Neologism as a Linguistic Phenomenon in Mass Media Textbook with Reference to Translation

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Abstract

The terminology of international development is constantly evolving as new socioeconomic concepts emerge. These new concepts have no
equivalences in languages other than that in which they first occur. This paper tackles neologisms, and their translations, which have been found in the English textbook intended for the students of Mass Media Departments at some Iraqi universities and which have no Arabic equivalences. The students of Mass media face difficulties in understanding and translating the neologisms within their English textbook and during practicing their profession as journalists. This paper tries to point out the difficulties and find some appropriate solutions for the problem in question. Definitions are given to the concept of neologism. The types of neologisms and their versions in addition to selecting and creating new words are mentioned. A total survey has been made to the textbook in order to collect these neologisms. These new expressions have been checked up in websites and some encyclopedias to identify their exact meanings. The definitions of these neologisms are translated into Arabic to derive the new coinage from these definitions. Then, the suggested expressions are given to these new words. Finally, some points are drawn to state the conclusions of the current paper.

1. The Concept of Neologism

Neologisms are defined as "newly coined lexical units or existing lexical units that acquire a new sense" (Newmark 1988: 140). He points out the types of neologisms: old words with new senses, new coinages, derived words,
abbreviations, collocations, eponyms, phrasal words transferred words, acronyms and pseudo-neologisms (ibid). These items can pose a great challenge for the translator as they cannot be found in dictionaries. Therefore it is the translator who has to create new words and expressions as equivalences during the translation process.

Newmark (1988: 143) states that "any kind of neologism should be recreated; if it is a derived word it should be replaced by the same or equivalent morphemes, if it is also phonaesthetic, it should be given phonemes producing analogous sound effects". It is not only the translator’s right to create neologisms but, in a literary text, "it is his duty to re-create any neologism he meets" (ibid : 149).

Neology is one of the many translation problems that have no standardized solutions. In journalism, neologisms occur very often for their ability and power of information condensation and their expressive effect. Translators have to render
them in the target language by using quite complicated reasoning, which involves many factors, such as text type, creative traditions, literary norms and conventions that are familiar to the reader of a certain society. Various theorists have addressed the problem of neology, although the focus of each of them is different. Some have attempted to explain the reasons that enable the occurrence of neologisms in a language system. Aitchison (1991:89) says that their occurrence is justified by three causes: "fashion, foreign influence and social need". Wardhaugh (2002:188) says that a new lexicon can be adopted either by utilization of elements already present in the language or by borrowing lexicons from another language. The theorists who have addressed the problem have agreed on the skills that translators need to occupy when they are called to deal with neologisms (i.e. creativity, curiosity, intuition, ingenuity, reflection and resourcefulness), but they have not yet come to a common theory on what kind of strategies and solutions are appropriate for translating different types of neologisms. Moreover, only journals and
short articles address the issue of translating neologisms from a specific language to another specific language (http://www.shvoong.com/).

Neologisms as a linguistic phenomenon can be seen from different aspects: time (synchronic), geographical, social and communicative. Thus, neologism is a unit of the lexicon, a word, a word element or a phrase, whose meaning, or whose signifier-signified relationship, presupposing an effective function in a specific model of communication, was not previously materialized as a linguistic form in the immediately preceding stage of the lexicon of the language. This novelty, which is observed in relation to a precise and empirical definition of the lexicon, corresponds normally to a specific feeling in speakers. According to the model of the lexicon chosen, the neologism will be perceived as belonging to the language in general or only to one of its special usages; or as belonging to a subject-specific usage which may be specialized or general (Rey 1995:77). Neologism can be either a loan word in the form of a direct loan and a loan translation, or a newly
coined term, either a morphologically new word or by giving an existing word a new semantic content (http://www.proz.com/ ). If reliable sites are selected, the Internet can often provide helpful information to understand the meaning of new terminology, to find foreign-language equivalents and to verify usage (ibid).

For the individual, some words may be unknown without necessarily being neologisms. A special term that the interpreter does not understand is not automatically a neologism. It is part of the linguistic competence and general knowledge of the interpreter that s/he is able to determine whether a term is new or just unknown to him. Neologisms have to become generally known to the public through their usage in a specific context. In linguistics, a neologism refers to a recently created (or coined) word, phrase or usage which can sometimes be attributed to a specific individual, publication, period or event. The term was itself coined around 1800 A.D. A neologism can also refer to an existing word or phrase which has been assigned a new meaning.
Neologisms are especially useful in identifying inventions, new phenomena, or old ideas which have taken on a new cultural context. A neologist is a person who develops a neologism and neology is the act of introducing a neologism into a language (http://www.slideshare.net/).

2. Types of Neologisms

The kinds of neologisms vary according to the field they first occur in. Generally speaking, we can mention the following types of neologisms:

1) **Scientific** : "the task of the translator in science fiction is made more complicated by the fact that, apart from mediating between cultures, he or she has to create names for things that do not exist in reality, not even in the source culture" (Newmark 1991: 44). Scientific neologisms are words or phrases created to describe new scientific discoveries. They can be exemplified in the following: prion which is an "infectious protein particle: an infectious particle of protein that, unlike a virus, contains no nucleic acid, does not
trigger an immune response, and is not destroyed by extreme heat or cold" (Microsoft® Encarta® 2009).

2) **Political**: they are words or phrases created to make some kind of political or rhetorical point, sometimes, perhaps with an eye to the **Sapir-Whorf hypothesis** "theory about language: the theory that the structure of a language helps determine how its native speakers perceive and categorize experience" (Microsoft® Encarta® 2009), e.g., pro-life. Some political neologisms, however, are intended to convey a negative point of view. They can be exemplified in the following: brutalitarian. (http://www.slideshare.net/).

3) **Pop-culture**: they are words or phrases evolved from mass media content or used to describe popular cultural phenomena (these may be considered a subsection of slang), e.g., carb. (ibid)

4) **Imported**: words or phrases originating in another language. Typically, they are used to
express ideas that have no equivalent term in the native language, e.g., tycoon. (ibid)

5) **Trademarks**: they are often neologisms to ensure they are distinguished from other brands. If legal trademark protection is lost, the neologism may enter the language as a generalized trademark, e.g., Kodak. (ibid)

6) **Nonce words**: they are words coined and used only for a particular occasion, usually for a special literary effect. (ibid)

7) **Inverted**: they are words that are derived from spelling (and pronouncing) to form a standard word backwards, e.g., redrum

Paleologism: a word that is alleged to be a neologism but turns out to be a long-used (if obscure) word. It is used ironically (http://www.slideshare.net/).

3. Versions of Neologisms

There is another sort of distinction among neologisms. That is to say several versions of neologisms can be pointed out as follows:
a) **Unstable** : they comprise a class of neologisms which are extremely new, and being proposed, or being used only by a very small subculture.

b) **Diffused** : they have reached a significant audience, but not yet having gained acceptance.

c) **Stable** : they have gained recognizable and probably lasting acceptance .

(www.slideshare.net/)

4. Selecting and Creating New Words

   A translator may encounter a problem when the target language does not have an equivalent. Many people decide to leave the term in English. However, we should take a moment to think about why we are translating this software. The question is whether people who use your language are able to identify or understand the English word or whether they are even able to read it? In case they cannot, then we need to
look at creating or adapting the word (http://translate.sourceforge.net).

5. Cultural Acceptance

After being coined, neologisms invariably undergo scrutiny by the public and by linguists to determine their suitability to the language. Many neologisms are accepted very quickly; others attract opposition. Language experts sometimes object to a neologism on the grounds that a suitable term for the thing described already exists in the language. Non-experts who dislike the neologism sometimes also use this argument, deriding the neologism as abuse and ignorance of the language. (http://www.slideshare.net/).

Some neologisms, especially those referring to sensitive subjects, are often objected to on the grounds that they obscure the issue being discussed, and that such a word novelty often leads a discussion away from the root issue and onto a sidetrack about the meaning of the neologism itself. Proponents of a neologism see it as being useful, and also helping the language to
grow and change. Often they perceive these words as being a fun and a creative way to play with a language. Also, the semantic precision of most neologisms, along with what is usually a straightforward syntax, often makes them easier to grasp by people who are not native speakers of the language. The outcome of these debates, when they occur, has a great deal of influence on whether a neologism eventually becomes an accepted part of the language. Linguists may sometimes delay acceptance, for instance by refusing to include the neologism in dictionaries; this can sometimes cause a neologism to die out over time. Nevertheless if the public continues to use the term, it always eventually sheds its status as a neologism and enters the language even over the objections of language experts (http://www.slideshare.net/).

6. Translational processes

   The following neologisms have been pointed out in Ali (n.d.), entitled English for Mass Media:
1. **Podcasting** (Ali, n.d.:2): it is a form of distributing digital audio and video files over the internet, typically for convenient use on a portable media device (PMD) such as an MP3 player (Microsoft ® Encarta ® 2009).

The suggested Arabic equivalent expression:

نشر الملفات السمعية البصرية الرقمية عبر الشبكة العنكبوتية

The translational operation adopted here is expansion: making explicit the information that is implicit in the original, either in the main body or in footnotes or glossary. (Baker, 1998: 7).

2. **Blogging** (Ali, n.d.:2): Blogging, the frequent, chronological publication on the Web of personal thoughts and opinions for other Internet users to read (Microsoft ® Encarta ® 2009).
The translational operation adopted here is expansion.

3. **Advertorial** (Ali, n.d.:14) : it is an advertisement in an editorial form, i.e., an advertisement in a publication that looks like one of its normal articles (Microsoft ® Encarta ® 2009).

The translational operation adopted here is creation which is a more global replacement of the original text by a text that preserves
only the essential messages/ideas/ functions of the original (Baker, 1998: 7).

4. **Narrowcasting** (Ali, n.d.:25): it aims at specialized audience, i.e., to aim a radio or television transmission at a limited group of people such as cable subscribers or a specialized audience (Microsoft ® Encarta ® 2009).

The translational operation adopted here is situational equivalence which is the insertion of a more familiar context than the one used in the original (Baker, 1998: 7).

5. **Webcasting** (Ali, n.d.:28): Webcasting is a term used to mean distributing audio, video, and other media content in digital form using a computer network (Microsoft ® Encarta ® 2009).
The translational operation adopted here is transference: Newmark (1988: 81) defines transference as "the process of transferring an SL word to a TL text as a translation procedure".

6. Airchain (Ali, n.d.:29): In broadcast engineering for radio, the airchain or transmission chain (UK) (sometimes air chain (US) or just chain (UK)) is the path or route an audio or video signal takes on its way through a radio station or television station. Retrieved from http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Airchain.

مسار الجوی، في الهندسة الإذاعية، الذي تسلكه الإشارة السمعية البصرية في طريقها إلى محطة الإذاعة أو التلفاز

the suggested Arabic equivalent expression:

مسار نقل الإشارة
The translational operation adopted here is situational equivalence.


the suggested Arabic equivalent

الشريط السينمائي الخام

The translational operation adopted here is transference.

8. **Newswire** (Ali, n.d.:76): it is an internet news service, i.e., an internet service providing the latest information on current events (Microsoft ® Encarta ® 2009).

the suggested Arabic equivalent

خدمة الشبكة العنكبوتية لتوسيع آخر الأخبار حول الأحداث الحالية
The translational operation adopted here is expansion.


The translational operation adopted here is transference.

10. Skype (Ali, n.d.:97): Skype is a software application that allows users to make voice calls over the Internet.

The translational operation adopted here is transliteration: Vermes (2003: 93) says that transliteration means "cases where the graphological units of the SL name are replaced by TL graphological units", and he adds that the term 'graphological substitution' can also be used.

Conclusions

Almost all of the neologisms discussed in this paper are related to the world wide web. So, they are reckoned as scientific expressions. Accordingly, their translations depend greatly on the background of each expression. Thus, the translational operation differs according to each item. The translation process involves five
operations. The first operation includes three expressions which are translated through the **expansion operation** represented by podcasting, blogging, and newswire. The second operation deals with **creation operation** that renders the expression Advertorial. **Situational equivalence** is the third operation that includes the two expressions: narrowcasting and airchain. The expressions webcasting, filmstock, and webcams are treated through the forth operation that is **transference**. The fifth and last operation is **transliteration** which tackles the expression skype.

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