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Translating scope of intention in purpose clauses from Arabic to English: a cognitive account

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Abstract

In this study, I seek to discuss the translation of the scope of intention to see how changing the scope of intention through translation may affect the mental image(s) conjured up in our minds. To this end, five collections of short stories translated to English by professional translators were examined by identifying the purpose clauses in the source text (ST) and target text (TT) to figure out how not giving full consideration to the scope of intention in purpose clauses may or may not twist the message to varying degrees, thus affecting the translation accuracy and/or adequacy.

Keywords: Arabic-English translation; extent of causation; force dynamics; purpose clauses; (ir)reality; scope of intention.

1. Setting the scene

In this paper, the scope of intention in purpose clauses (be they finite or non-finite clauses) is discussed in a direct connection to translation. My starting point is the observation that making the scope of intention greater than the extent of causation or the other way round through translation affects not only the message intended by the author, but the mental image(s) conjured up in the target-language readers' minds as well. To make what I have in mind clear, the following example extracted from a short story titled الشجرة المقسة The Sacred Tree by Muhammad al-Zafzāf (translated by and cit. in Husni and Newman, 2008: 66-67) is considered:

Translating scope of intention in purpose clauses from Arabic to English: a cognitive account

In the ST, as we may observe, the writer decides to use the additive connector عمل to join two simple finite clauses, namely تركوا سلعهم they left their goods and اختفوا في أماكن ما they disappeared somewhere. Here, by virtue of the additive connector ع and in the process of happening ختفوا they disappeared, the emphasis is placed on the completion of the act of disappearing. This indicates that the extent of causation is greater than the scope of intention as it is asserted that they disappeared. However, in the TT, the translators opted for a different grammatical form when resorting to a purpose clause introduced by in order to, thereby imposing different specifications on the scene. In the TT, by the effect of in order to, the scope of intention becomes greater than the extent of causation, on the one hand, and, on the other hand, we, as observers, can see in our mind's eye that they are still lurking around their goods trying their best to find a place to hide in. To put this differently, in the ST the distance between their goods and the point they reached is greater compared with the distance in the TT. To reinforce this point, another example taken from a short story titled عبد المعاددة على المعاددة المعاددة على المعاددة المع

He had pretended more than once to be waiting for the lift without ever pressing the button in the hope of meeting one of the inhabitants of the building...

 without waiting, to wait without pressing the button. This force-dynamic framework enables us, as readers/viewers, to capture the cause (his desire to meet one of the inhabitants of the building) of the result (waiting without pressing the button). Being fully aware of this, the translators opted for a purpose clause introduced by *in the hope of*, where the scope of intention and the force-dynamic pattern were given full consideration.

The current study is structured as follows. Section 2 presents the research questions. Section 3 reviews purpose clauses from different perspectives. Section 4 describes the textual materials used. Section 5 offers a detailed analysis of some illustrative examples extracted from the data collected. Finally, section 6 concludes the study.

2. Research questions

The current study sets out to address the following research questions:

- 1. Will translators face any difficulty while translating purpose clauses from Arabic to English?
- 2. Will changing the scope of intention in purpose clauses through translation affect the intended meaning?

Added to these two research questions, the study also tries to address these questions:

- 3. What are the main characteristics of purpose clauses?
- 4. Will changing these characteristics in purpose clauses through translation affect the intended meaning?

As one may notice, questions 1 and 3 are a combination of both explorative and evaluative research questions. However, questions 2 and 4 are a combination of both explorative and descriptive research questions.

3. Purpose clauses from different perspectives

3.1. Agent-argument dependency (control)

In English, there are two types of clauses of purpose. They are (1) finite clauses of purpose introduced by so that or in order that, and (2) non-finite clauses, which are usually infinitival introduced by in order to, so as to, to, and the like. However, when the clause of purpose (be it finite or non-finite) has a negative meaning, it is normally introduced by for fear that, for fear of, lest, and so on. It is worth noting that in non-finite clauses, one of the agent-argument is not mentioned in the purpose clause, but it can be figured out from the information mentioned in the main clause. In a sentence of the following kind,

the non-finite clause to buy a flat is a purpose clause answering the question 'why', 'what for' or 'for what purpose'. Here, the agent-argument, i.e. the Buyer-to be, is not mentioned in the clause but can be driven from the main clause, i.e. my brother. To put this differently, the noun phrase my brother in the above example fills a verb-specific semantic role of loan Taker in the main clause and Buyer-to be in the purpose clause. Here, the subject of the non-finite subordinate clause is controlled by the subject of the main clause, i.e. my brother. In this respect, Burton-Roberts holds: "When a non-overt is specific and understood as identical to an overt constituent in a higher clause, the higher overt element is said to CONTROL the non-overt element" (2016: 251; emphasis is in the original). When the above sentence is changed to a complex one by using the conjunction so that, for instance, as in

Translating scope of intention in purpose clauses from Arabic to English: a cognitive account

(4) My brother took a loan from the bank so that he could buy a flat,

the agent-argument expressed by the pronoun *he* referring back to *my brother* needs to be mentioned. Here, it is worth noting that unlike the subject of the non-finite subordinate clause, which is a non-overt element, the subject of the finite subordinate clause, i.e. he, is not controlled by the subject of the main clause, i.e. *my brother*. This is because in such a structure the subject of the finite subordinate clause, i.e. *he*, could be replaced by another subject, such as *my sister* or *my father* as in:

- (5) My brother took a loan from the bank so that my sister could buy a flat.
- (6) My brother took a loan from the bank so that my father could buy a flat.

Building on this, in discussing the purpose clauses, we need to identify the benefactor. In sentences (3) and (4), the benefactor, i.e. the person who is going to benefit directly from the act of buying the flat, is *my brother*. Semantically speaking, the noun phrase *my brother* fills a semantic role of Benefactor and verb-specific semantic role of Buyer-to be. However, in sentences (5) and (6) the benefactor is not *my brother*, but *my sister* and *my father*, respectively—they fill the semantic role of Benefactor and verb-specific semantic role of Buyer-to be.

3.2. Reality versus irreality

Events can be parts of known reality when they occurred in the past, parts of irreality when they have not occurred yet and immediate reality when they occur at the moment of speaking. To see whether the purpose clauses are parts of known reality, immediate reality or irreality, these examples can be considered:

(7) The man travelled to London to find a job.

In example (7), the man travelled to find a job; therefore, the act of travelling is part of known reality as the emphasis is placed on the completion of the act. However, the act of finding a job is not part of reality as we are not sure whether he found a job or not. Let us compare it with this example:

(8) The man decided to travel to London to find a job.

In example (8), it is not asserted that the man travelled and found a job; therefore, the acts of travelling and finding a job are not parts of reality. In example (9), however, by the effect of the finite clause *he arrived there*, it is asserted that the man travelled; therefore, the act of travelling is part of reality.

(9) The man decided to travel to London to find a job. Once he arrived there, he started looking for a job.

In example (10), by virtue of the finite clause *he found a job*, the act of finding a job turns out to be part of reality. But, what about calling his family to tell them about his job? Did he call them? Did he tell them?

(10) The man decided to travel to London to find a job. Once he arrived there, he tried to find a job. When he found the job, he called his family to tell them about his job.

As can be seen, the emphasis is placed on the completion of the act of calling in a specific period of time in the past; therefore, it is part of reality. As regards the act of telling his family, we are not sure he told them as it could completely slip his mind for any reason. From the above discussion, it can be concluded that purpose clauses are parts of irreality when they are looked into on their own. However, when the context and co-texts are taken into account, they might be part of reality as shown hereinabove.

3.3. Force dynamics

Force dynamics, in the sense Talmy (2000) uses the term, refers to the forces that motivate the entities presented in the scene, explicitly or implicitly, to act in a particular way, such as resisting such a force, overcoming it, blocking it, removing the blockage and so on (Talmy, 2000: 413; Evans, 2007: 83; Evans and Green, 2006: 199; Almanna and Al-Shehari, 2019: 128; Almanna and House, 2023: 261). When the scene is presented by the language user in a way that indicates it is not force dynamically neutral, then it is characterized by having a power differential, forcing one of the entities, who tends to do or not to do something in normal circumstances, to do the opposite, thus entailing causality. To make this point clear, the following example can be considered:

(11) The girl went to the mall to buy a new laptop.

Here, as one may observe, the scene is not force dynamically neutral as the girl's need to buy a new laptop motivates her—who tends in normal circumstances to stay at home, not to spend her money, etc.—to go to the mall (whether walking, by car, etc.) to buy a new laptop. This force-dynamic framework enables us, as readers, to capture the cause (to buy a new laptop) of the result (the girl went to the mall).

Translating scope of intention in purpose clauses from Arabic to English: a cognitive account

3.4. Functional systemic grammar

According to Halliday's (1976: 199) systemic functional grammar, transitivity is defined as "the set of options relating to cognitive content, the linguistic representation of extralinguistic experience, whether of the phenomena of the external world or of feelings, thoughts and perceptions". Each process (be it material, mental, verbal, behavioural, relational or existential) is made up of three main elements, namely (1) the *process* itself typically expressed by a verbal group, (2) the *participants* determined in advance by the writer/speaker which are typically realized by a nominal group, and (3) the *circumstances* associated with the process typically expressed by an adverb or a prepositional phrase. As far as purpose clauses are concerned, they are one of the cause circumstances that construe the reason why the process is actualized. Cause circumstances, according to Halliday, are classified into three main types, viz. reason circumstances, purpose clauses and behalf clauses.

After examining purpose clauses from various perspectives, the subsequent section presents a detailed introduction to the corpus of the study, followed by a comprehensive analysis.

4. Corpus of the study

The corpus of the study consists of five collections of short stories translated into English by professional translators. They are:

- 1. Modern Arabic Short Stories: A Bilingual Reader (translated by Husni and Newman, 2008; hereinafter called source 1);
- 2. I Die Every Day (translated by Zagood and Pragnell, 2017; hereinafter, called source 2);
- 3. Ten Stories from Iraq (translated by Pragnell and Sadkhan, 2011; hereinafter, called source 3);
- 4. The Scent of Winter (translated by Sadkhan and Pragnell, 2012; hereinafter, called source 4), and
- 5. Nights of Ms Salman (translated by Eric Winkel, 2010; hereinafter, called source 5).

In selecting the textual materials used in the current study and attempting to be objective, to a certain degree, in choosing the data to be analyzed, issues such as (1) directionality (i.e., from Arabic to English), (2) text type (i.e., narrative fictional texts), (3) reader (i.e.,

bilingual), and (4) availability (i.e., based on convenience in terms of reach and accessibility) were given serious consideration.

These five collections, along with their translations, were examined by identifying the purpose clauses (whether finite or non-finite) in both the ST and TT to determine whether the scope of intention changes through translation, and whether such a change affects the accuracy of the translation.

5. Discussion

Out of the 138 purpose clauses extracted from the five collections of short stories, a total of 114 purpose clauses were reflected in English without changing the scope of intention. Only 24 were not reflected in the TT, thus changing the scope of intention, as illustrated in the following illustrative examples:

عاد من جديد يسترق النظر إليها عله يجد شيئاً في ملامحها يضيء ما اعتراه من حيرة وذهول. (12)

Once again he glanced over at her, and noticed something in her features that shed light on what had baffled him (Source 1: 86).

As can be seen, in the ST, a clause of purpose introduced by is used. Here, it is not asserted that the in-text participant found something in her features; therefore, the scope of intention is greater than the extent of causation. However, in the TT, the translators imposed different specifications on the scene when opting for the additive connector and, thereby emphasizing the completion of the act of noticing at a specific point in the past. By doing so, they made the extent of causation greater than the scope of intention. Had they given adequate consideration to both the scope of intention and extent of causation, they would have suggested a rendering, such as Once again he glanced over at her in an attempt to notice something in her features that shed light on what had baffled him.

فبدأ الأستاذ عبدالحفيظ من فوره ينقب بحماس أشبه بالهستيريا في المجلدات التي أصفر لونها عله يعثر عندها على حل يبطل مفعول كتابها الذي جاءت به من عالم الموت والأشباح، ومضى لدهشة الزوجة والأطفال يقلب البيت رأسا على عقب عله يجد أثرا لهذا السحر. وياخذ فأساً ويحفر عند عتبة الباب علهم والأطفال يقلب البيت رأسا على عقب عله يجد أثرا لهذا السحر. وياخذ فأساً ويحفر عند عتبة الباب علهم دفنوا له شيئاً هناك. ويمزق أغلفة الكراريس والكتب المدرسية عل شيئا بحجم الدبوس مدسوسا في احداها. And so Mr Abd al-Hafiz began to delve into old, yellow-stained books with a frenzy that bordered on hysteria, in the hope of finding something that would counteract the effect of her book, which she had brought from the world of the dead and ghosts. Much to the surprise of his wife and children, he turned the house upside down searching for a trace of this magic. He began to dig up the threshold to the house with a pickaxe, given to the illusion that they had buried something for him there. He ripped the covers of the copybooks and schoolbooks in search of something the size of a safety pin hidden in one of them (Source 1: 99).

In the above example, as one may observe, there are four purpose clauses introduced by بهاند. which were translated into in the hope of (first occurrence), searching for (second occurrence), given to the illusion (third occurrence) and in search of (fourth occurrence). In all these examples, the scope of intention is greater than the extent of causation as it is not asserted that he found something that would counteract the effect of her book, he found a trace of the magic, they buried something for him somewhere and he found something the size of a safety pin hidden in one of them. Having given the scope of intention adequate consideration, the translators managed to produce an accurate translation with respect to the purpose clauses used.

Farmers had started bringing their herds to the town market. I went down a street that took me far away from the town centre. I continued looking back until I found myself in the darkness of a narrow alleyway that suddenly descended to the other edge of the town where there were lush fields with trees like giants spread out above them. My roommate must have woken up by now and be missing his fortune (Source 2: 11).

Here, in the second sentence التخذت طريقا تبعدني عن وسط المدينة, literally meaning I took a road that would take me far away from the town centre, there is an implicit conjunction of purpose, such as كي, لكي, بغية, etc., meaning to, in order to or with a view to. However, by virtue of the additive connector and resorted to by the translators, the emphasis is put on the completion of the act of going down a street, thus making the extent of causation greater than the scope of intention, which is lost through translation. Approached from a cognitive linguistic perspective, in our mind's eye, we can see that the in-text participant is far away from the town centre in the TT while he is still not far from the town centre despite being in the street that would lead him to the town centre. Had the translators paid extra attention to the scope of intention as opposed to the extent of causation, they would have suggested a rendering such as I went down a street that would take me far away from the town centre.

The image in the mirror fidgeted when the boy, with his back, moved his seat away, stretching his torso out of the window so as to keep watching the feet of two small schoolchildren who were running after a ball in the middle of the yard (Source 4: 11).

Here, by the effect of the grammatical forms and content specifications resorted to by the author, the emphasis in to to move something and to to stretch is placed on the completion of these two actions. Added to this, in the ST, there is no time lapse between the action of moving his seat back and the action of stretching his torso out of the window. The moment he moved his seat away and stretched his torso out of the window, the im-

age in the mirror fidgeted. This indicated there is no time gap among these three actions. This was reflected by the translators. However, in the fourth clause, i.e. يتابع بنظراته أرجل تلميذين he was watching the feet of two small schoolchildren, the translators opted for a purpose clause introduced by so as to, thus changing the extent of causation. To explain, the extent of causation in the ST in this clause is greater than the scope of intention as, by virtue of the grammatical forms used, it is asserted that he watched the feet of the two small schoolchildren while playing; therefore, the act of watching is part of reality. Further, there is no time interval between stretching his torso out of the window and watching the feet of the children. In the TT, however, by the effect of the purpose clause resorted to by the translators, the scope of intention becomes greater than the extent of causation, thus affecting the mental image conjured up in our minds.

Many thoughts like this flitter in my brain, but very rapidly, and I try to be free of them, so I could be free to look at Shireen's amazing face and deep comportment... (Source 5: 19).

Here, two clauses of purpose introduced by in order to and 1 to are used in the ST. These were reflected in the TT when the translator opted for the connector so meaning so that in so I could be free and to in to look at Shireen's amazing face and deep comportment. It is worth noting here that by the effect of the grammatical forms resorted to by the author in the ST, we got a message that the author, in the mouth of one of his characters, does not talk about a single event that occurred in a specific time, but rather, he is talking about a series of similar events that occurred to him. Building on this, these events along with the actions employed therein were drawn out over a period of time. This was reflected in the TT. However, the verb i.e. to contemplate or consider carefully, used in the ST, is characterized by multiplexity, i.e. it consists of more than one element/look. However, the translator failed to reflect this characteristic when he opted for to look, which is characterized by uniplexity, i.e. it consists of one element/look. Had he taken this into consideration, he could have suggested something like to stare at, to keep looking at, to contemplate, etc.

In the above example, a clause of purpose introduced by الم is used in the ST. However, this purpose clause is lost through translation when the translator opted for an adverbial clause, i.e. where we could hide away now and then. Here, as one may observe, although the purpose clause النختفي فيه بين وقت وآخر was not translated into a purpose clause, the scope of intention is still greater than the extent of causation as it is not asserted that they used

the house to hide away now and then. Despite this, changing the Sayer from *she* in كا فالت الماذا لا to I in "Why don't we escape?" I said affects the mental image conjured up in our mind as target language readers. To elaborate, the scene in both texts is characterized by having a dyadic personation type, i.e. speaker and addressee. However, this was not reflected through translation. As one may notice, while in the ST there is two-way participation, in the TT there is one-way participation, thus changing the style from casual to something else.

He thought, what if all the sparrows were to come into the ward and alight on his bed and carry him and fly him to the white clouds so he could be a traveler forever (Source 5: 95).

In the above text, two purpose clauses introduced by لا to are used. They are غيمة على غيمة الد الله الأبد i.e. to put him on a white cloud, and بيضاء ..., i.e. to be a traveller forever. They are parts of a process of sensing expressed by the verb فكّر, i.e. to think, where the scope of intention in this process and its parts is greater than the extent of causation. As can be observed, the translator, in one of these two aforementioned clauses, decided not to emphasize the process of doing expressed by the verb وضع to put. Rather, he decided to emphasize the initial and medial portions of the open path expressed by the verbs على to fly. As regards the second purpose clause introduced by to in الأبد ليظل مسافراً إلى i.e. to be a traveller forever, the translator resorted to using the connector so meaning so that, thus reflecting a similar mental image where the scope of intention in both texts is greater than the extent of causation. Added to this, by virtue of إلى الأبد and its equivalent forever, the act of travelling is drawn out over a period of time in both texts.

Ten centuries have gone by since what happened in that village, ten similar ones have passed, and now everything is going quiet and returning to its former days... (Source 3: 55).

In order to take his place amid that chaos, he began the task of putting the books back into their right places (Source 4: 51).

Here, a purpose clause introduced by لكي in order to is used in the original text. It is asserted that he began the task of putting the books back into their right place, but, by virtue of the grammatical forms and content specifications resorted to, we are not sure if he took his place amid the chaos. With this in mind, the scope of intention in the purpose clause لكي is greater than the extent of causation; therefore, the translators opted for in order to take his place amid that chaos to reflect this.

Like other towns, Munyat al-Nasr was superstitious about Friday, and any event that took place on that day was viewed as a sure catastrophe. The people of the village were, however, excessively superstitious. They were opposed to any work being done on that day for fear it would end in failure, and thus they postponed all work until Saturday (Source 1: 271).

Here, as one may observe, the villagers, having the feeling that any work done on that day might end in failure, decided not to do any work on that day. To put this differently, the relationship between their feeling that any work done by them on that day may end in failure and their decision not to do any work on that day is not force dynamically neutral. Rather, it is characterized by having a power differential to force the villagers, who tend to work on that day, to postpone any work on that day till another day. This force-dynamic framework enables us, as readers/viewers, to capture the cause (their feeling that any work on that day may end in failure) of the result (postponing all work until another day). This relationship is expressed in the ST in a purpose clause introduced by Acies Oue to the use of Acies Oue to the use of intention is greater than the extent of causation as it is not asserted that any work done by them would end in failure. Being fully aware of this, the translators resorted to for fear, thus reflecting the intended meaning and creating a similar mental image in their readers' minds.

Nasibi was ordered by his father to fast, but he tried to break his fast in secrecy in order to allay his hunger. Qismati, however, was quick to protest, saying: "Don't forget that we share one abdomen. If you take a single morsel. I'll tell Father" (Source 1: 121).

In the above example, one of the main characters, after having been ordered by his dad to fast, tried to break his fast. This indicated that he fasted and, accordingly, felt hungry and, as a result, he tried to eat anything to assuage his hunger. While the attempt of breaking his

fast is expressed implicitly in the ST, it is expressed explicitly in the TT. Irrespective of this, it is not asserted that he broke his fast; therefore, the scope of intention is greater than the extent of causation. This was given serious consideration by the translators who resorted to using a purpose clause to emphasize the cause (in order to allay his hunger) of the result (he tried to break his fast in secrecy).

The barman placed a glass of wine and a sugar bowl in front of Zubeida. She scooped a spoonful of sugar in her glass and stirred it in. Widad thought to herself that Nabil had a similar habit of putting salt in his beer to slow down the effects of the alcohol (Source 1: 167).

As can be observed, a clause of purpose introduced by Yei. i.e. in order not to, is used in the ST and reflected in the TT when the translators opted for a non-finite clause of purpose to slow down the effects of the alcohol introduced by to. However, in the TT the emphasis is placed on the act of being drunk, while in the ST the emphasis is put on the actor filling a verb-specific semantic role of alcohol Drinker. Despite that, in both cases it is not asserted that the actor got drunk, i.e. the scope of intention is greater than the extent of causation. It is worth noting that, by the effect of the grammatical forms and content specifications used in the ST, it is clear the writer is not talking about a single act of drinking but a series of acts. This was given serious consideration by the translators when they opted for to have the habit of in Nabil had a similar habit of putting salt in his beer.

6. Conclusion

The data of the study were qualitatively analysed by focusing on the scope of intention in purpose clauses. This was done through first identifying the purpose clauses used in the five collections of short stories, along with their own translations, and then determining whether the scope of intention was changed through translation or not, and how this affected translation accuracy.

It has been shown from the discussion of the data that purpose clauses in Arabic lend themselves easily to purpose clauses in English. This indicates that both languages have the potential resources to linguistically encode purpose. However, when the scope of intention, as opposed to the extent of causation, is not given full consideration by the translator, this affects the intended meaning, as the emphasis, in this case, is placed on the completion of the act, thus changing its status from being part of irreality to being part of reality.

In response to question 3 regarding the main characteristics of purpose clauses, purpose clauses are characterized by first being part of irreality. However, at times these

clauses turn out to be parts of reality when they are accompanied by any endophoric and/or cataphoric reference that indicates that what is part of irreality has already occurred in the past or is occurring at the moment of speaking. Purpose clauses are also characterized by agent-argument dependency, but not all of them. To explain, the subject of the non-finite subordinate clause, which is a non-overt element, is controlled by the subject of the main clause, hence its dependency. However, the subject of the finite subordinate clause is not controlled by the subject of the main clause. Added to this, purpose clauses (be they finite or non-finite) are characterized by having a power differential, encouraging or forcing one of the entities, who tends to do or not to do something in normal circumstances, to do the opposite, thus entailing causality. In terms of importance, purpose clauses (be they finite or non-finite) are not as important as main clauses as they are dependent clauses. Syntactically speaking, they can be compared with the noun phrase and verb phrase used in the sentence.

Translating scope of intention in purpose clauses from Arabic to English: a cognitive account

With respect to changing the characteristics of purpose clauses through translation and whether it affects the intended meaning or not, it has been shown that changing a purpose clause from being part of irreality to being part of reality without making up for such a change by employing an endophoric or cataphoric reference will make the extent of causation greater than the scope of intention, thus affecting the intended meaning. As stated above, purpose clauses are characterized by having a power differential that would encourage or force one of the entities to act accordingly. Therefore, paying less attention to this characteristic will impose a different force-dynamic pattern on the scene, thus changing it from non-force dynamically neutral to force dynamically neutral.

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