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Translating the English Punctuation Marks (as Visual Metadiscourse) into Arabic

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A R T I C L E I N F O

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A B S T R A C T

In translating a certain text, one has to be well aware of the importance of sound translation of punctuation marks due to their critical role in the translation product. Appropriate use of punctuation marks in the SL should be reflected likewise in the TL. Meaning is often guided by these marks. In this research, an attempt is made to shed light on some aspects related to these marks, their numbers and how they are translated from English into Arabic. Besides, this research focuses on the relationship between these marks and the concept of visual metadiscourse and how they are translated from the metadiscourse point of view. In the present research, ten texts translated from English / Arabic are checked against Newmark's (1988) model of punctuation which is adopted in this research. The objective is to see how accurate, clear and natural the translations are. The research at hand investigates the semantic as well as pragmatic role played by punctuation marks and how that is reflected on translation concluding that much more attention should be paid to the translation of punctuation marks.

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ترجمة علامات الترقيم الانجليزية (كادخالات خطابية مرئية) الى العربية

م. محمود احمد محمود الحريثي / كلية الآداب/ جامعة الموصل

الخلاصة:

على المترجم أن يدرك تماما، عند ترجمته لنص ما أهمية ترجمة علامات الترقيم بشكل سليم نظرا للدور الذي تلعبه في الترجمة. إن الاستخدام الصحيح لهذه العلامات في النص الأصل يجب أن ينعكس بالمثل على النص الهدف. فغالبا ما تدير هذه العلامات المعنى. و في البحث الحالي، ثمة محاولة للإشارة الى بعض النواحي المتعلقة بهذه العلامات و ؛إعدادها و كيفية ترجمتها من الانجليزية الى العربية. علاوة على ذلك، فالبحث هذا يركز على العلاقة بين هذه العلامات و ما يسمى بالإدخالات الخطابية المرئية و كيفية ترجمتها من منظور المدخلات الخطابية. و يتناول البحث الحالي عشر نصوص مترجمة عن الانجليزية و قد تم فحصها باستعمال نموذج العالم نيومارك عام (١٩٨٨) و الخاص بالترقيم المتبع في هذه الدراسة. و الغرض من الدراسة هو قياس دقة و وضوح الترجمات. ويتناول البحث ايضا الدور

الدلالي و البراغماطيقي لعلامات الترقيم و كيفية انعكاس ذلك على الترجمة متوصلا الى أن من الواجب ان يولي المترجمون انتباه اكثر لترجمة علامات الترقيم.

1.1. Introduction

Grammar books normally contain elaborated passages about individual punctuation marks. The common approach to study punctuation is to employ a prescriptive treatment of punctuation, that is, lengthy lists of rules for sound punctuation are provided, however the actual practice is not tackled (IJCL: 1998). The present study is an attempt to investigate some of the differences existing between Arabic and English systems of punctuation.

Punctuation plays a crucial role in determining the meaning of some texts. Punctuation, if misused or used haphazardly, would result in misunderstanding the text at hand and consequently the translation of that text would be inappropriate. Mogahed (2010: 2), argues that there are numerous instances of difference between the languages of the world as far as these marks are concerned, for example, Arabic and English have many differences in this respect. He states that punctuation marks in English, are sometimes translated into conjunctions in Arabic which is the TL. At the same time, (Fathi, 2020: 623) argues that Arabic tends to be more explicit than English.

1.2. The Concept of Punctuation Marks

Punctuation marks are regarded as the nuts and bolts of writing. Text unity is brought about by their virtue. Further, some scholars view these marks as a part of metadiscourse (Crismore, 1989). Newmark (1988: 58) mentions that punctuation is potent and easily overlooked. Mahdiyan (2012: 25) perceives that inadequate punctuation makes the text reader confused and forces him to iterate reading the text so many times to grasp the intended meaning of the writer. Similarly, haphazard use of punctuation marks can be overwhelming for the

reader. Thus, sound application of these marks is of grave importance for translators considering the vital and decisive role they play in meaning transfer from the source to the target texts.

Generally speaking, punctuation aids the readers to understand the flow of the written discourse via breaking it down into less complicated components. Greenbaum and Nelson (2002: 9) believe that there are some rules that readers should adhere to. For instance, there should not be a comma between a subject and a predicate unless it is the first of a pair of commas. They also believe that such a case depends on the grammar of a sentence, i.e., the analysis of the sentence into subject and predicate. Some punctuation rules rely on grammar and others on meaning. In this sense, punctuation has a semantic function.

1.3. Translation and Punctuation Marks?

In general, translation is a process whereby the translator decodes the message sent by the (SL) writer and encodes it to the (TL) reader in a way that similar intended meanings and effects are constructed between the two languages (Fathi, 2020: 616). As for the translation of punctuation marks, it has been investigated by many scholars. However, concerning the translation from English into Arabic which is the object of this study, several scholars agree that English punctuation marks are rendered into Arabic not as punctuations but as words and phrases. Baker (2011: 193) views that Arabic language confirms to norms of cohesion by using typical Arabic conjunctions, i.e., English punctuation marks are rendered into Arabic by cohesive metadiscourse devices.

The problem encountered by translators who translate from and to English and Arabic is that there is some difference in the use of conventional punctuation. This research sheds light on those differences in punctuation in the English language and how they are reflected in the Arabic language. Despite the fact that both English and Arabic share several of the basic punctuation marks

as periods, commas, question marks and exclamation marks, Arabic has, at times, methods to express what is meant in the SL text by means other than punctuation marks (Al-Qinai: 2013). There are some marks in English such as quotation marks and parentheses that have been used in Arabic, yet other marks as is the case with apostrophes and semicolons have rarely if ever been used in original Arabic (ibid: 3). In this research, however, some of the English punctuation marks are either deleted or replaced by some visual metadiscourse markers. This study sheds light on the way meaning, expressed in punctuation marks in the SL (English), is reconstructed by virtue of visual metadiscourse markers in the TL-Arabic, thus preserving the intended meaning of the text producer in the TL.

1.4. Punctuation Marks, Metadiscourse and Visual Metadiscourse

Metadiscourse is an umbrella term and a thorny area of study. It has been tackled from different viewpoints. It is simply interpreted as "discourse about discourse" or "talk about talk" (Li Fa-gen, 2012: 846). Some scholars such as (Ifantidou, 2005, p.1326 and Van Kopple, 1985, p.83) tackle metadiscourse from the perspective of words and expressions. Some relate the functions of metadiscourse according to punctuation marks (Hyland & Tese, 2004, p. 157). There are some scholars who discuss it from the perspective of visual metadiscourse.

Concerning visual metadiscourse, Kumph (2000: 401) states that the visual metadiscourse devices can be represented by punctuation marks. Visual metadiscourse devices, thus, have textual and interpersonal functions because they organize the textual elements of the text and signal the reader how to get the intention of the text producer. Visual metadiscourse can provide design criteria for writers considering the needs and expectations of readers, and help

construct the ethos of writers. Hurst (1991) generally remarks that visual metadiscourse can show information which is not easily expressed in words.

Visual marks are included as they convey meaning to the readers as words do (Fathi, 2005: 71). In order to grasp the intended meaning of the text, readers should go beyond the phrases and words in the text, especially punctuation metadiscourse. Items included in this category are hyphens, colons, semicolons, quotation marks, inverted commas, question marks.. etc. (Fathi, 2005: 71). The table below illustrates some of the visual metadiscourse markers:

	Punctuation marks	Semantic field	Types of PM
Visual Metadiscourse	Hyphen	Comment, specify, or define preceded proposition	Brown stepped aside in favor of the slicker more nakedly ambitious and more electable Blari
	Colons	Explain what preceded by proposition	Two basic approaches to prevent Iran from going nuclear: coercion and engagement
	Semicolons	Imply a relation between	Japanese officials…

		propositions without stating that relation to engage reader	could normalize relations; the talk was of sums ranging up to 10$ billion
	Inverted Commas	Give special effect or indicate irony	Jang Song was "purged" from the senior leadership
	Quotations	Set off material quoted from others	Blair made a point of saying "I hope to go on and on and on"
	Question Marks	When an answer is not expected (rhetorical)	So how long will Blair go on?

Table (1-1): Fathi's (2005: 73) Visual Metadiscourse Markers

Regarding the relationship between visual metadiscourse and punctuation marks, Catford (1965) refers to the visual effect of punctuation and the resulting reflections on translation. He (1965: 62) believes that a graphological translation, the translation of punctuation marks in this study, is not an easy task (ibid).

El-Shiyab (n.d: 115) states that punctuation can be placed inside the domain of pragmatics, i.e., under metadiscourse. The meaning of some utterance is known from the writer's intention. This leads to the conclusion that punctuation marks, besides its ordinary usages, point to the writer's tone and

intentions embedded within the text. A comma, for example, makes a great difference in meaning; consider the two sentences:

A- A six-month-old calf was submitted for examination, showing lameness in all four legs which had been present since after birth.

B- A six-month-old calf was submitted for examination, showing lameness in all four legs, which had been present since after birth.

(Kirkman, 2006: 39)

It can be noticed that the first sentence is restrictive while the second is non-restrictive. This is steered by the comma. The former provides no new information; the latter, by contrast, entails some new information. This is reflected on the translations as follows:

أ- تم تقديم عجل عمره ستة اشهر للفحص جميع ارجله عرجاء و هي كذلك منذ ولادته.

ب- تم تقديم عجل عمره ستة اشهر للفحص و تبين بعد الفحص ان جميع ارجله عرجاء و هي كذلك منذ ولادته.

So in the second sentence, the addition of (و تبين) is a must and it is an instance of metadiscourse item. This addition suggests that Arabic is more elaborative than English.

1.5. Arabic Punctuations V.S English Punctuations

Languages differ drastically in sentence making features and the translator should be conscious of the subtle differences emerging when translating from one language into another. In this respect, Baker (1992: 151) stresses that in addition to the syntactic structure, punctuation marks may be employed to signal information structure in written language and that different languages employ various devices that communicate information within the text and the translator ought to be sensitive in the course of translation.

A big part is played by punctuation in the interpretation of a text to be translated. Thus, misuse of it or haphazard use would lead to misunderstanding the text at hand and so comes up with a wrong or distorted translation. In this regard, the famous American writer Edger Poe (1848: 197) says " the writer who neglects punctuation, or mispunctuates, is liable to be misunderstood ". The writer/ author should pay due regard to punctuation marks and not employ them randomly, by the same token, the translator ought to care for them before embarking on translating the text they are used in (Mogahed, 2012: 2). English and Arabic have distinct differences in the use of punctuation marks; thus the translator translating from one of them to the other should be well aware of the differences between them (ibid.).

Chejne (1969) states that ancient Arabic writing contained a well-defined system that illustrates punctuation marks. Chejne mentions that diacritical marks for distinguishing similar letters appeared in the 17th century. In the same vein, Al-Qinai (2013) adds that due to the fact that Arabic was, originally, a spoken, not written, language that depends upon audible intonational patterns, those written representations of punctuation marks were not that prominent and up to this day they follow no defined rule-governed system as is the case with the English language. Al-Qinai (ibid) maintains that some source text (English) punctuation marks are translated or transferred in Arabic by lexical items; this method will do two jobs: change the formal impact of the original and increase the total number of words in the target text.

As is mentioned earlier, the purpose of this research is to show how punctuation marks have visual metadiscourse and pragmatic functions and to what extent they are problematic for translators. Visual metadiscourse devices such as (wa) are employed in Arabic to replace the punctuation marks used in English. Very often, Arabic tends to use words rather than punctuation marks which are of the characteristics of the English language.

1.6. Punctuation Marks

Different scholars have surveyed these marks but with slight differences. It is interesting to touch on some of the classification of punctuation marks presented by some scholars who have elaborated in this regard.

Praninskas (1975, 358-359) lists English punctuation marks as follows:

a- The Apostrophe (’):

Usages:

1- to mark omissions in contracted forms.

2- in the word *o’clock.*

3- to indicate possession, origin, measure.

b- The Colon (:) :

Usages:

1- to introduce a list.

2- after the names of speakers, when writing dialogue.

c- The Comma (,) :

Usages: The comma (,) can be used:

1- after (yes,) or (no,) in a response.

2- before a connective in a long compound sentence.

3- to separate items in addresses.

4- to separate equivalent sentence parts in a series.

5- to separate a speaker's words from the introductory statement.

6- to group large numbers into thousands.

7- to set off the addressee in direct address.

8- to separate an introductory clause from the rest of the sentence.

9- after a mild exclamation.

10- before and after an appositive.

11- to separate a tag question from the rest of the sentence.

12- before and after a non-restrictive adjective clause.

d- The Hyphen (-) :

Usages: The hyphen can be used:

1- in certain fixed expressions: person-to-person, station-to-station.

2- in compound numerals.

3- at the end of a line when dividing a word.

e- The Period (.) :

Usages:

1- at the end of every statement.

2- after most abbreviations.

3- in the expressions a.m and p.m.

4- to indicate cents and other decimals.

f- The Question Mark (?) :

Usages:

1- at the end of a direct question.

2- after a tag question.

g- Quotation Marks ("…") :

Usages:

1- to enclose the actual words of a speaker.

2- around foreign words used in English sentences.

h- The Semicolon (;) :

Usages:

1- in a compound sentence without a connective.

2- between phrases in a series when they contain commas.

Al-Qinai (2013: 2-17) compares between English punctuation marks and Arabic ways of expressing these marks. He investigates the salient differences in punctuation between the two languages as follows:

1- Space segmentation:- Spaces separate paragraphs, discourse units, and sentences, clauses, phrases and words, grammar units. Indentation marks the first line of new paragraphs, and extra spaces split paragraphs. The former case does not apply to Arabic, while the later one applies.

2- Capitalization:-

English uses capital letters to signal proper names, abbreviations and paragraphs. Besides, capitalization is used in headlines. Arabic, however, has no capital letters, sometimes round brackets and quote marks are employed as a device to overcome capitalization absence. Sometimes, Arabic adds a word in the course of the translation to compensate for an extended capitalization in the

English script, e.g. "DO YOU UNDERSTAND THAT?", in the Arabic rendering "هل تفهم ذلك حقا؟" the word "حقا" is added in an effort to convey the sense of emphasis.

3- Abbreviation and special symbols:-

In English, titular contractions, abbreviations, and acronyms are employed. In Arabic this phenomenon does not exist; instead, further words are added to bridge this gap.

4- Commas:-

This important and often used mark occurs in various contexts, of which are the following:

a- In English, the comma is used, for instance, in a series of three items or more, the items are separated by commas except for the first and last ones. Arabic replaces the commas by the conjunction (wa).

b- Transition and commentary words are set off by commas. Arabic either reproduces the comma or insert a lexical substitute, e.g., "However, the arbitrator disqualified reports submitted after the deadline.", "....,على اية حال", however, in certain situations, the comma is ignored in Arabic. For instance, " As a result, she intends to apply for a job that suits her credentials", " و نتيجة لذلك فهي تنوي التقدم لوظيفة تناسب مؤهلاتها".

c- In English, a comma is inserted after a subordinate clause. Arabic uses coordinate conjunctions instead.

d- A comma is added before a non-defining clause beginning with an –ing verb. In Arabic this comma is replaced by a visual metadiscourse item (و هو) as in "The company will be overtaken by Super Electronics," said the chairman, addressing the general assembly. ".....قال رئيس مجلس الادارة و هو يلقي كلمته".

e- A comma is added after an attribution that precedes simple quotations. Arabic uses a colon.

f- A comma separates two parts of an antithetical sentence whereby, the second contrasts the first. Whereas in Arabic this comma is optional.

g- Commas surround parenthetical phrases in English, while Arabic introduces linking words- as visual metadiscourse markers as well as reordering the sentence parts.

h- To introduce direct questions in English, a comma is used. Arabic tends to delete it.

i- A comma is added after a direct address in both Arabic and English.

j- A comma is used with dates in English, while Arabic uses visual metadiscourse markers instead.

5- Semicolons:

It is neither a comma nor a period, it is in between. In English it is used between two parallel sentences bearing similarities or contrasts (Newmark, 1984: 175). In Arabic, it is replaced by a conjunction. For example:

Man proposes; God disposes. العبد في التفكير و الرب في التدبير

6- Colons:

In English, it occurs before an explanation or a series of examples. In Arabic, it is usually translated into a conjunction. Example:

Luckily, the supreme court gave its ruling just in time: the candidate is acquitted and he can run for the Mayer's elections.

و لحسن الحظ فقد اصدرت المحكمة العليا حكمها في الوقت المناسب حيث نص على تبرئة المرشح و تمكنه من خوض انتخابات اختيار العمدة.

7- Hyphens:

In English, it is often used to separate compound words. In Arabic, however, it can be rendered into a substitute, as a conjunction. Example:

The London-based newspaper. الصحيفة التي تتخذ من لندن مقرا لها.

8- Dashes:

In English, a dash is used to indicate a sudden thought shift, hesitation or to separate a parenthetical sentence. Newmark (1984: 174) indicates that dashes interpret a sentence. In Arabic, it is replaced by a lexical equivalent.

9- Quotation Marks:

In both Arabic and English single or double quotations marks are used to set off citations, quoted speech, ironically used words, etc.

10- Apostrophes:

In English, it is used to signal grammatical contractions e.g., he'll, we won't, etc. Arabic, however, restores the full words. Example:

I 'll attend the meeting. سوف احضر الاجتماع.

1.7. The Model Adopted:

In this research, the adopted model is Newmark's (1988) classical idea of punctuation as a discourse unit for meaning demarcation and Baker's (2011) perspective of punctuation. Newmark's (1988: 58) notion of punctuation is that it is " an essential aspect of discourse analysis, since it gives a semantic indication of the relationship between sentences and clauses, which may vary according to languages". Citing an ST in English and its TT in Arabic, Baker (2011: 202, 193) says that " the source text uses no conjunctions but relies instead on punctuation devices" (193), and adds that the TT employs " typical

Arabic conjunctions: (wa), (hatha-wa), (kama), etc." (ibid: 202). The study adopts the above models, which are in concord with each other, in the process of data analysis.

1.8. Data Analysis and Discussion

The following examples show the different employment of punctuation in both English (STs) and Arabic (TTs), and the analysis of the two versions.

Example (1): *(two English paragraphs vs. one Arabic paragraph)*

The following example consists of two paragraphs, its Arabic version, however, has been merged into a single paragraph for purposes related to the flow of Arabic.

Park then conducted a little survey; he asked Gary Gorton, a Yale professor, who had helped build the model Cassano used to price the credit-default swaps. Gorton guessed the piles were no more than 10 percent subprime. He asked a risk analyst in London, who guessed 20 percent.

Cassano simply trusted the models, even when the models weren't designed for subprime in particular, or even really for mortgages. (Adapted from: Newsweek, 2.7.2009).

ثم اجرى باراك دراسة ميدانية حيث سال جاري جورتون الاستاذ في جامعة بيل و الذي ساعده في اعداد النموذج الذي استخدمه كاسانو لتسعير تبادل عمليات التخلف في سداد الائتمان. و قدر جورتون ان نسبة المشتقات المالية لن تتعدى ١٠ بالمائة. و سال محلل للمخاطر في لندن فقدرها بعشرين بالمائة. و لهذا فقد اطمان كاسانو للنماذج رغم انها تصمم خصيصا للمشتقات المالية و لا حتى للرهونات العقارية.

Al-Qinai (2013: 4)

Discussion:

The above excerpt is visually divided into two paragraphs whereas its Arabic translation merges the two paragraphs into one by means of the

consequential transition link و لهذا [therefore, so] with no effect on the coherence of topical progression.

Example (2): *(capitalized English words vs. boldface Arabic ones)*

The following two examples show how English emphasis is rendered into Arabic.

a- GREAT SATAN SITS DOWN WITH THE AXIS OF EVIL - (The Times on US-Iran Talks, 2007).

الشيطان الاكبر يجتمع مع محور الشر.

Al-Qinai (2013: 5)

b- NOT TO BE DISPENSED WITHOUT PHYSICIAN'S PRESCRIPTION - (The Times on US-Iran talks, 2007).

يمنع صرف هذا الدواء بدون وصفة طبية.

Al-Qinai (2013: 5)

Discussion:

It can be noticed that in the SL it is common that headlines are capitalized for emphatic purposes, however, in Arabic this is reflected by using boldface as in (a) or a different font colour.

By the same token, English visual metadiscourse is different from that in Arabic. Example (b) for instance is a warning, frequently found in medicine inserts, is printed in extended capitals and is translated by using boldface in Arabic.

Example (3): *(English acronyms and ampersands vs. full Arabic words)*

The following examples (‘a’ and ‘b’) show how such English acronyms or ampersands are transferred into Arabic.

a- G8 leaders met with NATO members in EU headquarters to discuss the economic crisis.

اجتمع قادة كبرى الدول الصناعية الثمانية مع اعضاء حلف الناتو في مقر الاتحاد الاوربي لمناقشة الازمة الاقتصادية.

b- Mr. & Mrs. Dickson.

السيد ديكسون و حرمه or السيد و السيدة ديكسون.

Al-Qinai (2013: 4)

Discussion:

The English acronym (NATO) is transferred into Arabic as a full word. Similarly, the ampersand in (b) (&) or (ε) also commonly called an 'and sign', is a logogram representing the conjunction "and". As there is no graphological Arabic equivalent, the symbol for the ampersand is rendered by the conjunction و [wa]:

Example (4): *(English comma vs. connectives or zero equivalents)*

a- The Solar system is composed of a star, nine planets and several satellites.

يتكون النظام الشمسي من نجم و تسعة كواكب و بضعة اقمارصناعية.

b- However, the arbitrator disqualified all audit reports submitted after the deadline.

الا ان المحكم فند جميع تقارير المدققين التي قدمت بعد الموعد المحدد.

Al-Qinai (2013: 7)

Discussion:

For the flow of the discourse, in example (a), the comma is replaced by the connective (و), (wa).

As for (b), there is no need to translate the comma; it is replaced by a zero equivalent.

Example (5): *(English comma, inverted comma & hyphen vs. Arabic coordination)*

Consider the following instances:

a*- One major solution to the problems of large-scale organizations has been the development of bureaucracy, which Robert K. Merton defines as "a formal, rationally organized social structure [involving] clearly defined social patterns of activity in which, ideally, every series of actions is functionally related to the purposes of the organization." This sociological definition, which we shall follow, contrasts sharply with the widespread use of "bureaucracy" and 'bureaucrat" as political epithets often applied to governmental agencies and officials, for whom the conventional stereotype is the officious, rule conscious, responsibility dodging clerk entangled in red tape and preoccupied with busy-work.* (Translators' Qualifying Exam 1998, ITI, London).

لقد جاء نشوء البيروقراطية كأحد الحلول الرئيسية للمشاكل و التي تعترض سبيل المؤسسات الكبرى. و يُعرف روبرت كي مرتون البيروقراطية على انها "بناء اجتماعي منهجي يقوم على اسس منطقية و يتضمن انماطا اجتماعية محددة المعالم لأنشطة تكون في صورتها المثلى على هيئة سلسلة من الافعال التي ترتبط وظيفيا بأهداف المؤسسة" . ان هذا التعريف الاجتماعي الذي سنتبناه في هذا السياق يتناقض بشدة مع الاستعمال الشائع لكلمة "البيروقراطية" و "البيروقراطي" باعتبارهما لقبان سياسيان غالبا ما يطلقان على ادارات و مسؤولي الحكومة الذين يتجلى نموذجهم التقليدي في موظف المكاتب المتغطرس الذي يتمرس بالقوانين و يتحاشى المسؤولية و يغوص في اعمال الروتين و يتوه في مشاغل العمل.

(Award Winning translation by Al-Qinai: 2013)

b- *According to UNESCO figures, illiteracy is still rampant in Africa.*

وفقا لإحصائيات اليونسكو فان الامية مازالت متفشية في افريقيا.

The English text (a) implements commas and other punctuation marks to produce elaborate subordinate structures while its Arabic translation employs coordinate conjunctions that offset many of the ST punctuation devices. In example (b), the Arabic construction (فان) is a stylistic device added in order to create cohesion and to smoothen and naturalize the text. The comma in English is translated into the Arabic equivalent (فان).

Example (6): *(English semicolon vs. period,* contrast or connective *in Arabic)*

In the following examples the English semicolon is translated into period as in example (a), into a contrast as in (b) or into a connective in Arabic.

a- *Offerings for breakfast include waffles, juice, and coffee**;** eggs or eggs with sausage, with or without potatoes, juice, and tea**;** omelets with a choice of fillings, tea or coffee**;** or simply juice, coffee, and toast (Robbins: 20).*

تشتمل اختيارات وجبة الإفطار على الكعك و العصير و القهوة. كما يمكن اختيار البيض و البيض بالسجق مع او بدون البطاطا و كذلك العصير و الشاي. ويمكنكم اختيار العجة بالحشوة التي تفضلونها مع الشاي أو القهوة. ويمكنكم اختيار العصير فقط و القهوة والخبز المحمص.

b- *Man proposes; God disposes.*

العبد في التفكير لكن الرب في التدبير

Al-Qinai (2013: 12)

c- *If that documentation was prepared outside your own organization, do you have a reliable system in place to insure that you receive copies of the information as submitted to Customs; that it is reviewed for accuracy; and that Customs is timely apprised of any needed corrections. (U.S. Customs, Voluntary Compliance Systems, Training Course 2008)*

إذا تم اعداد هذه المستندات خارج إرادتك، فهل يوجد اليك نظام معتمد للتأكد من استلامك نسخ من المعلومات عند تقديمها للجمارك و الاطلاع لمراجعة صحتها و معرفة احتياج الجمارك لأي تصحيح في وقته.

Discussion:

In (a), the English ST uses semicolons to set off separate combo choices for breakfast offerings. The punctuation is intended to defuse any confusion that may be caused by using commas only. The Arabic translation uses periods as a substitute.

In (b), a semicolon is also used between two parallel sentences bearing contrast (Newmark 1984: 175).

In (c), the Arabic translation substituted the semicolon with a coordinate conjunction و , (wa), [and].

Example (7): *(hyphens in English vs. connective, word & prepositions in Arabic)*

The following three instances of the (hyphen) show different ways of rendering this punctuation mark.

a- The iron - steel company.

شركة الحديد و الصلب

b- The London - based newspaper.

الصحيفة التي تتخذ لندن مقرا لها/ الصحيفة التي تنشر في لندن

c- Mother - daughter relationship.

علاقة الأم بابنتها

Al-Qinai (2013: 15)

Discussion:

From the above examples, the following can be noticed:

In (a), the hyphen is replaced by (و); in (b) it is replaced by a relative pronoun التي; and in (c) it is transferred by a preposition.

Example (8): *(dashes in English vs. visual items in Arabic)*

Writers use dashes to interpret the flow of the sentence conspicuously (Newmark, 1984: 174). Consider the following examples:

a- Janet sold her house for one reason — she was in debt.

باعت جانيت منزلها لسبب واحد ألا انها كانت مدينة

b- We will sell the car in Colorado — if it ever gets us there!

سنبيع السيارة في كولورادو هذا إن اوصلتنا إلى هناك!

c- The customs officer found many narcotic bags — **thirteen** — stashed away in the dashboard.

وجد موظف الجمارك العديد من أكياس المخدرات و بالتحديد ثلاثة عشر كيسا مخبأة في لوحة مفاتيح السيارة.

Al-Qinai (2013: 15)

Discussion:

From the above examples, the following can be noticed:

It can be seen that instead of reproducing the dash in English, the Arabic sentence prefers to introduce a visual metadiscourse item. In (a) the dash is replaced by (ألا). In (b) the dash is rendered into (هذا). In (c) the dashes are replaced by (و بالتحديد).

Example (9): *(dashes in English vs. zero equivalents)*

The sentence below can be rendered without dashes or parentheses since the parenthetical phrase may be considered an inseparable post-nominal attribute of the subject.

My grandfather—may God bless his soul—used to fast every Monday.

Al-Qinai (2013: 16)

كان من عادة جدي رحمة الله عليه أن يصوم كل إثنين.

Al-Qinai (2013: 16)

Discussion

It can be noticed that the dashes in English can be rendered by zero equivalents in Arabic simply because the latter in the standard terms employs no dashes but connectives.

Example (10): *(English quotation marks vs. zero equivalents)*

In some instances, quotation marks are ignored in Arabic dialogues as in the following excerpt from the short story الارجوحة by Mohammad Khudair (Aziz et al. 1985: 234).

- Your son is in the army, ma'am, isn't he? – Yes my son Ali. – Ali Qasim. – Yes it is him; do you know him? - He is my friend; we are in the same unit. – How is he? It has been a while since he wrote to us, how is he? – Ma'am, your son is…

ألديك يا أمي ولد في الجيش؟- نعم إبني علي.- علي قاسم.- نعم هو, اتعرفه؟- انه صديقي, انا و هو في نفس الوحدة.- كيف حاله؟ مرت مدة طويلة دون ان يكتب لنا رسالة, كيف هو؟ - يا امي ولدك قد...

Discussion

Here, it can be easily noticed that the English quotation marks are ignored for they have no counterparts in Arabic.

1.9. Conclusions

In time variations in punctuation marks are an ordinary result of the translation process, deviations are much more vivid in languages belonging to families as well as cultures of different origins as is the case with Arabic and English. Punctuation marks rendered from English into Arabic have been utilized in Arabic by means of words or phrases as well as punctuations, namely the most prominent ones such as periods, quotation marks, and exclamation. Sometimes punctuation marks existing in the source language, i.e., English in this research, are translated into nil equivalents; the reason is that they are grasped in the course of the discourse in the text in question. It is worth mentioning that inappropriate rendition of punctuation marks may distort the intended meaning of the discourse in question.

It can also be concluded that while the English language has a well-defined strict rule for the use of punctuation marks, Arabic has its own methods of punctuation represented in visual metadiscourse devices.

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