds that "the difficulty in decoding cultural signs can be more problematic for the translator than semantic or syntactic difficulties."

As is the case with various world languages, Arabic and English linguistic systems are very different because they belong to two different cultures. This, of course, constitutes one major problem in the general translation process. Sofer (2002) argues that an Arabic translator must be conscious of the generic difficulties while dealing with two different languages like Arabic and English. Hence, a translator is unlikely to carry out the process of rendering appropriately without taking into full consideration these cultural disparities.

The multifarious aspects of cultural differences include the discursive euphemistic and dysphemistic activities.

It should be stated that dysphemisms are heavily influenced by sociolinguistic elements. Thus, they cannot be separated from the social and cultural boundaries. According to Crystal (2008), sociolinguistics can be defined as a branch of linguistics that studies the relationship between language and society. Translating dyphmesims from one culture into another is not an easy task due to cultural and linguistic load. According to Nida (2012, 50) "The crucial problems of effective interlingual communication are not primarily linguistics, but sociolinguistic, because it is in the blend of language and culture, of word and concepts, and of semantics and pragmatics that the real significance of translation and interpretation can be best understood and the principles of sociolinguistics can be most usefully employed".

In the present work, a set of dysphemistic expressions are drawn from Arabic, both the standard and the local varieties, and their translatability or otherwise is discussed. The analysis addresses the types of dysphemism used and the language patterns utilized, examining the lexical choices and rhetorical devices to convey negative meanings. More specifically, answers for the following questions are needed:

1. What are some of the dysphemistic expressions in Standard and Jordanian local Arabic?
2. Why are dysphemisms difficult to translate?

3. Dysphemism and Culture

As mentioned above, almost no aspect of human life is devoid of euphemisms nor dysphemisms. No doubt, every language can demonstrate the culture of the people who use it. Like euphemism, dysphemistic expressions can be an integral part of language, especially the spoken variety, and bear the mark of culture. Similarly, dysphemisms can be easily noticed in people's conversations, and they reflect different levels and patterns of culture and thus can be considered a mirror of it. Hence, it should not be ignored that the use of euphemisms as well as dysphemisms culturally varies because of different history, social customs, values, religions, and moral standards. Hongwei's (1999) concept of mental culture is relevant to this context, which refers to people's mentality and behaviors, their thought patterns, beliefs, conceptions of value, and aesthetic tastes. Cultural differences across all these aspects will lead to dissimilar form and content of dysphemistic and euphemistic expressions in various languages. Depending on from which culture a text is translated to which culture, the amount of using such specific forms of language could change.

Allan and Burrige (2006) explore the cultural aspects of language use and how taboo words and expressions reflect societal norms and values. While addressing the social and cultural aspects of taboo language, focusing on words and expressions that are considered offensive, vulgar, or inappropriate within a given society, they discuss how language reflects and shapes cultural norms, values, and power dynamics. In the same manner, Hughes (2006) stresses the strong influence of social, political, and cultural factors on the creation and usage of offensive language. He further highlights the role of dysphemism in expressing power dynamics, social hierarchies, and group identities. He examines how certain dysphemistic expressions are used to target specific social or ethnic groups, or to establish social boundaries and reinforce societal norms.

The functions dysphemistic expressions perform across different cultures vary depending on the context. These include expressing strong negative emotions or showing contempt towards someone or something. They further can be employed to criticize, demean, or belittle individuals, groups, or ideas. Interlocutors intend to convey their disdain or disapproval by using such offensive or derogatory language.

Moreover, dysphemisms can be utilized to reinforce societal norms or taboos; this is done by associating negative connotations with certain disfavored behaviors or ideas. This form of language serves to discourage or shame others from engaging in behavior deemed inappropriate or unacceptable within a particular social or cultural context. Besides, dysphemisms can serve to bolster group identity or

solidarity. Various terms of this type are used to refer to outsiders or rival groups. Thus members of the same community can create a sense of unity and cohesion within their own group, enhancing an "us versus them" mentality and heightening a sense of belonging among group members.

As for the emotional dimension and catharsis, dysphemizers might be used to release strong emotions through activities or experiences in a way that helps the listeners understand their attitudes. Hence, dysphemisms can provide an outlet for expressing frustration, anger, or other intense emotions. By using strong and offensive language, individuals may find a way to release their pent-up feelings, achieve a sense of emotional catharsis, and communicate their negative emotions more directly and forcefully.

Humor and satire can be among the major social functions realized through dysphemizing. Dysphemisms could be invested in a humorous or satirical manner to create comedic effects or critique certain societal aspects. By purposefully using offensive language, comedians or satirists may aim to provoke laughter, challenge social norms, or highlight insincerity and hypocrisy.

It is important to note that the use of dysphemism is often considered impolite, offensive, or disrespectful in many social settings. While it can serve various social functions, it is crucial to be mindful of the potential consequences and impact of using such language, as it can perpetuate stereotypes, harm relationships, and contribute to a hostile social environment.

4. The Translatability of Dysphemisms

Culture plays a central role in translation, affecting the meaning, usage, and interpretation of words, phrases, and expressions. Cultural translation will be a must when cross-cultural communication occurs. In such communication, misinterpretation is likely to occur if participants are unaware of each other's cultures. To overcome this challenge, translators are expected to possess the skills for effective and correct intercultural interactions. Dysphemisms can be translated to some extent, but the level of translatability depends on various factors, including the specific dysphemism, the languages involved, and the cultural context. The translatability of dysphemism across different languages can vary depending on cultural and linguistic factors. Dysphemisms are often deeply rooted in a specific language and culture, making direct translation challenging. Allan (2018) examines how language can be used as a tool to shield or protect oneself or as a weapon to attack or offend others. She states that the various functions of dysphemism can be evidenced in different contexts like politics, advertising, and media pinpointing their effects on perception and interpretation, and their sociocultural implications.

Dysphemisms are often culturally specific, relying on shared knowledge, values, and social norms that vary cross-culturally. These nuances may not have direct equivalents in other languages. Thus, translating a dysphemistic expression without considering its cultural context may result in loss of meaning or inappropriate translations. Translators should remember that different languages and cultures have varying levels of sensitivity towards certain topics. Within this vein, Pym (2010, 144) states that "The prime cause of cultural translation is the movement of people (subjects) rather than the movement of texts (objects)". For him, cultural translation lies more in processes rather than products.

A highly offensive dysphemistic utterance in one language might not sound equally harsh in another. Translators need to be aware of the cultural implications and potential impact on the target audience when rendering a dysphemistic expression. In some cases, direct translation may convey the intended message. Some dysphemistic expressions can have direct equivalents or near-equivalents in another language. These are often cases where the offensive nature of the term can be adequately conveyed in the target language without significant loss of meaning. However, even in these cases, cultural and contextual considerations are important to ensure that the translated language form retains its intended impact. Yet, direct translation of dysphemisms does not work in many instances because of cultural differences. In this case, translators must adapt the dysphemistic expression to a culturally appropriate equivalent in the recipient language. This could involve finding alternative words, expressions, or strategies that convey a similar unpleasant or derogatory tone while considering the target language's cultural sensitivities and linguistic conventions.

Furthermore, language structure and idiomatic expressions are also key factors as dysphemisms heavily depend on a language's unique linguistic structures and idiomatic expressions. Therefore, the literal translation may not capture the intended meaning or the emotional impact. Translators may need to find alternative ways to convey the unfavored connotations. The socio-historical context is another cultural dimension that has a decisive input into translating dysphemisms. Dysphemisms are likely to be affected by socio-historical events and specific periods. The historical background and cultural allusions embedded in dysphemistic language may not be easily translatable, as they require contextual understanding that may not exist in the target language. Consequently, creative adaptation is a way out for this problem. In some cases, translators may need to resort to creative adaptation rather than direct translation. Considering cultural sensitivities and linguistic peculiarities, they might opt for different words, expressions, or strategies to convey a similar offensive tone in the target language. In summary, the translatability of dysphemism across languages requires careful consideration of cultural, linguistic, and contextual factors. Professional translators should have a deep understanding of both the source and target languages and the cultural nuances to appropriately convey the intended meaning and emotional impact of dysphemistic language.

Another way out for the challenge of rendering dysphemisms into another language resorted to by a translator is the strategy of explanation or paraphrasing. In cases like these, translators may opt to provide an explanation or paraphrase the meaning of the dysphemistic term to deliver negatively equivalent connotations in a more culturally adequate way. This approach is thought to preserve the impact and intention of dysphemism despite the difference of the linguistic form.

5. Findings and Discussion

Euphemizers are formulae that are employed to soften the impact of mentioning a taboo or a socially non-preferred expression involving reference to topics such as death, betrayal, failure, and objectionable animals/items (Farghal 2012). In contrast, dysphemizers are fixed expressions, phrases or sentences that are employed to show one's joy, gloating, or glee over another's misfortune. In Arabic, dysphemizers can

Translating Jordanian Dysphemizers into English

have different forms, and they all reflect someone's happiness or joy over others' misfortune. They can be an idiom, a verse, a saying, a proverb, involving in some cases irony from the side of gloaters. Due to cultural differences and social variations, translating dysphemizing expressions or phrases from Arabic into English is not easy as bridging remote cultures is not always possible.

Some of the examples considered below are proverbs and common public sayings, derived from the local culture. Proverbs and sayings hold a significant place in Arabic culture and are deeply ingrained in the daily lives of Arabs. They carry out a crucial function in social interaction and communication, expressing wisdom, loaded with cultural values, and social norms. Like idiomatic expressions and figures of speech which are deeply rooted in culture, proverbs and folkloric sayings can be challenging to translate. These linguistic forms often have culturally specific meanings that may not be readily understood in another language. Therefore, translators need to find equivalent expressions or rephrase them to translate the intended meaning effectively. Following are representative examples that stem from various dysphemizing sources, namely proverbs, verses of the Qur'an, and poetry.

5.1 *على نفسها جنت براقش* (lit. *Baraghish (female dog) has afflicted herself by herself*).

Countries, communities, groups or even individuals may undergo certain calamities of different types, politically, economically, criminally, or militarily in case of wars. When such bodies, organizations and persons are hated and loathed by others, the latter would not sympathize with them and may even go further to wish them more disparaging consequences.

One may be troubling, distressing, and disquieting by nature. This raises hatred from those around him to the extent that such people would wish him a tragedy or death. To exemplify, Rashid is always making trouble for neighbors, and no one has the courage to stop him. One day, Rashid tried to make a fight with Ahmed who was passing by, without noticing that the opponent had a pistol. Fighting with Ahmed in such a barbaric way pushed Ahmed to take out the pistol and shoot him to die on the spot. After the news had spread like wildfire, the neighbors expressed their glee and malicious joy by saying the proverb (*Baraghish (female dog) has afflicted herself by herself*) as a way of expressing happiness and pleasure. This proverb implies that one should be responsible for his deeds and behaviors.

The proverb's social and cultural implications and allusions stem from the novelty or an incident where a group of thieves decided to attack a village, who keep a female dog called *Baraghish*. It was night and the attacking group could not locate the people of the village who hid themselves in a nearby cave. When the thieves fed up from the search, they decided to retreat from the place. The disaster happened when *Baraghish* barked and uncovered the secrecy of the people's location. At once, the thieves shot all the people and *Baraghish*, the female dog itself to die all without exception. The proverb above was released to describe the scene or the incident.

Literal translation of the dysphemizing proverb into English does not relay the meaning in the receptive culture for many reasons. First, the sense of hatred and detestation of others cannot be reflected likewise in the western culture, where people may reflect their anger by registering a case in courts, for example, to stop outlaws from creating social problems. In addition, the proverb is culturally loaded with meanings; dogs are kept in the eastern culture for protection and guarding, and killing them in such a

barbaric manner is something normal for many people. In the western culture, however, dogs and pets are given more care and are kept for other purposes like companionship. The stigma brought on *Baraghish* for barking has made it an example of stupidity and lack of wisdom which cannot be acceptable in the west.

Thus, the loss of translation resulting from social and cultural differences cannot be easily compensated, compared to loss resulting from linguistic differences. Dickins et al (2002, 29) say that “general cultural differences are sometimes bigger obstacles to successful translation than linguistic differences”. For compensation of the whole social and cultural gap and vacuum, translators should make reference to the incident itself, and should give enough details about the people of the source culture. More importantly, the joy and happiness and the audience’s response for one’s disaster entailed in the dysphemizing proverb cannot be preserved in the English translation *to hell*, for example, which is a great translation loss.

5.2 الى حيث القت رحلها أم قشعم (lit. to where *Um Ghash'am* has laid its load)

Arabic literature is rich in proverbs that are based on incidents inherited and transmitted through generations. The example under discussion is a case in point. In situations of travelling, death, stepping down from a position, and even in tragedies, people sometimes express their feeling gloatingly. In third world countries on the main, individuals usually dispute issues that are unjustly resolved due to the deactivation of laws and regulations; some people do not get their rights fully, and others are biased because of certain powers and patronages, considered for some parts. Thus, unjust situations create a feeling of hatred and eagerness to avenge, or at least begets an outlet to invoke for disasters befalling oppressors.

Idiomatization of poetry is used in Jordanian Arabic to reflect a certain attitude when someone or some people are befallen with a calamity or a tragedy. To exemplify, Jordanians have suffered because the successive governments have failed to resolve the economic problems. As a result of demonstrations and in response to the pressure staged in streets, the monarch dissolved more than a government. To express happiness or pleasure for the decision, Jordanians would recite the inherited half hemistich (الى (حيث القت رحلها أم قشعم) (lit. to where *UmGhash'am* has laid its load). This phrasal dysphemizer is used in Jordanian Arabic to show people’s smugness and malignant for dissolving the government. The phrase is used as a metaphor in Arabic to mean death or no return. It is an invocation-like phrase to wish those who were once in charge to die or at least not to return to office once again.

Literal translation of the hemistich into English as ‘to where *Um Ghash'am* (death) has laid its load’ will not convey the real sense loaded in the dysphemizing phrase. This will not also reflect the people’s inner feelings; therefore, enough explanatory details are needed to convey such disparage, humiliation, and curses; insulation and wishing the worst, expressed in the phrasal dysphemizer can be perceived in the Arabic utterance to wish spiritual and psychological injury of the hated people.

Also, the functional translation *to hell* of the current example can relay the purpose of the dysphemizer, but other related variables will remain unrendered. Details of *Um Ghash'am* as a connotation of death, bad consequences of battles, no return among many others, are necessary to uncover the exact meaning. Not only this, the injustice and the unfair distribution of property are other associations of bodies and individuals. That should be explained, as such situations are the main motivators that push people to utter such a dysphemizing phrase. Another fact that should be explicated here is that many people do not understand the meaning of the individual elements of the phrase in Arabic. This creates a real translation challenge for the dysphemization entailed in the example under discussion.

5.3 *ولا تحسبن الله غافلا عما يفعل الظالمون* (*Think not that Allah doth not heed the deeds of those who do wrong*)

Jordan is a Muslim country though there is a Christian minority that is influenced by the Islamic culture, to the extent of using Qur'anic verses or prophetic sayings in daily life. The fact that disputes erupt sometimes between Jordanians over certain issues has influenced them linguistically when expressing contradictory views. When someone in office, known as unjust, is said to be afflicted or befallen with a disaster, people would show their joy by uttering certain Quranic verses that echo their reaction, like the one under discussion.

In this example, the verse is uttered as incomplete because the completion is (*إنما يؤخرهم ليوم تشخص*) *إنما يؤخرهم ليوم تشخص* (*ففيه الأبصار*) which Ali (2003, 142) translates as (He but giveth them respite against the day when the eyes will fixedly stare in horror). This shows that the dysphemized people are delayed, for punishment, to the Day of Resurrection. In other words, speakers want the disaster to happen immediately. Literal translation of the verse deprives it from the dysphemization implications expressed by Jordanians. To partly preserve the dysphemizing sense and influence, there should be a similar discourse in the receptive culture in the first place. This is very difficult to create due to political, economic, social, and religious differences. In such a translation, including the verse in a target language receptive discourse would seem nonsense and redundant and would be a wordy load.

To resolve such a translation challenge, cultural, social, religious, and semantic and pragmatic details should be provided to reflect the social malevolent and spiteful joy for what has happened to a person or a group of people. The gloaters' ironic use of the verse reflects the size of anger or wrath of those concerned and shows the unpleasant joy and gladness over the bad luck of the people in question; this feeling is not easy to recreate in the receptive language due to possible misconception and miscomprehension.

5.4 *الى جهنم وبئس المصير* (*lit. to hell and evil is their destination*).

People's interactions and the type of relationship draw the kind of connections between them. When fights or problems between people occur, bad relations raise, and each party wishes the misfortune and the bad of luck to the other. In Jordanian Arabic, one way of expressing one's joy or glee upon hardships

afflicting opponents is dysphemization. Proverbs and idiomatic expressions, derived from different sources such as the Qur'anic verses can be manipulated to show hatred and exulting of language users in certain situations.

In the example under discussion, reference to the Qur'an is made to reflect a speaker's inner feeling towards someone caught by a disaster. Some modification on the verse is made to suit the situation, where no reference is made to the unbelievers. The Qur'anic verse is (وللذين كفروا بربهم عذاب جهنم وبئس المصير), which Ali (2003, 1498) translates as "For those who reject their Lord (The cherisher) is the penalty of hell, and evil is (such) destination". The part of the verse, which is modified and employed as (الى جهنم) (الى جهنم وبئس المصير lit. to hell and evil is their destination). The gloater wishes the afflicted person an immediate and a swift entry to hell.

To situationally exemplify the dysphemizing expression, X is known as an extremely bad manager though not an owner of a car company. He does not pay the employees their salaries in the proper time; he many times sacked out some of them without a reason, and more importantly pays very low wages. Hearing about his way of dealing with the employees of the company, the owner decided to terminate the contract of the manager. To express their joy after the news spread, an employee said (الى جهنم وبئس المصير) lit. to hell and evil is their destination. In fact, many users of the dysphemizing part of the verse do not know that it is Qur'anic; they rather think that it is a proverb, and that idea or thought might be due to the slight modification made on the verse under discussion.

Translating the current dysphemizer into English is hard to achieve for many reasons. First, people in the west live in states of law, and they are given their financial rights, for example, without deductions or delays. In western countries, if an employee is not paid fully, he would raise a case in the court against the company to get his financial rights. Thus, dysphemizing expressions are not commonly used in the same manner as in the Arab World. Hence, a real dysphemizer's translation loss is expected in the target culture. Socially, people in the two cultures belong to two different mentalities; whereas Arabs such as Jordanians are influenced by the Qur'anic discourse, secular people in the west do not resort to that type of dysphemizing source. This religious component is again not relayed in the receptive language. Besides, the size of malignant pleasure in the Arab World cannot be reflected similarly in the receptive culture, due to many discrepancies between the audience of the source discourse and those of the target discourse.

5.5 وهل جزاء الإحسان الا الإحسان (Is there any reward for good-other than good)

One fashion of expressing an attitude or a feeling toward an individual is the use of irony. Words or utterances are employed to express something other than that of literal meaning. Irony is used in order to convey a certain message stronger and sometimes clearer for those who share the same situation or setting, and those sharing similar experiences. In ordinary language, sardonic language creates strong semantic power that results in real emotive pressure on the audience. This emotive power is plain in using the religious discourse to show a speaker's delight over one's calamity.

Translating Jordanian Dysphemizers into English

Jordanians use formulaic expressions to harden the impact of hardships afflicting opponents. The current expression is religious and has gained its proverbial form from its frequency among people. It can be safely stated that the verse is thought as a proverb-like formula between all social classes regardless of their educational level or social position. To practically test the dysphemizers, let us have this example: X is known as too greedy, covetous, and materialistic. He has never donated even a penny in any benevolent projects or helped needy people. One day, he got up early and found that his mall is completely burnt out. Hearing about this, Y ironically said *وهل جزاء الإحسان الا الإحسان* (Is there any reward for good-other than good). The use of this proverbial-like part of the verse reflects the real joy of Y when being informed that the mall is burnt.

Regarding translation, the Arabic ironic dysphemizer manipulated in the verse is difficult to translate into English due to many linguistic and cultural problems. Chakhachiro (2009, 32) is quoted as saying: "It seems an arduous, if not impossible task to tackle the analysis and translation of irony from a linguistic perspective. The linguistic and cultural differences between languages reflect discrepancies in the way speakers employ irony to express themselves. This renders the translation of irony as elusive as the concept of irony in itself and not amenable to traditional translation theories".

Because of the clear differences at the cultural and linguistic levels, more than a translation strategy can be followed, let us say semantic and communicative (Newmark 1988), formal and dynamic translation (Nida 1964), and overt and covert translation House (1977). The audience of the source text and the audience of the target text should have a communal agreement on the size of effect that speaker and the translator aim to create. Translating the above verse into *to hell* deprives it from the dysphemizing sense or power in such a functional translation. According to Chakhachiro (2009), ironic devices are elemental and powerful devices of an original text that must be equally communicated. Both the writer's deviant stylistic choices and the reader's responses ought to be negotiated in the process and each militates against the other. However, the substantial formal changes required to achieve functional equivalence run the risk of obliterating the source-text writer's idiosyncratic stylistic manipulation. This applies to the omission of some part of the verse which is functional socially and culturally.

On the whole, the dysphemizer is uttered to express people's bragging and self-satisfaction over one's disaster. Meanings such as disparage, humiliation, curses, and degrading can be observed in the utterance to insult and wound the hated people. In other words, interlocutors resort in an ironic manner to using the verse as a dysphemizer to show one's glee for another's sadness and grief. Implicitly, meanings such as disparage, humiliation, curses, and degrading can be observed in the utterance to insult and wound the hated people. The English possible dysphemistic expression equivalent *to hell* partly conveys the meaning. That is due to social, cultural, and religious differences which cannot be palliated but by the provision of enough details, which is a translation strategy that is adapted when clear differences exist between different cultures.

5.6 يداك أوكتا وفوك نفخ (lit. *your hands have tied the bladder/goat-skin bag and your mouth has filled it with air*)

People pass through difficult situations. The harder the situation is, the unforgettable it is. However, indirectly, events are transmitted from one generation into another through the formation of proverbs that suit the event and help in the memorization of the incident. Proverbs thus may be a way of keeping a real experience and the truthfulness of man's knowledge. What might be true is that some proverbs are internationally shared due to similar experiences that people come across.

The proverb is used in classical Arabic and is still used until now; it can be understood mainly by versed people. The proverb is set to describe nomads who are said to have lived on an island that is separated from other islands by a gulf. Some of the nomads tried to sail to other islands and there were no boats. They filled their goat-skin bags with air to help them swim onto the next island. A nomad was surprised when his bag got loose, and its mouth opened and got unfilled from air. When he asked for help, another said *your hands have tied the bladder/goat-skin bag and your mouth has filled it with air*, which means you are responsible for the consequences.

In Jordanian Arabic, the proverb of the story is uttered when people blame someone for what happens to him and attribute to him all bad luck and misfortune. Dysphemizing the situation comes as a result of bad relationships between the interlocutors. The simplest way of avenging for Jordanians, especially the ordinary ones, is invoking a blow to hit an oppressor. To exemplify, X is known as a briber, and therefore wins all the bids provided by a certain authority. He cheats in the work and people complain from the bad quality of his constructions. One day, he made a visit to one of the schools, and when he was in the third floor, the building collapsed and he died immediately. Notified in that disaster, Y overjoyed and happily said (يداك أوكتا وفوك نفخ).

Regarding translation, the dysphemizing statement is not easy to convey into a completely different culture. The real desire of calamities to befall someone in the Jordanian culture cannot be similarly perceived in the receptive language due to many sociocultural perspectives. Whereas invocations of bad luck are a possible way of avenging for loss of people's rights in the Jordanian culture, law is applied on those who devour such rights in the western culture. Besides, the dysphemizers are absent or rare in the English-speaking countries, and *to hell* in such countries does not bear to relay all social connotations. In addition, the literal translation *your hands have tied the bladder/goat* associated with *skin bag and your mouth has filled it with air* would look completely unacceptable in the target language and culture and only explanatory details can compensate any translation loss.

5.7 جاجه حفرت على راسها عفرت (lit. *A hen has dug in earth and filled its head with dirt*).

What makes a certain incident easy to recall is being described by a piece of poetry, an idiom, or a proverb. The formation of proverbs and structuring them are based on the environment, and the language user, who created them. Words employed in such a formation are derived from nature, which is why a strong link can be observed in proverbs; also, how the proverb is formed depends on the user and how he

employs words to describe the scene. Proverbs are normally employed to provide a piece of advice or express the truth. Jordanians use proverbs to express their feelings toward certain people; sometimes, they use proverbs as dysphemizers in which they uncover the immense feeling of hatred and odium against certain people. The proverb under discussion is a case in point.

Uttering the Arabic dysphemizing proverb, *a hen has dug in earth, and filled its head with dirt* to describe a person overwhelmed by a calamity, reveals the size of hatred in the heart of the speaker. The illustration of the social and cultural meaning can be shown in the following example: X has been working in a factory for more than fifteen years; he used to work as an agent to the manager against some money, and many employees have lost their jobs. The manager retired and a new manager was appointed. Thinking that the new manager accepts his agency, he reported to him about some workers. Instead of taking an action against the workers, the manager immediately terminated the contract of X. The news spread among all employees; one expressed his feeling by uttering *a hen has dug in earth and filled its head with dirt*. Using this saying to express the speaker's feeling implies that the spectators know all its social and cultural perspectives and implications, and do not have any problem in grasping its situational meaning.

Translating the dysphemizing proverb into English as *to hell* collides with many sociocultural problems. Ecologically, dirt in the Jordanian culture easily erupts when dug by the hock of hens; the claws are strong and hard, and thus, dusting the head with earth erupting from the ground is easy. The scene in western culture cannot be completely imitated as the land is almost wet all the year round. As far as dysphemization is concerned, which is the main theme here, the feeling of hatred, shown in uttering the proverb to reflect the general feeling against X cannot be felt likewise. In addition, the literal meaning looks odd, and does not portray the sense of abhorrence. Enough details and clear description of the scene are the only guarantee to ensure full understanding in the receptive language since the functional translation *to hell* is not enough.

Translating dysphemisms can be challenging between distant languages, like Arabic and English. Therefore, explaining or paraphrasing some dysphemistic expressions a strategy because of the linguistic and cultural values they hold. In such cases, translators may choose to provide an explanation or paraphrase the meaning of the dysphemisms to convey their unpleasant connotations in an appropriate way. Translators consciously resort to this approach as it ensures that the impact and intention of the dysphemistic expressions are preserved, even if the specific linguistic form is not.

5.8. *الله يمهل ولا يمهل (Allah delays but does not neglect)*

Resorting to dysphemism can be through one's patience and waiting for Allah's fair punishment or affliction on the dysphemized person or persons. Dysphemization can in this sense be a final remedy, when injustice is practiced upon tyrannized or oppressed people. It reflects the size of frustration that one reaches when his rights, for example, are not given to him. The following exemplifying situation illustrates the point.

Samir borrowed a sum of money from Ammar to build a project to have a decent life and promised to repay the money back after two years. After the two years had passed, Samir denied the money, and

rejected the idea of repayment. The project failed after some years, and the court issued a verdict to prison Samir in the charge of fraud and deception. When Ammar heard about that, he instantly said “Allah delays but does not neglect”.

The Jordanian Arabic saying is socially and culturally comprehended. Its function is understood by all people, regardless of their position, social status, age, economic status and level of education. The religious impact is very clear in Jordanian culture, where people refer to All in all their situations. This is completely different from the Western secular culture. Literal translation the current example of dysphemization into English collides with many social and cultural challenges. Similarly, translating it functionally as *to hell* also does not reflect the size of agony and consequently the hatred that drives someone to say it. Explanation and supporting details are the only way to guarantee the reflection of the dysphemization embedded in the Jordanian saying.

5.9. اللّٰي بَتَقْدَمُهٗ بِيَدِكَ الْيَمِيْنِ بِتَلْقَاهُ بِيَدِكَ الشَّمَالِ (what you give with the right, you receive in the left)

Colloquialism is very popular among Jordanians when they express their wishes for others to get afflicted by disasters. Colloquial idioms can be a variant of other standard idioms that are used in Arabic and English cultures. The idiom under discussion is a case in point. It is the variant of the Arabic idiom *كما تزرع تحصد* which fully corresponds to the English idiom, *as you sow so shall you reap*.

In Jordanian Arabic as well as in English, the idiom means that the consequences of one’s actions to oneself are in proportion to his or her good or bad intentions towards others. The idiom in the current example has different wording, and it often entails the wishes of good or bad consequences to others. However, the context decides that as shown in the following illustrative job situation: Khalid got BA degree in medicine and applied for a job in one of the hospitals. However, the chief refused to hire him due to some family problems. As a result, Khalid raised an issue in the court against the chief. The court issued a decision to terminate the job of the chief who was charged of many corrupt issues including the opposition of appointing Khalid who is eligible.

Khalid and his family heard about the court decision and happily altogether uttered اللّٰي بَتَقْدَمُهٗ بِيَدِكَ الشَّمَالِ. The functional translation of the Jordanian colloquial idiomatic expression into English *as you sow so shall you reap* can relay the meaning in English. However, the social situations are different. Whereas getting a job, for example, is not subject to fair criteria in third world countries like Jordan, it is subject to that in the west. As a result, resorting to dysphemization, which is the main theme of the study, cannot be similarly influential in the target language. Social and cultural context should be explained together with the functional or the literal translation of the dysphemizer in the receptive culture.

6. Conclusion

This study has investigated Jordanian desphymizers from social, cultural and translational perspectives. It has shown that Jordanian desphymizers are drawn from different sources such as religion, poetry and sayings. The study has shown that it is too difficult to convey the implications of Jordanian

Translating Jordanian Dysphemizers into English

desphemizers. It has also pointed out that such expressions are context-specific, often reflecting specific religious or social circumstances. As a result, translating them requires linguistic proficiency and a deep understanding of the cultural nuances and connotations associated with them.

The study has concluded that translators must carefully consider the target language and culture, adapting or explaining the dysphemizers as necessary to ensure that their negative nature is effectively conveyed. To overcome these challenges, translators should possess a strong command of both the source and target languages, in-depth cultural knowledge, and sensitivity to the social and historical contexts in which the dysphemizers are used. It has also revealed that dysphemisms in Jordanian culture are stemmed from different sources and they have different variants. Since the dysphemisms are culturally and socially specific, explanatory details and footnoting, in addition to functional translation can be suitable procedures to translate them into English.

ترجمة تعابير الشماتة من العربية الى الإنجليزية

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الملخص

تناقش هذه الدراسة التحديات اللغوية والثقافية اثناء ترجمة تعابير الشماتة المستخدمة في اللهجة الأردنية الى اللغة الإنجليزية. ولإجراء الدراسة استخدم الباحثون تسعة أمثلة من تعابير الشماتة المستخدمة في الأردن وتوظيفها في سياقات اجتماعية محددة لبيان كيفية استخدامها عمليا للشماتة بالآخرين. وبعد مناقشة هذه التعابير لغويا واجتماعيا وثقافيا، بينت الدراسة صعوبة نقل الدلالات السلبية لهذه التعابير أثناء ترجمتها للإنجليزية. لقد توصلت الدراسة الى أن لتعابير الشماتة الأردنية جذور دينية وأدبية واجتماعية، ما يجعل ترجمتها مباشرة من الصعوبة بمكان، وذلك لمحدداتها الثقافية. وعليه فقد بينت الدراسة أن إيجاد المكافئ لتعابير الشماتة بنفس الدلالات السلبية ليس سهلا في اللغة الإنجليزية.

الكلمات المفتاحية : مفردات الشماتة، الثقافة، الترجمة، العربية، الانجليزية.

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Translating Jordanian Dysphemizers into English

Terry, Adeline. 2010. Euphemistic dysphemism and dysphemistic euphemism as means to convey irony and banter. *Language and Literature* 29: 57-75. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0963947020910624>