

The Problems of Translating Prepositions in Shakespearean *Othello* into Arabic

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المخلص

تعتمد هذه الدراسة إلى تسليط الضوء على حروف الجر الإنكليزية كما بحثها النحاة التقليديون والمعنيون بالبناء اللغوي والنحاة التوليديون. وفي وسع المرء أن يكتشف بأن النحاة التقليديين تعاملوا مع المعنى بوصفه أساساً لتحليل أقسام الكلام كافة واستخدامها وليس حروف الجر فحسب من خلال المدارس الثلاث، ودراسة سمات واستخدامات حروف الجر الإنكليزية موضوع البحث، وهذا يدل على أن المعنى وليس المبنى هو معيارهم الوحيد في التحليل.:

وترمي هذه الدراسة إلى التحقق من صحة الفرضيات الآتية:

١. ما إذا كان المترجمون الأربعة يستخدمون نموذج نايدا (١٩٦٤: ص١٦٥) لترجمة مسرحية عطيل بشكل متباين.

٢. احتمال عدم وجود المكافئ الترجمي في النصوص العربية.

٣. فيما إذا كانت حروف الجر في الإنكليزية تتكرر أكثر مما هي عليه في العربية.

وقد خلصت الدراسة إلى نتيجة أساسية وهي أن ترجمة حروف الجر تمثل المحك الحقيقي لكفاءة المترجم في اختيار المكافئات الترجمية الأكثر دقة.

Abstract

This paper aims at shedding some light on prepositions in English as have been discussed by traditional structural and transformational generative grammarians. By examining the trends of thought adopted by each of the three schools and studying the features and uses of the English prepositions

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under investigation, one can find out that traditional grammarians have dealt with meaning as a basis for analysing and using not only prepositions, but all other parts of speech as well. That is to say, meaning, not form, is their only criterion of analysis. The work attempts to verify the following hypotheses:

1. The four translators of Othello variably employ Nida's (1964) models for translation.
2. Nil equivalence is likely to appear in Arabic texts.
3. Prepositions occur more frequently in English than they do in Arabic.

With regard to the main findings, the translation of this type of text is a critical and difficult test for the competence of any translator to choose the most appropriate equivalence. As for the hypotheses they are valid.

Statement of the Problem:

Prepositions have always been a problematic area for translators. Limited in number as they are, they form a basic part of conversation and general understanding of language.

The Model Adopted:

Nida's (1964) two types of equivalence are to be applied to the prepositions in Othello which are formal equivalence which focuses attention on the similarity of form between the SL text and the TL text as well as on the content while dynamic equivalence is based on the equivalence of response.

Introduction into Prepositions:

Prepositions express certain relations between two parts of a sentence, e.g. Zayd is in the garden: زيد في الحديقة. The preposition 'in' and its Arabic equivalent في express a spatial relation obtaining between 'Zayd' and 'the garden'. The phrase following the preposition is called its complement, and both the preposition and its complement form the prepositional phrase: 'the garden' الحديقة is complement, and 'in the garden' في الحديقة is a prepositional phrase.

The position of the preposition in both English and Arabic is before its complement. This is rigidly fixed in Arabic. In English, however, there are a few exceptions where the preposition is postponed. These are:

- (i) In questions: What are you looking at?
- (ii) In relative clauses: This is the man I was looking for.
- (iii) In exclamations: What a strange thing dreams are made of!
- (iv) In the passive voice: This point was agreed upon.
- (v) In to-infinitive: He is pleasant to talk to.
- (vi) In -ing constructions: That speaker is not worth listening to.

Moreover, the Arabic preposition governs its complement in the genitive case. The complement of English prepositions has the objective case if the complement is a pronoun, e.g.:

- I gave the book to her. (Aziz, 1989: 183)

Prepositions are used to refer to a relationship between persons, things, etc. and other persons, things, etc. Prepositions are divided into three main types of function: prepositions of time, those of place, and those for other uses (not of place and time). But the same preposition can sometimes be used in different ways, e.g.

- Your lunch is on the table. (place)
- I saw Bob on Monday. (time)
- Do you have any books on Latin America? (other)

Prepositional Complement:

A prepositional complement is realized by:

1. A noun phrase, e.g.
On the table.
2. A nominal Wh-clause, e.g.
From what he said.
3. A nominal -ing clause, e.g.
By singing a peace treaty.

(Quirk, 1973: 167)

As complementation of a verb or an adjective, the preposition is more closely related to the preceding word which determines its choice, than to the prepositional complement (Quirk et al., 1985: 657).

The last prepositional phrase functions as preposition complement (Kies, 2006: 1).

Prepositions Viewed Functionally:

Curme (1931: 190) notes that the prepositional phrase functions as:

1. An adverb of place, e.g.

He is working in the garden.

2. An adverb of time, e.g.

He arrived in the evening.

3. An adverb of manner, e.g.

He wrote the letter with care.

He also notes that the prepositional phrase expresses:

1. A result, e.g.

He worked himself to death.

2. A degree, e.g.

He is taller by two inches.

3. An attendant circumstance, e.g.

She passed me on the street without speaking to me.

4. A restriction, e.g.

He may be dead for all I know.

5. A cause, e.g.

He was beheaded for treason.

6. A concession, e.g.

His wife clings to him with all his faults.

7. A condition, e.g.

Without him I should be hopeless.

8. A purpose, e.g.

John works for grades.

9. A means, e.g.

He cut the grass with a lawn mower.

10. An agency, e.g.

The trees were trimmed by the gardener.

Prepositional phrase may function syntactically in the capacity of an adjunct, postmodifier, complement of a verb, complement of an adjective, subjunct, disjunct and conjunct. Of the aforementioned functions, those of adjunct and postmodifier are the most common.

The following are instances which show the syntactic use of prepositional phrase:

1. The farmers were working on the farm.

The prepositional phrase 'on the farm' modifying "working", functions as an adverbial element.

2. The clock in the tower is out of order.

The prepositional phrase 'in the tower' may serve as a post-modifier of the noun head. This prepositional phrase and the like in its adjectival function most commonly occurs after the noun or pronoun modified.

3. The girls were looking at their bad drawings.

The prepositional phrase 'at their bad drawing' completes the verb since it is more closely related to the verb than to the prepositional complement.

4. He is happy with his success.

The prepositional phrase 'with his success' functions as an adjective complement.

5. From a personal point of view, I find this a good solution to the problem.

The prepositional phrase 'from a personal point of view' functions as subjunct.

6. In all fairness, she did try to phone the police.

The prepositional phrase 'in all fairness' functions as disjunct.

7. On the other hand, he made no attempt to help her.

The prepositional phrase 'on the other hand' functions as conjunct.

A recent approach to the polysemy of prepositions has developed from the frame of cognitive semantics where prepositions express not only spatial (topological) relation. Moreover, I would agree that this is not the result of a metaphorical extension, but it is learnt from the beginning of language acquisition, itself being the source of metaphorical extensions. In this sense, the literal meaning of the preposition is not a bare spatial relation in geometric terms, but this is conceptually coloured by a functional relation borne between the participants (Langachen, 2006: 9).

Prepositions Viewed Lexically:

Clark (1968: 93) argues that dictionaries do not usually indicate what a preposition means. This argument emphasizes the need to treat prepositions and their meanings as a system of relations.

Prepositions, as function words, are relatively weak or in lexical meaning. They derive their meaning almost from their relation to other words in the context. Such words are more important for what they do than for what they mean. Prepositions, in language, serve to mark or specify the various types of relational meaning, those of place, time and others as in:

1. He sat on a bench. (place)
2. He sat at six o'clock. (time)

A preposition is not a word which has no meaning at all, and it is not a word with a clearly determined meaning.

Every symbol in language represents a certain limited meaning. For instance, the period as a punctuation mark means that the reader has to make a final pause whenever he comes to such a sign. The meaning of a preposition can be understood by inference from the verbal context. Accordingly, "discovering what a word means independently of any linguistic context is difficult" (ibid.: 93). Consider the following sentences:

3. Tom is playing in the garden.
4. Tom is playing near the garden.

The preposition 'near' conveys the meaning that Tom is outside the garden, whereas in the previous sentence 'in' expresses the idea of 'enclosure' and denotes that Tom is located in a position within the garden. In analysing the meaning of prepositions, one may find that they have more than one meaning. To illustrate this point, Bennett

(1975: 60) says that a lexeme may or may not have the same meaning in two separate contexts. Then he gives the following examples:

5. She was sitting by the window.
6. Return it to me by Monday.

Consequently, to identify prepositions fully, it is not enough to find out their lexical meanings.

In primary uses, lexical units that express spatial meaning (prepositions, among others) refer to the domain of physical space and topological relations between entities (Gibbs, 2006: 12).

Overlapping Types of Preposition:

Clark (1968: 216) studies 33 prepositions examining the similarities in meaning between them. He found that the prepositions which are similar in meaning elicit overlapping sets of association. Also, prepositions can be used to indicate different spaces. It is assumed that a place which is thought of as a surface with length and width will be a proper position of contact associated with ‘on’. However, prepositions like ‘into’, ‘in’, ‘out of’, ‘though’, ‘off’, and ‘across’ can also be associated with surface when the latter is thought of as ‘an area of ground or territory enclosed by boundaries’. The following examples with the diagram drawn opposite each:

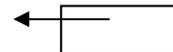
1. They crowded into the street.



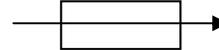
2. I have a house in the street.



3. They flew out of the country.



4. We went for a walk through the park.



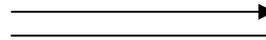
illustrate that the overlapping between various types of preposition can well be realized as in some previous examples in which the same space is introduced by a variety of prepositions. The following examples show that the same preposition can indicate different positions:

5. Zeki is working in his house.

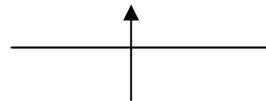
6. The farmer is working in the field.

In addition to the two directional words ‘to’ and ‘from’, Leech and Svartvick (1975: 200) suggest that prepositions such as ‘along’, and ‘off’ can also express the directional movement of a line. The following examples with the diagram opposite each show the directions of movement denoted by each preposition.

7. We walked along the river.



8. They drove across the frontiers.



9. We turned off the main road.



There are several points of similarity between prepositions and other word classes and constructions in English grammar, in particular conjunctions and adverbs, but also participles and adjectives (Quirk et al., 1985: 658).

Everyday language use, however, reveals that not only typological relations are expressed, but also force-dynamic and

functional patterns of relationship between entities. We can grasp this idea by looking at the following examples:

Typological patterns: At the centre.

 On the table.

 In the box.

Force-dynamic patterns: Rush at him.

 Come on.

 Hit him in the stomach.

Functional patterns: The parishioners are at church, at praying.

 The soldier is on duty, on the machine-gun.

 The prisoner is in custody, in handcuffs.

(Bower, 2006: 84)

There are several points of similarity between prepositions and other word classes and constructions in English grammar, in particular conjunctions and adverbs, but also participles and adjectives (Quirk et al., 1985: 658).

Deletion of Prepositions:

Generally speaking, prepositions like other parts of speech might be omitted in certain linguistic contexts. Sometimes the omission is useful as it shortens the sentence and makes meaning easier to grasp.

Some prepositions, Poustma (1926: 105) thinks, are apt to be dropped under certain conditions. The preposition ‘at’ for example is omitted especially in the adjunct of place as in:

1. The soldier takes his place some distance from the officer.

‘At’ can also be omitted in adjunct of time as in:

2. John was awake about 11:30.

Its omission is the rule before the adverb ‘about’ as in the above sentence. He adds that the modification obtaining in the function of the verb will cause the preposition to disappear, sine numerous intransitive verbs may be converted into transitive through the absorption of the preposition with which they are construed as in:

3. He travels in the continent.

4. He travels the continent.

5. He climbs on the tree.

6. He climbs the tree.

7. He entered into the house.

8. He entered the house.

All prepositions, Fillmore (1968: 131) believes, are deleted in subject position, i.e. when a nominal becomes a subject of a verb it loses its preposition as is illustrated in the phrase marker of the following sentences:

9. The death of the dog.

10. The dog died.

11. The reading of books.

12. Read books.

The rule for the omission of prepositions in the nominalizations stated above reads. “Whenever the object of a preposition is made subject, it loses its preposition” (ibid.: 93). The examples below demonstrate this:

13. Bees swarm in the garden.

14. The garden swarms with bees.

Semantically speaking, sentence (13) means that there are some bees in the garden, i.e. bees can be located somewhere in the garden while sentence (14) indicates that the garden has been invaded by bees. It is noteworthy to remark that a preposition is obligatorily omitted in a sentence such as the following:

15. We went home.

When a verb contains, within its own meaning, the meaning of a following preposition, it is often possible to omit the preposition (Quirk et al., 1985: 685).

In some cases, the preposition is deleted. Sometimes this deletion is optional as in:

1. When the preposition for expresses a span of time, e.g.

- We have lived here (for) twelve years.

2. When the preposition on is used before days of the week (when the day is used alone or when the day of the week modifies another temporal noun such as morning, afternoon and night (Haydut, 2006: 3).

The Choice of Prepositions:

Fillmore (1968: 200) maintains that if the choice of the preposition to go with each verb, is not determined by a general rule, it is to be determined by the idiosyncratic properties of the verb, e.g.

1. Yousif came to London.
2. Yousif arrived in London.

Among the common prepositions of place relation which are deleted or changed according to the idiosyncratic properties of the preceding verb are: 'few', 'to', 'at', 'in' and 'on'. The preposition 'from' is deleted when it is preceded by the verb 'leave' as in:

3. Zeki went from Baghdad.
4. Zeki left Baghdad.

In a sequence where the two prepositions 'from' and 'to' occur to describe a journey the source of which the listener does not know, the verb 'leave' will delete the preposition 'from' and govern the object of the preposition as its direct object, whereas the directional word 'to' will be converted into 'for' as the following examples demonstrate:

5. Selma went from Baghdad to London.
6. Selma left Baghdad for London.

The verb 'leave' will delete the prepositional phrase 'from Baghdad' in the sentence above and function as an intransitive verb only if the listener is familiar with the source of the journey as the sentence below shows:

7. Selma left for London.

Langendoen (1970: 201) has also noticed that the preceding verb will decide the choice of the preposition.

In the following example the preposition 'at' is used after the intransitive verb 'arrive' to specify the end of a journey, e.g.

8. Layla arrived at the hotel.

Owing to its idiosyncratic property, the verb 'reach', if used instead of 'arrive' in the following sentence, will delete the preposition 'at' and act as a transitive verb, e.g.

9. Layla reached the hotel.

The distinction in Langendoen's view (1970: 201) between the location or movement in time is that there are some verbs which play a spatial role only and others which play a temporal role only, e.g.

10. The delegate walked into the auditorium.

11. The meeting lasted into the morning.

The two sentences above indicate that the verb 'walk' occurs only with movement in time. The sentences below show that the preposition 'in' is deleted when the meaning of the verb is part of the meaning of the preposition. Thus:

12. My money is in this box.

13. This box contains my money.

With regard to the preposition 'on', the occurrence of certain verbs such as 'wear' and 'carry' which describe a situation indicating

that a person carries something with him allows for the deletion of the preposition as in:

14. He puts his hat on his head.

15. He wears his hat.

As complementation of a verb or an adjective, the preposition is more closely related to the preceding word (look at, sorry for), which determines its choice, than to the prepositional complement (Quirk et al., 1985: 657).

The choice of preposition is used for pedagogical purposes as in choosing the correct response to fill the gap, e.g.

1. _____ painting over is beautiful.

that, these, those

2. She works hard during the day and sleeps _____ night.

at, at the, in the

3. The cheese is _____ the eggs.

behind, in front, in

4. They can _____ chess very well.

play, to play, playing

(Esl, 2006: 9)

Shakespearean Language and His Use of Prepositions:

The most striking feature of Shakespeare is his command of language. It is all the more astounding when one not only considers Shakespeare's formal education but the curriculum of the day. There were no dictionaries, the first such lexical work for speakers of

English was compiled by schoolmaster Robert Cawdrey as *A Table Alphabetical* in 1604. Although certain grammatical treatises were published in Shakespeare's day, organized grammar texts would not appear until 1700s. Shakespeare as a youth would have no more systematically studied his own language than any educated man of the period (from the Internet, 2007).

Despite this, Shakespeare is credited by the Oxford English Dictionary with the introduction of nearly 3000 words into the language. His vocabulary, as called from his works, numbers of upward of 17.000 words (quadruple that of an average, well-educated conversationalist in the language). In the words of Louis Marder, Shakespeare was so facile in employing words that he was able to use over 7000 of them – more than occur in the whole King James version of the Bible – only once and never again (from the Internet, 2007).

Shakespearean English, in spite of the calamitous cries of high school students everywhere, is only one linguistic generation removed from that which we speak today. Although the Elizabethan dialect differs slightly from Modern English, the principles were generally the same. There were some (present days) anomalies with prepositional usage and verb agreement, and certainly a number of Shakespeare's words have shifted meanings or dropped with age, from the present vocabulary word order, as the language shifted from Middle to Early Modern English, was still a bit more flexible, and Shakespeare wrote dramatic poetry, not standard prose, which gave some greater license

in expression. However, Elizabethan language remains sibling of our own language, and hence, accessible (from the Internet, 2007).

This facility with language, and the art with which he employed its usage, is why Shakespeare is as relevant today as he was in his own time (from the Internet, 2007).

Data Analysis:

Prepositions play a decisive role in indicating the style of any writer. Shakespeare exploited prepositions skillfully to display his distinguished style. Several difficulties arise, however, when we set out to choose the most appropriate equivalent because English and Arabic belong to two different language families. This task is taken up by a third person, i.e. the translator.

Samples of Translation Equivalent:

Nida's (1964) two types of equivalence are to be applied to the prepositions in Othello (see page 2) as we have already mentioned that formal equivalence focuses attention on the similarity of form between the SL text and the TL text as well as on the content while dynamic equivalence is based on the equivalence of response.

The following are instances of prepositions from Othello.

The SL Text (1):

Roderigo says

Shouldst know of this (Act 1, Scene i, Line 3, Page 3)

The TL Texts:

1. Al-Khumayri .١ وانتم تعلم
2. Jabra .٢ ادري بهذا
3. Jamaal .٣ _____
4. Matraan .٤ لانك تتسمت خير هذه المسألة

Discussion:

The type of preposition used here is simple. The preposition does not appear in the translations of Al-Khumaryri and Matraan because their translations are dynamic while it appears in the translation of Jabra, but it is deleted by Jamaal. The preposition is determined by the verb that precedes it.

The SL Text (2):

Iago says

And on other grounds (Act 1, Scene i, Line 4, Page 4)

The TL Texts:

1. Al-Khumayri .١ وفي غيرهما من البلدان
2. Jabra .٢ وفي مضامير اخرى
3. Jamaal .٣ وفي مواقع اخرى
4. Matraan .٤ وفي امصار اخرى

Discussion:

This type of preposition is simple. It is a spatial preposition. It refers to the surface of grounds. It is formally translated by all translators.

The SL Text (3):

Iago says

That never set a squadron in the field (Act 1, Scene i, Line 24, Page 3)

The TL Texts:

1. Al-Khumayri ١. ما قاد في حياته جيشا إلى المعركة
2. Jabra ٢. ولا يعرف من تنظيم الفرق في المعركة
3. Jamaal ٣. لم يقدر سرته في معركة
4. Matraan ٤. ولم يسير قط كتيبته في معترك

Discussion:

This type of preposition is simple. It is a spatial preposition which means inside the field and not outside it. It is translated formally by all the translators. Its translation into Arabic is different which carries from (الى) to (في) the matter which is determined by the verb that precedes it.

The SL Text (4):

Brabantio says

By what you see them act! (Act 1, Scene i, Line 4, Page 9)

The TL Texts:

1. Al-Khumayri . ١ . بالظاهر من اعمال بناتكم!
2. Jabra . ٢ . يعقول بناتكم!
3. Jamaal . ٣ . يعقول بناتكم!
4. Matraan . ٤ . على ما يبدين من الطهارة!

Discussion:

The preposition is simple. It is translated formally by all the translators. It is a preposition of means. Jabra and Jamaal have the same translations. The most adequate translation is that of Matraan and Al-Khumayri because they are closer to the SL than the others.

The SL Text (5):

Othello says

'T is well I am found by you (Act 1, Scene ii, Line 12, Page 11)

The TL Texts:

1. Al-Khumayri . ١ . حسن ان تكون انت الذي وجدنتي
2. Jabra . ٢ . من الخير انكم وجدتموني
3. Jamaal . ٣ . من حسن الحظ ان تكون انت الذي عثرت علي
4. Matraan . ٤ . من التوفيق ان تكون انت الذي لقيتني

Discussion:

The preposition is simple. It is rendered dynamically by all the translators because Arabic tends to use the active voice more frequently than the passive.

The SL Text (6):

Senator says

To keep us (Act 1, Scene iii, Line 13, Page 14)

The TL Texts:

1. Al-Khumayri _____ .١
2. Jabra _____ لا بقائنا .٢
3. Jamaal _____ يصرف .٣
4. Matraan _____ .٤

Discussion:

The preposition is simple. It is formally translated by Jabra and Jamaal, whereas the whole sentence is deleted by both Al-Khumaryri and Matraan.

The SL Text (7):

Duke says

How say you by this change? (Act 1, Scene iii, Line 10, Page 14)

The TL Texts:

1. Al-Khumayri _____ ما راىكم في التغيير؟ .١
2. Jabra _____ ما قولكم بهذا التغيير؟ .٢
3. Jamaal _____ ما قولكم في هذا التغيير؟ .٣
4. Matraan _____ ما قولكم في هذا الانقلاب؟ .٤

Discussion:

The preposition is simple. All the translators have translated it formally. They translate it into (بِ) except Jabra who translates it into (ـَ). They are used interchangeably. It seems to be simply a matter of style.

Findings and Discussion:

The rendering of (7) prepositions in *Othello* show that the four translators handle prepositions in different ways. They adopt, but variably, the two types of equivalence proposed by Nida (1964) (see page 2). Our analyses of the four renderings of prepositions show that the prepositions have not changed through time. Prepositions are formally translated by all the translators and one time by Al-Khumayri and Matraan who also delete the preposition once.

Conclusions:

The conclusions drawn from this study are as follows:

1. Translations of literary texts must be formal to convey both of form and content.
2. Though this study is orientated towards identifying the problems of translation, it has mainly pointed out that in both languages, prepositions are preposed before their complements. In very few cases, however, English prepositions may be postposed. It has also revealed that Arabic prepositions govern the complement in the

genitive case while the complement of English prepositions has the objective case if the complement is a pronoun.

3. There is no nil equivalence concerning the translation of prepositions from SL into TL.
4. Prepositions are more frequently used in English than in Arabic, and this will lead to a serious imbalance between the quality and quantity of the translation in the sense that prepositions are deleted either because of deleting the whole sentence or because of adopting the dynamic equivalence.

Pedagogical Recommendations:

1. It is essential that people embarking on translation understand the use of English prepositions to provide the potential translations of prepositions.

Access to dictionaries is not essential because the meaning of the preposition is determined by the context. Also translators need to be cognizant of fundamental differences between the prepositions on whose texts they work.

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