

English Translation of Arabic Flash Story: A Discourse Analysis Oriented Approach

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Abstract

The present study examines the translation of Arabic flash stories in several of Ahmad Jarallah's Flash stories taken from his collection entitled: *The Adventures of Sindibab* (2019) by focusing on the macro-structural aspects of the flash story. The paper aims to check up the problems of narrative analysis: macrostructure in translating the flash story from Arabic into English, also finding out the translator's success in achieving an appropriate equivalence of the source text or not.

The study hypothesizes that there are some difficulties in analyzing such texts, despite the presence of some resemblance between Arabic and English macro-structure items in the flash story, due to the different understanding of the macrostructure elements and the real meaning of the flash story by each translator. To evaluate the appropriateness of macro-structure discourse renditions, an eclectic model developed by the researcher will be used in discussing the selected texts depending on Nida's (1964) model as well as some opinions related to several Arabic scholars in this respect.

The study has concluded that there are some differences in translations depending on the different comprehension of the translators with regards to the spirit and meaning of the texts and the macrostructure of each language.

Keywords: Discourse analysis, Macrostructure, Flash story, Nida's model

1. Introduction

Flash story is a literary genre emerged in the Arabic literature since the nineties of the last century in response to a band of political, economic, and social circumstances that preoccupied the human beings and still pull down in a way that endanger the safety and security of humanity

as a whole in addition to the speed factor at present, which in some way turn this genre away from verbiage as in the case of the various anecdotal genre.

Flash story is a very short story that conveys a short event in a limited and narrow place with one or few characters or no character (Subh, 1981, 121) and (Smith, 2018, 4). This genre has the same elements of the standard story which are: the beginning, rising action, climax, and the end, but it is written concisely to include fewer words (Applebee et al., 1999:13).

Mughamarat Sindibab is a collection of flash stories published in (2019) and written by the Iraqi narrator Ahmad Jarallah / University of Mosul/ College of Arts –Department of Arabic after the end of the military operations against terrorism in Mosul / Iraq. The reason behind naming his collection as *Mughamarat Sindibab* not *Mughamarat Sindibad* is cynical as life's experience seems like unreal adventures turned to be internal adventures occurring behind the corridors of the house or job scene or war field or history (Jarallah 2019,5). This paper attempts to analyze the translation of the narrative discourse analysis, focusing on the macro-structural aspects of selected flash stories to show whether the translators were able to convey the appropriate renderings of these selected flash stories.

2. Literature Review

It is noteworthy that some studies concern and follow either microstructure or macrostructure or even both of them in some fields and literary types. Here will review briefly a number of some works in this respect. The study of Shannon Hall-mills (2010) was concerned with the analyzing the microstructure in narrative and expository genres, another study made by Cosmo Toth (2014) observes short stories and interpretative repertoires in research interview. Dyah Kusumatuti (2019) wrote a paper aims at analyzing a certain short story according to microstructural approach, also Morad Alshafi (2020) wrote a paper aims at analyzing a certain short story by focusing on microstructure and macrostructure ,yet none of these studies tries to link the narrative analysis of the structures especially macrostructure to translation. The current study attempts to fill this gap by presenting narrative analysis: macrostructure in translating the flash story in particular which is one of the most difficult literary genres due to its structure and unique literary characteristics from Arabic into English. An eclectic model developed by the researcher in which he builds and utilizes the narrative analysis of macrostructural sides in the translation of some flash stories under discussion which we believe will help researchers and those interested in understanding narrative analysis of macrostructure concerning translation.

3. Methodology of the Study

The study uses an eclectic model prepared by the researcher depending on Nida's model (1964) as well as on some opinions related to some Arab authors in this field. Six texts with their renderings selected from Ahmmad Jarallah's collection are selected to discuss their translations done by three translators (MA holders) concentrating on the macro- structural aspects in the flash story.

4. Marco-Structural Analysis

The macro-structure is an essential part besides the micro-structure of the linguistic-semantic discourse and not solely an element of a psychological model of the discourse process (VanDijk, 1976, 1) and (VanDijk, 1980, 27). He argues that the macro-structure of discourse is the global meaning and theme of the text. It is significant to deal with themes as part and parcel of the discourse (Brown and Yule, 1983, 40).

(Labov and Waleizky, 1967, 12) point out that the elements of fiction such as plot, structure, setting, theme, complication, resolutions etc., are used in stories to refer to the global narrative structure.

This paper is concerned with specific literature genre i.e., the flash story, which was emerged in the early twentieth-century in the west in the authors' works like Hemingway's who wrote flash stories as "In our time" (1925), Clarke "if I forget you earth" (1951). Flash fiction as a literary genre presents a meaningful context and may improve the ability of the reader's grammatical and linguistic skills (Rahman and Arju, 2013, 125).

Each narrative genre has its purpose, yet the general one is to tell a story. As for the plot of the story, several analysts proposed the usual elements that form a narrative with different labels. Table 1 illustrates several elements used by some analysts:

Table 1. A number of elements used by some analysts

The analyst	The elements
Labov (1972)	Abstract – orientation – complication action – evaluation – resolution – coda
Steins (1982)	Setting – initiating event – response- attempt – consequences – reaction
Applebee et al. (1999)	Exposition – complication – climax – falling actions – resolution

5. Macrostructure Analysis in Arabic

The narrative analysis concerning the macro-structure reveals the analysis techniques used by the writer to create the text. It is a set of rules that govern the behavior of the system and its components where no one of them can replace the other (Aleid, 1999, 15).

Although the flash story like other genres, such as short story, and prose poem where the ruling framework as (Al-Zaidi, 2013, 1) almost diverges from the traditional construction of the usual short story, it has the main structure that makes up the narrative discourse, i.e., the character, the setting, narrative event with a simple plot. This structure includes the following elements:

A- Plot: It is a sequence of events with a complete and unified structure arranged as from the beginning of the event, then the middle and finally the end. It indicates the reason for what occurred, and when it occurs (Shirbt, 2009, 43).

- B-** Narrative: It is a narration of an event or several events, whether it is fictional or real in an artistic linguistic image (Wahba, 1984, 238).
- C-** Setting: The major elements here are the time and the place:
- 1-** The time: It is the process of successive events according to the linguistic system to express life reality in the past, present, or future (Auathallah, 2002, 17).
 - 2-** The place: It is the verbal place imagined and it is a place made by the language based on the purpose of the imagination and its need in the story (Abood, 2009, 19).
- D-** Character: It is one of the fictional individuals or may be realistic around whom the events of the study are brought about and cannot be separated from the event. Furthermore, the character can be a human being or an animal, or imaginary object, or even an inanimate object (Shirbt, 2009, 44).
- E-** Theme: This is the main message which that the story revolves around (Taleb, 1989, 20).

6. The Model Adopted

Equivalence is one of the major and controversial topics of translation. It has been tackled by several scholars of translation as (Nida, 1964), (Nida and Taber, 1969), (Catford, 1965) etc. In this paper, the Nida approach of equivalence (1964) is used (formal and dynamic equivalence).

Two directions were proposed by (Nida, 1964) in translation: formal equivalence and dynamic equivalence. In formal equivalence, (Nida, 1964, 149) says that the focus in translation falls on the message itself, i.e., in both form and content, while in dynamic equivalence the emphasis is on the fulfillment of the naturalness in translation by reproducing the same impact on the (TL) reader to that experienced the (SL) recipient.

As for dynamic equivalence, (Nida, 1964) applies three modifications in tackling the equivalence in (TL). The first one is the “addition” which is employed to purify the disambiguation of lexemes and to reveal the implied elements; the second one is the “Subtraction” which is used to specify the conjunctions and adverbs. Finally, the “alteration” procedure should be done due to the disagreement between (SL) and (TL).

7. Data Analysis and Procedure

Six of the flash stories have been selected from Ahmad Jarallah’s collection *The Adventures of Sindibab* with their translations by three translators (MA holders). The focus of the present analysis of these flash stories will be on Macro-structure aspects by adopting an eclectic model depending on Nida’s model and some concepts related to some Arabic scholars including (Wahba, 1984), (Taleb, 1989), (Auathallah, 2002), (Abood, 2009), and (Shirbt, 2009).

Note: the following abbreviations S.L.T. and T.L. Ts will be used instead of Source language text and target language texts in succession.

S.L.T (1)

(درس)

بجانب الانقاص التي خلفتها الحرب ظل كتاب القراءة مفتوحا على صفحة (دار دور) ثم قلبته الريح الى صفحة (نيران).
(جار الله 7:2019).

T.L. Ts

1-(A lesson)

By the debris made by the hostility of war, there still laid the first-grade primary school reading book, opened to the first topic (a house-houses), yet the wind turned to the page to the other topic (a fire-fires).

2-(Study)

Next to the debris which is inflicted by the war. The reading book is open on the page (house-houses) then overturned by the wind on page (flames).

3-In addition to the debris left by the war, the reading book remained open on the Dar Dor page, then the wind turned into the page of fire.

Discussion

The title of this flash story implies a lesson for humanity and not just the literal meaning of the lesson. The author's transcendence of the superficial, visualized vision into a vision implies another clear life of these ruins, which previously interacted with the human.

The word (الانقاص) in the first sentence is the setting where the events occur. The readers' attention immediately turns to the role of motives and aims through employing such a structure that creates anxiety and prepares the reader for the event following.

Reviewing the translations, we start with the first sentence (بجانب الانقاص التي خلفتها الحرب), the translator no.1 follows dynamic equivalence through the "addition" procedure by adding the word (hostility) in translating this sentence to give the real atmosphere of the war which seems effective, while the two other translators almost stick to the original text and use formal equivalent rendition.

The intimate object (كتاب القراءة) represents the absentee's character due to the war that is inspired by the (كتاب القراءة) which is usually associated with the reader. This element is rendered dynamically by the translator no.1 by adding some words which do not exist in the (ST) to clarify the type of reading book used in Arabic primary school, yet this matter seems equivalent. The other translators use formal equivalence and adhere to the (SL) structure which looks more successful.

Now comes the rising and complication action which goes to the next step or motive (مفتوحا على) (صفحة دار دور). This step is an important sense and presents the plot of the story. As for the translations, the translators no.1 and no.2 bond by the original text and use equivalent formal renditions, the translator no.3 used transliteration in rendering as (*Dar Dor*) to make it more

effective by sticking to the (ST), yet his rendition seems inappropriate one since he doesn't explain the intended meaning to the reader in the (TL). The renditions of the climax which happens when the author refers to the wind movement in turning the page of the book (ثم قلبته (الريح) for the three translators are formal ones.

Finally, and after reaching the end of the flash story which is presented (fire) as a symbol of war, we notice that translators no. 2 & 3 bond by the original text while the translator no. 1 who adds inappropriate words instead of one word as (fire).

Having scrutinized the renderings, one can notice that the translators ranged between dynamic and formal equivalences in a way that provided variant translations that seem appropriate and equivalent, and sometimes they don't seem so.

S.L.T (2)

(حياة)

شجرة يابسة.. تميل اغصانها على عشب اخضر طويل.. واسفل العشب.. عند الجذور قطرة من الندى ترحلقت توا وانتثرت.. وتسربت في باطن التراب نحو جثة لجذر ميت .

(احمد جارالله 9,2919)

T.L. Ts

1- A life

A stark tree. Its bough bends over the grown green grass, under which near the roots a dewdrop just slide and spread ... leaking into the deep soil toward a corpse of a dead root.

2- Dry three with its branched leaning on green long gross and below the grass out the roots there is a drop of dew that now slide and spread and went into the earth towards the corpse of a dead root.

3- Life

A dry tree whose branches tend to turn into along green grass. At the roots, a drop of dew slipped and spread out and leaked into the soil towards a dead root.

Discussion

In this flash story, the narrator attempts to create a semantic equation between death and life which ultimately leads to life.

The first move of this flash story is made by the author which is the setting and represented by (شجرة يابسة), as, for the character, it is not described by a specific person, but by a natural character (شجرة) which symbolizes the human being and its role is to give the reader something other than what he expected. The three translators offered equivalent formal translations that are loyal to the form and content of the original text. After introducing the character and the setting elements, the author turns the reader's attention to the initiating events represented by (تميل اغصانها على عشب اخضر طويل). In this sense, suitable formal translation, is presented again by the translators. Then the event continued (واسفل) العشب. عند الجذور قطرة من الندى ترحلقت توا

(وانتشرت), As for translations, translator no.2 and no.3 employed proper formal renderings, while translator no. 1 presented a proper dynamic one. Then the plot begins to get more complex and reaches its climax presented by (نحو جثة لجذر ميت). The translators no.1,2&3 provided in equivalent formal renderings which although they stick to the ST, were not able to convey the real meaning the author wanted to reach the reader which is the human, not the tree which symbolized by the word (جثة).

Finally, the story reaches its end that provides the theme for the reader, which is the hope in life despite death.

Reviewing, the three translations, one can say that they have taken over the formal equivalence with the use of a dynamic translation by the first translator.

S.L.T(3)

(موقف)

حبة القمح التي سقطت من سنبلتها.. ولم يحالفها الحظ في الطحن والتحول الى رغيف خبز مع الاف من رفيقاتها لاطعام الجياع.. ظلت مرمية في الحقل حتى تيبست.. ثم اغمضت عينيها وماتت.. طحنا من الحزن. (احمد جار الله 2019,27)

T.L. Ts

1. A stance

The wheat grain that dropped of its ear .. and missed the chance to be ground and turned into a bread loaf just like thousands of her other mates to feed the hungry ... remained aground in the farm till it dried... closing its eyes dead ... ground by grief.

2. A situation

A grain of wheat fell and was not lucky to be grinded and made into a loaf with thousands of its fellow grains to feed the hungry. It was left in the field until it dried; then it closed her eyes and died, grinded of sorrow.

3. The situation

A grain of wheat that fell from its spike and was not lucky in grinding and turning into a loaf of bread with thousands of its companions to feed the hungry and it remained to lie in the field until it became harsh. Then closed its eyes and died ... grinded from sadness.

Discussion

The writer tries to personalize the grain of wheat by reaching the final result, which is death by grief for its vanity in life.

The elements appear as a series of successive events developed coherently through the flash story to reach its inevitable end.

Despite the elements of the short story being almost the same as other types such as in the story, novel, etc., the short of this genre makes it more difficult for the translators to trace its elements

accurately. As for the setting, it is clear that the event took place in the field, not in the mill. (حبة القمح) is the natural character of the story, the sentence (حبة القمح التي سقطت من سنبلتها) is translated correctly by the translators no.1&3 by opting into formal equivalence, while the translator no.2 omits the word (سنبلتها) in a way that makes his rendering inaccurate.

Translator no.1 tries to get what the author intended through employing dynamic translation which seems equivalent to the sentence (لم يحالفها الحظ في الطحن), whereas the two other translators used formal one which does not look equivalent one as well as the grammatical mistakes in translating the words (في الطحن و طحنا) to “grinded” by translator no.2 and translator no.3 of the word (طحنا) as “grinded”. The events continue until the story arrives at the climax (ظلت مرمية في الحقل حتى تبيست) which is translated formally by all the translators. Then the story reaches the end (ثم اغمضت عينيها وماتت) where the translator no.1’s rendering seems equivalent through using the dynamic procedure for this sentence as (closing its eyes dead), while the two other translators achieved formal procedure for the sentence.

The last sentence which belongs to the end of the story (طحنا من الحزن) is rendered dynamically by the first translator, while the others use formal rendering for the same sentence.

Consequently, one can find that most of the time the translators presented formal equivalence except translator no.1 who seems to be aware of the intended meaning of the author.

S.L.T(4)

(غرق)

يرسم بحرا وساحلا وسفنا ويركض وحيدا على الورقة..حتى يسقط عند حافتها نحو سلة المهملات غارقا فيها..لانه لم يرسم بجانب السفن أي طوق نجاة. (احمد جارالله 2019,31)

T.L. Ts

1. Drowning

He draws a sea, a cost, ship ... and runs lonely over the page, to fall at the margin towards the cast-off bin, drowning deep there because he didn't draw any vest by the ships.

2. Drowned

He draws a sea, a beach, and ships and he run alone on the paper till he falls at the edge towards a wastebasket overwhelmed by that as long as he didn't draw any life-bants next to the ships.

3. Drowning

He is drawn by sea, coast, and ships, and passes alone on paper. until it falls on the edge of garbage, soaks it because no lifeline has been drawn alongside the ships.

Discussion

This flash story reflects the writer's goal to turn a true adventure into an unreal and inner one through drawings on paper.

The initiated event of this story which is presented by (يرسم) is carried by a character which is implied pronoun and it is referred to as (هو). As for the setting, it is represented by the word (الورقة). The first two translators adhered with the structure of the (ST) and presented an appropriate formal rendering, while the third translator presented an incorrect rendering of the sentence (يرسم بحرا وساحلا وسفنا).

The second sentence (ويركض وحيدا على الورقة) is the complication of the story and rendered suitably by the translators; the first two translators presented a formal rendering, while the third translator chose the dynamic translation one.

After the succession of events, they reach the climax when the hero falls from the paper as in the sentence (حتى يسقط عند حافتها نحو سلة المهملات غارقا فيها). Dynamic translation is presented here by translator no.1 by employing an additional procedure through adding (deep) to make the vision looks like a real one and to match the shape of the (ST). As for translators no.2&3, they provide a formal rendering for the same sentence which does not seem equivalent ones.

The last sentence (لانه لم يرسم بجانب السفن اي طوق نجاة) is translated formally by all the translators which seem equivalent ones.

Reviewing the three translations, one can find that not all the translations are as they look equivalent and sometimes, they do not. Translator no.1 succeeded in providing equivalent rendering ranging between formal and dynamic ones.

S.L.T (5)

(عدالة)

في الحرب.. لم يبق سوى ربع رغيف.. تناول الاب والام شيئا قليلا منه بالنظرات.. وتركا ماتبقى لفم طفلهما الصغير.(احمد جارالله 2019,10)

T.L. Ts

1. During the war, there only remained a quarter of a bread loaf.. the parents bit a bit of it with their eyes leaving the remnants for their little child's mouth.

2. Justice

At war, there is only a quarter of a loaf left, the mother and father had small bits with looks and left the remaining for their little child.

3. Justice

In the war, only a quarter of a loaf remained... the father and mother threw some looks, leaving the rest for their little boy's mouth.

Discussion

Through the satirical title of the story, the author tries to point out the significance of the story: altruism and sacrifice by adding a semantic and imaginary equation and moving from reality to fiction by eating the loaf with their gazes, while in reality, they leave it to their little child.

(في الحرب) presents the setting in the flash story where the events take place. The characters are (الاب والام) who play the role of the hero in the story as well as (طفلهما الصغير). After presenting the characters, the initiated event starts through what the author provided to pay the attention of the reader which is presented by the sentence (لم يبق سوى ربع رغيف). These elements were translated formally by the three translators by sticking with the same structure of the (ST).

(بالنظرات) represents the climax which happens when the parents look at the loaf through the sentence (تناول الاب والام شيئا قليلا منه بالنظرات). This sentence is rendered formally by the first two translators while the third one follows the dynamic equivalence through the subtraction procedure which seems more appropriate translation. In the last sentence, the three translators provide a suitable rendering by employing formal equivalent renderings.

Although the translators varied in rendering the flash story, it seems that the more appropriate rendering for this flash story was done by translator no.3 who mixed between formal and dynamic ways.

S.L.T (6)

(الخضر)

العشب الذي نبت بين صخرتين.. اخرج راسه بحذر خشية من قذائف الحرب.. لكن شظية صغيرة باغتت جبهته.. فسال بين الصخرتين دم اخضر..

T.L.T.s

1. The grass that grew between two rocks... took out its head cautiously for fear of the shells of war. But a small splinter suddenly caught its forehead, and green blood drifted between two rocks.
2. The grass grew between two rocks, it stuck its head carefully for fear of war missiles, but a small splinter went suddenly to its front and consequently, green blood flew out.
3. Green grass, grass that grows between two rocks comes out cautiously for fear of war shells. But a small fragment stunned his forehead. Green blood flowed among the rocks.

Discussion

The writer personifies the grass who suffers the war horrors. The story offers the theme of this flash story and reveals the virulence of the war.

All translators provided equivalent formal renderings in different style for each one of them for the character which is (العشب) and (بين صخرتين) which is the setting in the first sentence (العشب الذي نبت بين صخرتين).

Different renderings are offered by the translators for the second sentence (اخرج راسه بحذر خشية) (من قذائف الحرب). Translator no.1 presented a formal rendering, the translator no.2's rendering seems inaccurate one, as for the third one, makes a grammatical mistake in rendering (اخرج راسه) which is past tense by turning it into present tense as (comes out). The third sentence is translated appropriately by all the translators who opted for formal rendering. As for the last sentence which presents the end of the story (فسال بين الصخرتين دم اخضر), it is translated differently, the first and the third translators stick to the (ST) structure and translated appropriately by using a formal procedure, while the second one's rendering seems incorrect.

Reviewing the three renderings, one can see that the most appropriate rendering belongs to translator no.1, while the two other translators presented some inaccurate renderings.

8. Findings

This study comes up with the following findings:

1-It is found that the formal translation was applied by the translators more than the dynamic one regardless of whether they are correct or equivalent, however, the translator no.1 and followed by translator no. 3. are the only ones who used dynamic translation.

2-It is noticeable that some of the translators committed some grammatical errors here and there, for instance in the text no.3 by the translators no.2&3 when mistranslated the words (الطحن وطحنا) as (grinded).

9. Conclusion

The macrostructural narrative analysis is still a knotted domain but very essential part of language and as (VanDijk 1976) says that the discourse cannot adequately be narrated at the microlevel, but should contain a level of semantic macro-structure also, since it illustrates the global structure and affords effect on the reader in the (SL) and (TL). A close examination of comparing of the macro-structure elements that exist in the (SL) and their translations into the (TL) appears that macro-structure employed in the (SL) does not seem like a departure from that in the (TL) when suitably translated.

It is noticed that the intended meaning is not easily understood except for the author himself or the well-educated translator.

The renditions of the flash story were variant among the translators even with the same translator according to their satisfaction with the selected procedure in rendering or perhaps they do not understand the real meaning. Furthermore, some of the translations did not reach the true purpose of the writer this is because the translators are poor whether in their understanding in culture or in their literary background.

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