Cognitive Macro knowledge: A Semantic View of Translating Meanings of the Qur’anic Texts

Mohammed Nihad Ahmed (1)

Abstract

The major goal of this paper is to focus on the necessity of macro knowledge in translating process. It is hypothesized that macro knowledge constituents include conceptual components within the mental model that constitutes knowledge clusters as a major part of the cognitive system in general. This paper demonstrates the conceptual components underlying the formation of new mental images in exegeses of Qur’anic text on the one hand, and the translating process on the other, which agrees with the idea that says that translation is complex bilingual mediated communication. The macro knowledge is posited in this process with inference making mechanisms in mental model. As Qur’anic text is characterized by a high level genre that contains multifarious types of figurative tropes, the translator transfers the semantic and logical connectivity, mental image (conceptual structures), aesthetic standards and emotional charge of SL into TL keeping the norms of both languages as

(1) Senior Lecturer, Department of Basic Sciences, University of Mosul.
well as keeping the accuracy, fidelity and sanctity of the glorious Qur'anic text. The current study concludes that translation is a pure cognitive bilingual process in terms of macro knowledge constituents, and has a major operation performed in terms of knowledge and inference within the mental model.

1. Preview:
Translation as a phenomenon embodied in a complex process of bilingually mediated communication. It results in the production of target language text that is based on a source–language text (Schaffner, 1991: 1). The translating process is a highly sophisticated partition of communication; it is the criterion of humanity. It includes some cognitive processes collected to build a complete block of textual material in the target language. Thus, the hypothesis of this work springs from the question raised by Bell (1991) “what is the major need for the translator to know and make him able to perform rendering in order to translate?” It is hypothesized that the Qur’anic text has a property of being a high level type of genres, it consists of several figurative tropes, the constructive identity of this type of text is accurate, and consists of several rules and rituals characterized by sanctity. The translator's main duty is to find the closest natural equivalent, transfer one culture into another, travel between the languages, reproduce the same emotional charge of the source language, keep the aesthetic standards of the original and finally master the spirit of the conceptual image of cultural and language specificity. Thus, cognitive processes are required to see the interception between macro knowledge constituents and inference mechanisms. The macro knowledge is however developed and accumulated via developing the skills and much work. Naturalness in rendering the Qur'anic text should be maneuvered to the way of accurate translation, hence the rendered version should not be read as a translated one.
However, the translator’s own liability is to possess an adequate representation of knowledge ecology to the information of both languages (cf. Aziz & Lataiwhish, 2000: 110); (Ahmed, 2006: 29).

It is widely agreed to be the case that translation theory has never tackled the interception between macro knowledge and inference making process as a cognitive phenomenon so precisely. Over the last two or three decades, translation theory has become more prolific, more visible and more academic activity than perhaps ever before. It attracted remarkable academic momentum of philosophical and psychological studies. Hence, this study has come to see the interconnection between the macro knowledge of the translator’s mental model and how the text inferred as a basis of translator's mental model (Schaffner, 1991: 2).

2. Translator: Knowledge and Skills

It is important here to focus the attention on the competence of the translator. Some theorists of translation paid much more efforts on the translation skills, strategies, naturalness and the conceptual mappings of mental model performed through translating process. The cultural preferences and priorities among languages of the world are also posited on the basis that culture is the language property. In this respect, the work on macro knowledge environment that the translator should know is delineated in the current paper (Newmark, 1989: 2).

One of the most stereotypical strata of translation theory is that the translator must possess knowledge of both languages and the translator must be skilful in translation. Bell (1991: 36) suggested five distinct constituents of knowledge; they are: knowledge of target language (TL), knowledge of the text type, knowledge of source language (SL), knowledge of subject area, and constructive knowledge of both languages. The system of translation is, by nature, a communication among cultures and
languages. So, this sort of communication consists of three major constituent parts; encoding process can be performed in the writer/speaker of the text. The decoding process is that the listener/hearer can manage the codes sent by the encoder. The encoding – decoding relations are mediated and that is highly related to the translator of the text. The translator, therefore, operates cognitive processes with the linguistic corpus, and thus the process of decoding and re-encoding takes place.

As the translator is a medium between two cultures and languages, he/she must possess a broad knowledge of language variables, discourse factors, linguistics structures, etc. Thus, macro knowledge is the broad type of knowledge that contains

![Diagram of the translating process]

**Figure (1) Translating Process**
Adapted from (Bassenett, 2005: 25)

all linguistic and extra linguistic information, skills, figurative tropes, rituals, conceptual structures, cultural data and language universal and language specific (Newmark, 1989: 2).
The translator must have this type of knowledge, semantic fields of both languages, and rules of conceptual structures in both languages to carry the propositional content, the semantic clues of the texts, the conceptual images, syntactic rules of both languages, and semantic constructions. All these are included in the cognitive system of the mental model of the translator. The knowledge and expertise systems are specialized software package that enable to benefit from the knowledge of the expert human conceptual storage system in the mental model. Inference, on the other hand, plays a vital role in understanding and comprehending phases according to above mentioned systems. Thus, the understanding process is the preliminary process of comprehension whereby the receptor would invoke the conventional meaning of the discourse patterns in terms of his/her own macro knowledge structures and inference making mechanisms. This criterion can be seen in the complex conceptual constructions within the discourse-based formulaic clues\(^1\). Discourse comprehension (or even any piece of language) is fundamentally a knowledge and inference - based process. Certain text can be interpreted or even translated in terms of macro knowledge. There are also other mechanisms working according to expertise and skills developed through temporal and spatial environments of the text, as well as knowledge constituents stored in the ICM of mind. Hence, our interest in the subject matter is really our knowledge of that subject that is increasingly refined by skills, knowledge structures, experience, cultural preferences, systems of traditions, linguistic and semantic know know how of both languages (Dawood & Ahmed,

\(^1\) The complex conceptual constructions are seen in the use of semantic deviation such as innuendo structures, allusions, symbolic structures, implicature.
2006: 30). Expert systems within the mental model can give advice to user (translator) to communicate knowledge in novel ways (Bell, 1991: 36). So, this system includes the major components of the conceptual structure as in the following figure:

![Diagram of Cognitive Macro Knowledge: A Semantic View…](image)

Contact Line Correlation

**Figure (2)**

**Knowledge – inference Mechanism Correlation**

The macro knowledge base domains are combined with translation skills and expertise. In this respect, the translator should embark on the operation of developing the skills that are included in the training and practicing the methods of specialization. Cognitively speaking, the training and practicing can play a role in inference mechanism of the text. As a form of macro knowledge, cultural implications between languages imply pattern recognition of all preferences and traditions of social barriers and taking into account several possibilities before deciding the solution which appears to be the most suitable equivalent to the SL text (Schaffner, 1991: 2); (Reiss, 2000: 66).

3. **Macro Knowledge Structures**

   During the process of translating, the knowledge of the mental model can be posited in the components that cover the
macro knowledge. (Bell, 1991: 41) specified the major constituents of the macro knowledge, which can be summarized in the following:

1- Grammatical Knowledge: The rules of the code including types of vocabularies (Newmark, 1989: 3) and word formation, pronunciation/spelling and sentence structure, i.e., the knowledge and skills required to understand and express the literal meaning of the utterances.

إنَّ الإنسان خُلُقْ هَلْوَعًا (المعارج/19)
Verily, man is created impatient (Kassab, 1994: 1057)

خُلُق الإنسان من عَجَل سَأَرِيكُم آيَتي فَلا تَسْتَنْفِجْلُون (الأنبياء/37)
Man has been created hasty: I shall certainly show you My signs. Don’t ask me to hasten (in bringing them to you) (Kassab, 1994: 552).

The verb (خُلُقْ) (is created) is however formed as passive voice within that semantic reference to the negative connotation to denote to the nature of human instinct of impatience and born that he is being (impatient) (هَلْوَعًا) to judge and do things. Thus, negative connotation in this context is given in the Qura’nic text with passive voice; hence the translator in such case transferred SL into TL with equivalent passive. The syntactico-semantic point of view sees that the active voice - on the other hand - is usually escorted by the good deeds and may be of positive connotation and that is consequently a form of sacredness and accuracy embodied in the construction of the Glorious Qura’nic text (Al-Sameraee, 2009: 140). The translator tries to restructure a sort of grammatical balance on TL text. Sentence order and sentence patterns should be kept as much as possible. Sometimes, the translator tries to do some
modifications in sentence patterns or in accordance with the different usages of the target language that may not make changes in the overall content of the conceptual structure.

2- **Sociolinguistic Knowledge**: The ability to understand the conceptual structures appropriately within their social context as constrained by topic and content, the strata of the participants, purposes of the interaction, the attitudes of the participants, figurative tropes, idiomatic expressions, temporal and spatial situations, cultural and social spheres.

The divorcees shall wait three monthly periods before marrying. It is not permissible for them to conceal what Allah has created in their wombs, if they really believe in Allah and in the Last Day. Their husbands have better right to return them, if they intend reconciliation. **They shall have as much rights against their husbands as they have obligations towards them**, according to common practice. But their husbands shall have one degree of precedence over them. Verily, Allah is Mighty and Wise (Kassab, 1994: 59).

This process calls for cross-cultural operation on the part of the translator. The translator makes interpretation and uses an exact word in an exact context (anarchism). He/she seeks to dress TL text suitable suits for the text through selecting the most relevant structures within the social context. In other words, an exact, precise and concise context is the backbone of such an activity of religious
register of translation (cf. Bassenett, 2005: 123). Some protocols in society of the discourse have several rituals that may be opaque and unknown to the translator or even to the reader/hearer himself. Sociolinguistic knowledge means not only the social interaction of community, but also the social spheres and horizons of the text itself. The text should be rendered flexibly where the necessary constructions should be focused and the rendered versions should satisfy the minimum requirements of clear expressions embodied in the conceptual structures that can be inferred fluently and smoothly on TL.

3- Discourse Knowledge: The ability to combine form and meaning to achieve unified texts in different genres. The knowledge of the discourse should be ascribed by the logical connectivity according to the knowledge constituents. This type of connectivity depends upon the cohesion in form and coherence in the pragmatic, semantic and conceptual textures.

Oh you who believe! If you wish to pray, wash your faces, your hands as far as the elbows, partially wipe your heads with water and wash your feet as high as ankles. If you be ritually impure, you shall purify yourselves. But if you are on travel, or if one of you comes from the low land (Kassab, 1994: 174).

The underlined constructions depend on the conceptual structures; they imply figurative tropes that have several connotations. The structures can be inferred according to the macro knowledge, i.e. conceptual image,
inference making and culture. The translator firstly seeks to keep the sanctity of the Qur'anic text and transfer the closest image of (َُُْبًققب فَققبوََّّٖزُٗاْ) into (ritually impure, you shall purify yourselves). This discourse knowledge implies all links between discourses on the one hand and macro knowledge structures and inference making process on the other that are mediated by cognitive system. Discourse structures can only be reproduced in translating process by specific acts on the part of dominant interlocutors. Such acts are themselves controlled by macro knowledge of semantic content, conceptual structures and culture. (أَْٗ ََقبء أَحَق   ٍَّقْنٌُ ٍِّقَِ) the translator refers to the concept of SL with (or if one of you comes from the low land), as (الغانط) is the (low land) to refer to the place to answer the call of nature. So, (الغانط) in Arabic is the place to answer the call of nature. The translator is accurate in this case, he should took the accurate meaning of the SL text and render it into the TL. The conceptual structure of (low land) is to be understood by the TL that anyone comes from the (low land) in real should perform ablution because that person came from a place that is low in real, and consequently the call of nature is conceptually and semantic unknown to the TL receptors.

Thus elite discourses work about the expressive identity and emotiveness influence the emotional charge.

The achievements of those who disbelieve are likened to a mirage in a desert. A thirsty person thinks that it is a water, but when he comes to it, he finds it nothing; but there he finds Allah, Who repays him in full what he had done. Verily, Allah is Quick in reckoning with people (Kassab, 1994: 607).
In this case, the translator reproduced a new conceptual structure in TL text. Coherent devices are embodied in the most important information of a discourse (are likened), and (but there he finds Allah) played a vital cognitive role in producing the comprehension phase of the whole discourse on TL, because this is a figurative trope that is characterized by high sort of genre. This construction is full coherence of reference - inference relations and has logical connectivity to the text that assigns the necessary unity on TL.

4- **Strategic Knowledge**: The mastery and professionalism of communicative strategies which may be used to transfer communication or to compensate the breakdowns caused by limiting factors in actual communication or insufficient competence in one or more of the other components of communication. The production of all paradigmatic and syntagmatic relations in the text and the ability to transfer the image into another language through translation. The translator in this type confirms the norms of both languages in a communicative way during translating. The translator has a strategy to know the flavor of both languages that the reader may read the TL text as in SL text. The translator takes the text, in understanding process (1), as a whole discourse with all conceptual structures in terms of cognitive model of mind. The translator of the Qur’anic meanings embarked on the philological and exegeses in order to include all constructions.

وأدخل يَذَكَّ فِي جِبَّةٍ تَخْرِجُ بَيْضَاءٍ مِنْ عِيرٍ سَوِىٍ فِي تَسْعَ آيَاتٍ إِلَى فَرْعُونَ

(1) Understanding process is a preliminary process for the comprehension phase (Ahmed, 2006: 42).
"Now put your hand into your bosom and it will come forth white without stain (or harm): (these are) among the nine Signs (you wilt take) to Pharaoh and his people: for they are a people rebellious in transgression (Kassab, 1994:665).

The translator himself should infer the strategy of knowledge. This can be done through exegeses. The topic and the meaning of discourse can be described in two levels; the (micro) level of word and sentence meanings with contexts; and the (macro) level of discourse. The micro level of this discourse is powered by the use of (وَأَنْخَلَ يَدُكَ) to refer to the operation of putting hand, (فِي جَيْبِكَ) refers to the bosom of dress, and the (تأَخَرْجَ) refers to the difference would happen. The translator should take the concept of anachronism to the dress out the expressions suitable reference on TL; such as the case of (فِي جَيْبِكَ) that refers not to the (pocket). Topics are theoretically represented as the propositions that form its semantic macro-structure and the environment of the textual material as well as the inference making process of understanding and comprehending the text itself. Knowledge strategies are sometimes directly expressed in contexts as the most important (highest-level) information of mental models, and are used by the receptors to build such models.

4. The Processes of Cognitive Systems and Architecture:

The knowledge processes approach assumes that perception and understanding from linguistic inputs can be analyzed conceptually into series of situations and constituents
during particular inference mechanisms and macro knowledge constituents. The cognitive system operates pattern recognition on the basis of knowledge background to extract the significant features. The textual material of the Qur’anic text is very rich with various conceptual structures, which they constitute a cognitive style that simulate the cognitive model of mind. The simulation between the inference mechanisms and knowledge has a sort of communication among the conceptual constructions and this may result in the reproduction of equivalent image (Bower & irilo, 1985: 74); (Saedi, 1990: 393); (Bonnefoy, 1992: 187); (Al-Hilali & Khan: iii).

Cognitive semantic studies deal with translation in relation to the macro knowledge and conceptual structures that explains the processes of rebuilding the text in another language. The cognitive model of the religious text is typically recognized as a complex structure, defined by all sorts of knowledge - based construes. It should be noted that terms figurative tropes are not used in the same way as in most other conceptual structures of language (Lakoff 1987: 290); (Fauconnier 1994); (Fauconnier & Turner, 1996).

The translating process is naturally a plan because the translator tries first to recognize the clues of the text. This plan entered into the working memory, it consists of instructions to analyze certain texture. The identification stage ensues during which the system tries to classify the stimulus. Roughly speaking, this operation happened within the frame of pattern recognition; it is assumed to involve a weighted matching of the knowledge elements of both textual materials.
If they see a possible trading transaction, or some distraction, they hasten to it, leaving you standing on the pulpit. Say, “what is with Allah is better than play or trade. And Allah is the best Sustainer” (Kassab, 1994: 1018).

The translator's accuracy of identification depends on the quality of sensory information. So, the word is identified more readily if it is probable and expected in the context. The translator makes implicit predictions to the words and prototypes of the contexts. Returning to the structure of the discourse, the grammar of sentences is relative to the above sentences or propositions (linear relations). The conceptual structure of (التجارة) (trading) has preceded (اللهو) (distraction) primitively in (وإذا رأوا تجاره أو اللهو) and the conceptual structure was secondly interchanged into (خير من اللهو ومن التجارة) (play or trade) note that the concept of (اللهو) in the second case has been rendered into (play). This issue can be seen as a mental architecture that stimulates the translator’s mental model to take some strategies to achieve the understanding process and accuracy. In the first part of the text people were attracted by the trading during the Prophet’s time. While in the second part, the concept of (اللهو) has preceded (التجارة) trade that of being more generic than trade. In this respect cohesion of the TL text should be achieved in coincidence with coherence. The constructions are hierarchically relative to the semantic representations of the discourse. The interconnection between components of the cognitive system is stipulated by the control of inference network and knowledge constituents. The components can be divided roughly into a sensory system, a response system, a long term memory and central processor (short term memory). On this basis, the translator can perceive, think and decide the TL text (Bower & Cirilo, 1985: 74); (Saedi, 1990: 393); (Al-Sameraee, 2009: 163).
5. Translation of Figurative Tropes:

The most significant assumptions of the viewing figurative language are that such language is semantically atypical referent and requires special conceptual processes to be understood, and that consequently requires broad knowledge constituents as well as skillful capabilities of translation. The atypical reference of language can be inferred in terms of normal cognitive mechanisms. The translator of the SL figurative trope must recognize the semantic deviant nature of the figurative language before determining the atypical meaning of the text and find the relevant equivalent on TL text (Gibbs, 1994: 83). That means the translator should have macro knowledge of the cultural and language varieties of both languages to specify the atypical reference point of SL text.
Figure (3)
The Processes of Understanding Figurative Tropes

Oh Harun’s sister! Your father was not an evil man, nor was your mother a whore (Kassab, 1994: 514).

The underlined construction is however eponym that refers to Miriam, the sister of the good man (Harun). He is well known Prophet of Israeli people. This text refers to the similarity of Mariam to Harun in worshiping Allah and good deeds, her father was not ill – mannered and her mother was not a whore (Al-Saboni, 1996: 215). Discourse is acceptable only if the macrostructure satisfies a number of further cultural and semantic constraints. Another text:
Then a man came running from the farthest side of the city. He said, “oh my people! Follow Apostles”. Follow those who ask no reward from you, and who are guided to the straight path. Then he said to his people “why should I not worship the One Who has created me, to whom you shall be returned? (Kassab, 1994: 769).

The figurative language is however difficult to be inferred because of some cultural and conceptual specifics. The most influential ideas about understanding the macro knowledge come from understanding the conceptual structures of figurative tropes. When the text has been taken typically, the conceptual structure can only be a question to elicit more information. The standard cognitive model assumes that the analysis of atypical meaning is primary, and that the figurative interpretation of any text can be inferred through some set of rules in relation to receiver's understanding of context according to his/her cognitive system (Bassenett, 2005: 86), (Dawood & Ahmed, 2006: 30).

The mental model predicts that all instances of figurative tropes are inferred according to mappings of the atypical meaning of discourse. The long standing which assumptions proposed that figurative meaning is atypical, requires special mental processes to infer the meaning, and hence macro knowledge is posited (Figure, 3). A theory of translation can be partial, limited and fuzzy, if there is no fuse in the knowledge constituent spheres (Bassnett 2005: 22). It can point to the esthetic accuracy and fidelity to the Qur’anic text. Thus, in a paradigmatic departure, the translation of a Qur’anic text became a transaction or “substitution” not between two languages, but rather a more complex negotiation between two cultures. The unit of translation is no longer a word or a sentence or a paragraph or a page or even a text, but indeed the whole
language and culture in which that text is constituted in macro knowledge (Al-Hilali & Khan, 1996: 3); (Gibbs, 1994: 84); (Bassnett, 2005: 22).

Hence, the notion of culture is essential to consider the implications for translation and, despite the differences in opinion as to whether language is part of culture or not, the two notions appear to be inseparable.

6. Conclusions

In general, macro knowledge means the general information that the translator must have in order to render the SL into TL in a very fluent way, specifically in the case of Qur’anic text. Discourse consists relatively of explicit and implicit structures; the implicit ones are elicited in figurative tropes. It is noticed that the flavor of the TL text may vary with respect to the varied conceptual structures. Translator seeks to transfer the emotional charge that is sometimes seen on the TL. The translator pays attention to bring out the closest conceptual structure between two texts. The use of figurative tropes is embodied in the Qur’anic text to pass certain information, order, implicit explanation or details and thus this usage is a form of cultural specificity of Qur’anic language and this is a cognitive style.

The translator must have a sufficient skill and knowledge of both texts, because he/she is embarking on translating not usual text, but a Word of Allah, thus this characteristic must be well vested by the translator. Macro knowledge means the overall cultural and language specifications, hence these can come as a result of developing skills and knowledge structures. In cognitive model, the conceptual structure construes various images, representing two basic elements: the macro knowledge and inference making mechanisms. Mental models also consist
of concepts that constitute the image of the text and the connectors which show the paths of cognitive mappings across different input domains. The translator should confirm transferring the accuracy, fidelity and loyalty standards of the original text.

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