

Errors in Translating Psychological and Psychiatric Terms into Arabic by Fourth Year Undergraduate Students

Ahmed Jasim Muhammed Al-Ubaidi

B.A. Department of Translation

Abstract

The research is a descriptive analytic study of the fourth year undergraduate students' errors in psychological and psychiatric terms from English into Arabic. The problem of the research lies in students' interpretations of these terms as mere vocabularies, not as psychological, and psychiatric terms. It hypothesizes that students errors in translating terms is ascribed to the lack of these terms to the Arabic equivalents and students' inability to discriminate the suitable equivalents from the unsuitable ones. In order to evaluate the errors, ten students are assigned to translate a text about depression. Then, the translations are analyzed and results concluded in which J. C. Catford's linguistic theory of translation is adopted as a criterion for evaluating the translations.

The most important conclusion is the knowledge deficiency and misrecognition of the significations of psychological and psychiatric terms in both languages: SL (source language) and TL (target language).

1. Introduction

Students of translation encounter difficulties in rendering medical terms; especially the psychological and psychiatric ones into Arabic. They interpret their meaning depending on the dictionary without going back to their terminology in the psychological and psychiatry discourses. They deal with these terms as vocabularies in themselves, not as terms within a scientific field, i. e. psychology.

The study is a descriptive, analytic investigation of undergraduate students' errors in translating psychological and psychiatric terms into Arabic. It eliminates mistakes and goofing due to their insignificance in the study. Its significance lies in its specification of the text; it is confined to the terms that are agreed upon by psychologists and psychiatrists in the synopsis and the English- Arabic version of International Classification of Diseases (ICDL-10). In order to investigate students' errors, ten forth year undergraduate students of translation are tested in translating an extract from the aforementioned sources into Arabic. The sample of the test is restrictive to the students of the Department of Translation-College of Arts –Mosul University-study year 2010/2011.

It is hypothesized that students' errors in translating the source text into the target one are ascribed to the lack of Arabic equivalents to the psychological and psychiatric terms. Students transliterate some erroneous terms. They mistranslate the others due to their inability to discriminate between the suitable equivalents and unsuitable ones.

The research follows four procedures. First, a corpus of data of the translation of psychology and psychiatry is presented in a general discussion. Second, ten undergraduate students of the Department of Translation are tested in translating the source text into the target one. Third, the students' translations are evaluated and analyzed according to J. C. Catford conceptions of formal equivalence and contextual meaning in his linguistics- based translation. Fourth, conclusions are detected from the data analysis.

2.1 Translation of Psychology & Psychiatry: An Overview:

The translation of psychology started in early 20th.century. The emergence of Freud's, Young's, and Adler's analytic theories helped this translation to rise. The development of the method of psychology and its divisions into five main methods; neurobiological, behavioral, cognitive, psycho-analytical and humanistic methods led to the separation of the psychological terminology from the psychiatric one. Translators endeavored to find suitable equivalents to psychological terms in the one hand. On the other hand, they coined equivalents to the psychiatric terms.

The translation of psychiatry was theorized by Sigmund Freud. He rendered the psychological material to verbal expression; he interpreted the psychological material in his psycho-analytical theory such as repression, the unconscious, and substitution. He initiated the translation of psychological terms through his interpretation of dreams. Patrick Mahony affirms that Freud should "be ranked as one of the major theoretician of translation for he gives the concept a scope, extension and depth in his work that appeared nowhere previously in history" (Patrick Mahony, 1982: 63). He argues that the analyst aims at effecting through his

translation a translation and transposition of the unconscious into the conscious (Patrick Mahony, 1982: 65).

On the other hand, Ernest Jones in collaboration with Abraham A. Brill translated many of Freud's writings into English when he was in America at the beginning of the twentieth century. Freud's four volumes of *Collected Papers* were translated by Strachey, Joan Riviere, and others under Jones' supervision and were published in 1920s and 1930s under the title *Standard Edition of the Complete Psychological Works of Sigmund Freud*. In his letter to Freud, Ernest Jones stated that the first translations of his writings (Freud's writings) were not always felicitous [they were] casual and at times fearfully inaccurate" (www.en.wikipedia.org). The achievement of the *Standard Edition* lies in the reliance of the other translations and editions of Freud's work on it rather than on the original German texts (www.enotes.com). Yet, it had its defects. Freud's polysemous, elegant and expressive literary vocabulary and style were excessively stifled and the information, documents, personal letters, and notes of Freud's life and work restricted the edition editorial apparatus (www.enotes.com). Peter Gay argued that the use of "esoteric neologisms" instead of the "plain German" terms preferred by Freud was the most obvious "flaw" of Strachey's translation (www.en.wikipedia.org). Jacques Lacan misunderstood the meaning of 'instinct' in its Freudian sense when he based his translation on Strachey's edition. He rendered it to '*trieb*' [drive] in time the two terms have nothing in common (Jack Lacan, 1978: 12).

The translation of psychological and psychiatric theories into Arabic started in the 1920s. Besides, Arab translators collected psychological and psychiatric terms in dictionaries. They were almost psychologists and psychiatrists. Their efforts were not

exempt from transliterations or Arabicization. Dr. Muhammed Sharaf was the first Arab psychologist who collected psychological terms within a dictionary entitled *Dictionary of Medical and Physical Sciences: English/ Arabic* in 1926. He depended on the transliteration of certain terms. Abdul-Hameed Kadhim, a psychologist translated Robert A. S's *Psychology* into Arabic in 1948.

Dr. Munir Wahba Al-Khazin also collected psychological terms in his *Dictionary of Psychological Terms* which was published in 1956. Another psychologist followed him in his dictionary entitled *Dictionary of Psychological Expressions* in 1971; Dr Fakhir Akil. As for the Arab psychiatrists' translations, Dr. Fakhri Dabbagh, a psychiatrist translated from English into Arabic Fritz Wittles 's *The Sex Habits of the American Women* in 1960, and Hamed A. S. Zahran translated psychological and psychiatric terms in his *Dictionary of Psychology* in 1972.

Dr. Kamal Dusuqi published an encyclopedia entitled *The Store of Psychology* in 1987. It tackled the definitions of psychological terms and presented the figures of all the fields of psychology. Dr. Dusuqi stated that he based his encyclopedia on dictionaries of English, Arabic, and German Languages beside the dictionaries of psychology and psychiatry (www.alnayfat.net). He adopted Muhammed Sharaf's dictionary as a guide in the translation of each psychological term. He did not except Munir Wahba's and Hamed A. S. Zahran's dictionaries in his definitions of the psychological terms.

2.2 Data Analysis:

The discourse of psychology is one kind of medical discourse. It is a sub-variety of scientific language. It is filled with Latin and Greek words such as (anesthetic) and (therapy). Its terms are accepted in international terminology used in almost all languages all over the world. It is understood and adopted by doctors and health professionals. Caldwell and Henger conceive that "The language of medicine [including psychology] is verbal and symbolic and seemingly filled with mystery to the uninformed" (D. Al-Haj Qasim, 2003: 28).

The aim of medical language is to achieve the highest degree of precision in the use of words. It shares most of the linguistic characteristics of scientific literature. The first distinguishing feature of the vocabulary of medical material is that it is specialized. (Abdulkarim Al-Joburi, 1986: 1). Examples of these specialized terms are depression, antidepressant, schizophrenia, psychologist, psychiatrist... etc. Moreover, transparency characterizes the vocabulary of the medical language, "because it implies that the structure of the expression conveys the meaning virtually at the sight". (Isadore Pinchuck, 1977: 182).

The use of abbreviations also characterizes this language. For instance, it uses TM to stand for Trouble Maker and ECT to stand for Electroconvulsive Treatment. Colloquial usages are characteristic of certain types of scientific literature [such as the expression, General Practitioner]. (Al-Joburi, 1986: 2). Lastly, standardization characterizes the specialized languages, "where precision and rigidity of meaning are valuable and this has produced a strong incentive to standardize". (Pinchuck, 1977: 174).

The present research adopts J. C. Catford's theory of normal total translation. This theory departs from the grammatical and lexical sides of the SL and the TL. In it, "the grammatical units between which translation equivalences are set up may be at any rank" (J. C. Catford, 1981: 24). According to Catford, "in a long text the ranks at which translation occurs are constantly changing; at one point, the equivalence is sentence-to-sentence, at another, group-to-group, at another word-to-word" (Catford, 1981: 24). He distinguished between textual equivalence and formal correspondence. The former refers to "any TL text or portion of text which is observed to be the equivalent of a given SL form"; whereas the latter refers to "any TL category which may be said to occupy, as nearly as possible, the 'same' place in the 'economy' of the TL as the given SL category occupies in the SL" (Catford, 1981: 27). Catford bases his translation on the contextual meaning of an item. This translation demonstrates the groupment of relevant situational features with which an item is related (Catford, 1981: 27). It is constituted by the relationship of grammatical or lexical items to the related linguistic elements.

Students' errors are gathered from their written translation of ten sentences from English into Arabic. The sentences are collected from two sources: The Bulletin of Depression (WPA Bulletin on Depression, 2009: 1-2) and The Synopsis of Psychiatry (Kaplan and Sadock, 2007: 527-562). They tackle one topic, depression. It is interchangeable with psychology and psychiatry. It is considered one of the common terms in both fields.

Students' errors in translating psychological and psychiatric terms into Arabic can be classified as follows: errors in the selection of the suitable target text equivalence, errors in interpreting the term in ST, and errors in collocation in TT and ST.

Students show inability in choosing the suitable target text equivalent. They resort to generalization in their selection of the equivalent. This deficiency in equivalent selection is owed to their inability in discriminating the scientific language from the ordinary one. Isadore Pinchuck states that "the scientific term cannot be selected in the ordinary language for it demands a whole range of meanings besides its scientific meaning when the term is employed commonly". (B. Al-Magazaji, 1992: 70).

Students' translations of the following sentences show that seven students have rendered the term "depression" to "الاكتئاب"; whereas three have rendered it to "الكآبة"

- Depression is diagnosed on the basis of the World Health Organization's International Classification of Disease (ICD-10).
- Depression is a common illness more than anxiety and schizophrenia.

According to (ICD-10), the suitable equivalent is "الكآبة" (English & Arabic versions of ICD-10). In another position, they have given the term "schizophrenia" three equivalents: "انفصام الشخصية", "الإنفصام", and "الفصام", one student transliterated the term to "شيزوفرينيا". Seven of them have chosen the equivalent "انفصام الشخصية" and one student has chosen the equivalent "الفصام" and another has chosen "الإنفصام". Nowadays translators adopt "الفصام" as

the suitable equivalent depending on the general agreement of psychologists and psychiatrists referred to in (ICD-10).

According to the survey of students' errors in rendering the two terms mentioned above, it is obvious that seven errors are committed in translating the first term, "depression" and nine errors in rendering the second term "schizophrenia". Thus, the students' errors in rendering show 70% in translating the first term, and 90% in translating the second. The following table illustrates these percentages of errors:

The term	Errors	Suitable equivalents	Percentage
Depression	7	3	70%
Schizophrenia	9	1	90%

Table (1)

Students have misinterpreted the meaning of "sublimation" and "displacement" in the sentence below:

- Other patients resort to sublimation, which is somewhat close to displacement, as a reaction to sadism.

This misinterpretation is attributed to polysemy in both SL and TL. The term "sublimation" has polysemous meaning in both languages. In English its root, "sublime" has the following denotations: exalted, noble, lofty, wonderful, splendid, inspiring wonder or awe and in Arabic it denotes, "يسمو", "يتسامى", "يترفع". Student's translations exposed confusion in giving the suitable equivalent to the term "sublimation", three students rendered it to

"التهديب", and one student rendered it to "الترفع", in time two students chose the suitable one "التسامي".

As for the rest of the students, they gave three wrong renderings respectively; "التصعيد", "التحول", and "التكثيف". They are classified as mistakes. They are owed to students' deficient knowledge of the signification of the term "sublimation".

Students differed in their translation of the term "displacement". Their different renderings manifested different levels of understandings due to their misconceptions of the term. They misinterpreted the significations of the term. Three of them gave the suitable equivalent to it; "الإزاحة". Two students rendered it to "العزلة" and another two translated it to "التشرد". One student gave the equivalent "الإحلال"; whereas another rendered it to "التحول". "اللاشعوري للعاطفة الشديدة".

The percentage of errors committed in rendering the two aforementioned terms is displayed in the table below:

The term	Errors	Suitable equivalents	Percentage
Sublimation	5	2	80%
Displacement	7	3	70%

Table (2)

According to the table, eight errors are committed in rendering the term "sublimation" and seven ones in rendering the term "displacement". The number of errors in the first term shows 80% and the number of errors in the second term shows 70%.

Eight students rendered "psychiatrists" to "الأطباء النفسانيين", whereas the other two students gave the equivalents "أطباء النفس" and "المختصون النفسانيون" respectively in the following sentence:

- Psychiatrists and general practitioners should prescribe the appropriate dose and course of antidepressant medication to the depressed ones.

Students gave different renderings to the collocative phrase "general practitioners". Five of them rendered it to "أطباء عامون". One student mixed its rendering with the rendering of the first term; he rendered it to "الأطباء النفسيين الممارسين".

One student gave the suitable equivalent, "الممارسين العامين", whereas the other three students rendered it to "الممارسون", "المعالجين", and "المختصين بالطب العام". Their errors are ascribed to their misrecognition of the collocation of the two words "general" and "practitioners", they are unaware of the tendency of the word "general" to occur with the word "practitioners" as far as the ST is concerned.

Besides, they misinterpret the meaning of the term "practitioners"; they give four mistranslations: "الممارسون", "المعالجون", "المختصين بالطب العام", and "أطباء عامون". The following table presents the number of these errors and their percentage. It shows two errors in rendering the first term with 20% and nine errors in rendering the second term with 90% percent.

Errors in Translating Psychological and Psychiatric
Ahmed Jasim Muhammed Al-Ubaidi

The term	Errors	Suitable equivalents	Percentage
Psychiatrists	2	8	80%
general practitioners	9	1	70%

Table (3)

Errors in translating the collocative phrases are conceived in students' translation of the two terms: "persistent insomnia" and "uncomfortable headaches" in this sentence:

- Persistent insomnia, uncomfortable headaches, or anorexia can be reminders that the patient has not fully recovered from depression.

show deficient knowledge of the collocative TT equivalents. Students reveal inability to select the suitable TT equivalent. In the TT equivalent of the term "persistent insomnia", i.e., "الأرق", the word "الأرق" tends to occur with the word "المتواصل". As for the TT equivalent of the second term, i.e., "الصداع غير المريح", the word "الصداع" tends to occur with "غير المريح". Five students rendered the first term to "الأرق المستمر". Two of them rendered it to "الأرق الدائم" and one of them rendered it to "الأرق", whereas two students rendered it to its suitable equivalent, "الأرق المتواصل". Students showed diversity in translating the second term, "uncomfortable headache". Only one student gave the suitable equivalent, "الصداع غير المريح".

According to the analysis above, eight errors were committed in translating the first term and nine ones in translating the second term. They are owed to students' miscalculation of the collocative feature of TT equivalents of the two terms. Their percentages are displayed in the table below:

The term	Errors	Suitable equivalents	Percentage
persistent insomnia	8	2	80%
uncomfortable headache	9	1	90%

Table (4)

3. Conclusions:

This study investigated errors in translating psychological and psychiatric terms restrictively. It identified students' errors in choosing the suitable target text equivalent, errors in interpreting the term in the source text and errors in the collocation of the ST and TT. It has come up with the following conclusions:

1. The evaluation of students' errors in translating the two terms, "depression" and "schizophrenia" verified that those errors showed students' inability to choose the TT equivalent to the two terms.
2. Students' misinterpretations of the significations of certain terms uncovered students' confusion of choosing the suitable equivalent due to the polysemy of the meanings of the two terms.

3. Students' mistranslations of the collocative terms disclosed students' misapprehension of the collocative TT equivalent to the first term and the collocation of the second term and its TT equivalent.
4. Students' errors in translating the two collocative terms also manifested students' deficient knowledge of the collocation of the TT equivalents to the two terms.

Recommendations:

In order to help students of translation avoid committing errors in translating the psychological and psychiatric terms from the SL into the TL, the following recommendations are given:

1. Students should be requested to check the psychological and psychiatric terms in the specialized dictionaries or in their encyclopedias.
2. The translation of psychology and psychiatry should be given space in teaching scientific translation.
3. Students should be encouraged to read psychology and psychiatry in its original sources, i. e. in books and studies written by psychologists and psychiatrists.
4. Further efforts should be devoted to the analysis of students' errors in translating the other psychological and psychiatric terms in the departments of translation regardless of their stages.

References

- Al-Haj Qasim, Dua'aa M. M. (2003). *The Translation of Medical Discourse into Arabic*, an unpublished M. A. thesis, University of Mosul, College of Arts.
- AL-Joburi, Abdulkarim Ezbar Feyad. (1986). *Annotated Translation of Selected Chapters of "Depression" by D. P. E. Goldberg*, an unpublished M. A. thesis, University of Bath, School of Modern Languages.
- Al-Magazaji, Basma H. (1992). *Translating English Psychotherapeutic Texts into Arabic: A Study in Scientific Translation*, an unpublished M. A. thesis, Al-Mustansiriya University, College of Arts.
- Catford, J. C. (1978). *A Linguistic Theory of Translation*, Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- <http://alnayfat.net/vb/>
- http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/James_Strachey.
- <http://www.enotes.com/psychoanalysis-encyclopedia/standard-edition>
- Kaplan and Sadock (2007). *Synopsis of Psychiatry*. Philadelphia: Wolters Kluwer.
- Lacan, Jacques (1978). *The Four Fundamental Concepts of Psychoanalysis*. New York: W.W. Norton.

- Mahony, Patrick, (1982). "Towards the Understanding of Translation in Psychoanalysis", *Meta: Journal des traducteurs/meta: Translators' Journal*, Vol. 27, no 1.
- Pinchuck, Isadore. (1977). *Scientific and Technical Translation*. London: A Deutsch.
- The English and Arabic Version of International Classification of Disease (ICD-10), (2009). Iraqi Ministry of Health, Baghdad, Iraq.
- WPA Bulletin on Depression. (2009). Vol. 14, No. 39.

Appendix (1)

1. Depression is diagnosed on the basis of the World Health Organization's International Classification of Disease (ICD-10).
2. Depression is a common illness more than anxiety and schizophrenia.
3. Since 1958, antidepressants have frequently been used to treat patients faced with thoughts of suicide.
4. Psychotherapy – when practiced by trained and available psychotherapists– has been and continues to be successful method for overcoming depression.
5. Psychiatrists and general practitioners should prescribe the appropriate dose and course of antidepressant medication to the depressed ones.

6. The critical problem is the risk of depression relapse due to pharmaceuticals abuse.
7. Depression can be considered as a chronic condition for as many as patients, in much the same way as hypertension or diabetes.
8. Persistent insomnia, uncomfortable headaches, or anorexia can be reminders that the patient has not fully recovered from depression.
9. Patients generally use some defense mechanisms such as repression, suppression, projection, compensation, negativism and conversion.
10. Other patients resort to sublimation, which is somewhat close to displacement, as a reaction to sadism.

المستخلص

يعتبر هذا البحث دراسة وصفية تحليلية لأخطاء طلبة الدراسات الأولية في المرحلة الرابعة في ترجمة مصطلحات علم النفس والطب النفسي من اللغة الإنكليزية الى اللغة العربية. تكمن مشكلة البحث في تفسير الطلبة لهذه المصطلحات كمفردات لغوية محضة و ليست كمصطلحات نفسية وطب نفسية. ويفترض البحث أنه تعزى هذه الأخطاء الى افتقار هذه المصطلحات الى المكافئات العربية والى عدم قدرة الطلبة في التمييز بين المكافئات المناسبة و المكافئات غير المناسبة. ولتقويم هذه الأخطاء طلب من عشرة طلاب ترجمة نص متعلق بموضوع الاكتئاب، ومن ثم تم تحليل هذه الترجمات واستخلاص النتائج، حيث اتخذت نظرية ج س كاتفورد اللغوية في الترجمة كمعيار لتقويم هذه الترجمات. ومن أهم النتائج التي توصل اليها البحث هي القصور المعرفي وسوء أدراك دلالات مصطلحات علم النفس والطب النفسي في كلا اللغتين: لغة المصدر (اللغة الإنكليزية)، ولغة الهدف (اللغة العربية).