

## *Problems of Translating English Euphemisms into Arabic*

**Asst. Prof. ESSAM TAHIR MOHAMMED\***

تأريخ القبول: ٢٠١٩/١١/١١

تأريخ التقديم: ٢٠١٩/١٠/٢

### **Abstract**

This study is a humble attempt to investigate the problems that may face the student translators in their attempt to translate some of the common kinds of English euphemisms" i.e. death, sex and religion" euphemisms into Arabic. Due to the linguistic and cultural difference between the two languages involved ,each culture ,consequently, allows different connotations for the linguistic items it includes. Such a cultural difference in its turn assigns each speech community unique taboos, norms and euphemisms. Therefore, it is hypothesized that the euphemistic expressions would create a real problem for the inexperienced translators specially those who are unaware of the inevitable role of culture in transferring the communicative value and the meaning of the SL text. The differences between TL and SL cultures consequently form the main task and challenge of a talented translator to transfer the cultural bound units such as euphemisms from SL into TL with the minimum loss of the meaning, effect and aesthetic content of the original text.

### **INTRODUCTION**

Euphemism is a figurative device which is almost used by everyone in order to avoid the directness of speech or the ugly expressions. Arabic language as English uses euphemisms in many aspects of life for the same purpose ,i.e. showing politeness. Arabic refers to this use of language as "al-talatuf "which means using mild words in addressing others .The following example shows the use of euphemisms in both languages:

---

**Dept. of Translation / College of Arts / University of Mosul .**

The English euphemism "pass away" is translated into the Arabic euphemistic equivalent but in many cases euphemisms pose a real problem to the translators specially when they are very opaque or idiomatic. The inexperienced translators in such case resort to the transference of the literal meaning of SL euphemisms into TL language committing a serious mistake or at the best they translate SL euphemism into TL dysphemism losing politeness and shifting from the indirect meaning to the direct one. According to Larsen(1984:116)Euphemisms will often need to be translated by a comparable euphemism in the receptor language .The important thing is for the translator to recognize the euphemistic nature of the source language expression and then translate with appropriate and acceptable expression of the receptor language whether euphemistic or direct . In the present study the researcher would like to shed light on euphemism in English in general and on the most common types of euphemism, i.e. religion, sex and death euphemisms in particular .

### **1.The Concept of Euphemism :**

A euphemism can be defined as an indirect means of expressing taboo things (i.e.,a distasteful, unpleasant) concept. For example, the euphemistic phrase "to answer the call of nature" expresses the taboo-marked meaning "shit " without explicitly referring to the taboo subject which is evacuating the bowls or more vulgar "to shit". Similarly, the phrase " get busy " expresses the taboo-marked meaning "having sexual intercourse" without explicitly referring to the taboo subject i.e., sex. If we consider only the literal meanings of the components " get and busy", we arrive at the taboo-free meaning "being busy " not "a sexual intercourse". According to Partridge(1947:43) euphemism is a linguistic substitution strategy motivated by a communicator's reluctance to offend an addressee. Leech (1981, p. 45) defines euphemism as "the practice of referring to something offensive or delicate in terms that make it sound more pleasant than it really is. He adds that this technique consists of replacing a word which has offensive connotations with another expression, which makes no overt reference to the unpleasant side

of the subject, and may even be a positive misnomer. Lyons(1981:150) on the other hand states that there are social taboos operative within the language- community and these should be studied within the domain of sociolinguistics. He adds that the replacement of these taboo words by others is a kind of descriptive or cognitive synonymy, consequently, the existence of taboo words or taboo ideas stimulates the creation of euphemisms(ibid:151). Rawson( 1981:1)points out that the need for euphemism is both social and emotional, as it allows discussion of 'touchy' or taboo subjects (such as sex, personal appearances or religion) without enraging, outraging, or upsetting other people, and acts as a pressure valve whilst maintaining the appearance of civility. According to Rawson euphemism are of two kinds: Positive and negative. Positive euphemisms include the many fancy occupational titles, which salve the egos of workers by elevating their job status: help for servant (itself an old euphemism for slave), Other kinds of positive euphemisms include personal honorifics such as colonel, the honorable, major, and the many institutional euphemisms, which convert madhouses into mental hospital .Negative, defensive euphemisms are extremely ancient. Satan "the good man, the great fellow"(ibid:2). Larson(1984,p:116)notes that euphemism is figurative expression which is in some way like a metonymy .It is used to avoid an offensive expression or one that is socially unacceptable or one that is unpleasant. Larson(ibid)affirms that all languages have euphemistic expressions which substitute for certain words, specially in the area of sex, death, and the supernatural. Burchfield (1985:29) confirms that a language without euphemisms would be a defective instrument of communication. On the other hand ,Cobb (1985:72)believes that the main purpose behind using euphemistic expressions is presenting a situation, a person or an object in a more agreeable, more reassuring or politer light than would be afforded by the hard glare of reality or by crude, direct definition. Allan and Burrige(1991,p:14)point out that euphemisms are alternatives to dispreferred expressions ,and are used to avoid possible loss of face .The dispreferred expression may be taboo, fearsome, distasteful, or for some other reasons has too many negative connotations to felicitously execute speaker's communicative intention on a given occasion. According to

## **Problems of Translating English Euphemisms into Arabic**

**Asst. Prof . ESSAM TAHIR MOHAMMED**

Crystal(1991:59)euphemisms are ways people use to avoid stating the plain fact. He points that the main three topics which attract euphemisms are death, sex and toileting(ibid). Gramley and Patzold (1992:21)point out that euphemisms are not a result of changes in, for example, science, technology or the environment, but of changes un the moral sense of a society in areas where it has a communal bad conscience or is afraid to talk about a taboo subject. These areas have traditionally been the human body, death ,sex, etc.(ibid). According to Burchfield (1996:267) the employment of euphemisms can be viewed positively as the use of words of good omen, or negatively as the avoidance of unlucky or inauspicious words. Cuddon(1998:312)says that euphemism is a fair speech that has become the bane of much writing in the 20th c., especially in the jargon language of sociologists, educationists and bureaucrats. It is common in officials' also in broadcasting and newspapers. So widespread is it and so insidious its influence that frequently becomes a form of newspeak. Fromkin(2003:479) points out that the existence of taboo words and ideas motivates the creation of euphemisms. Just as surely as all languages and societies have taboo words, they have euphemisms to replaces taboo words or serve to avoid frightening or unpleasant subjects. According to Dearborn (2005:306) the meanings of words and phrases may be divided into denotation (the referent of the term) and connotation (the associated properties, including social import). If either the denotation or connotation of a word or phrase is offensive to social sensibilities, a 'softer', more polite form may be used. Such forms are *euphemisms*. When the possible offense in a word lies in its connotation, a word with the same or a similar referent, but lacking this connotation, may be sought(ibid) Cruse(2006: 57)defines euphemism as an expression that refers to something that people hesitate to mention lest it cause offence, but which lessens the offensiveness by referring indirectly in some way. The most common topics for which we use euphemisms are sexual activity and sex organs, and bodily functions such as defecation and urination, but euphemisms can also be found in reference to death, aspects of religion and money.

One can conclude from what has been mentioned above that euphemism is replacing socially unacceptable concepts by acceptable ones that save the face as Allan and Burrige(1991,p:14)pointed out.

### **2.Dysphemism, Orthophemism and Euphemism:**

Euphemisms , dysphemisms and orthophemisms are rhetorical devices . Euphemisms , dysphemisms are quite common ones . A Euphemism is positive; it takes a word, phrase, or concept and makes it sound more positive. For example, the words “death” and “died” they become positive by using phrases like, “bought the farm,” or “he’s pushing up daisies instead of them”. Dysphemism on the other hand, is a negative one .It is the opposite of euphemism i.e., the use of the offensive words and expressions. Orthophemism simply refers to the use of words in their neutral sense. Allan and Burrige(2006:29)have created the term x-phemisms which refers to the union set of euphemisms, orthophemisms and dysphemisms. They argue that euphemism (Greek *eu* 'good,well and *pheme* speaking)while dysphemism(dys 'bad')rarely appears in ordinary language. Orthophemism(Greek *ortho* 'proper, strait, normal)is a term they have coined to account for direct or neutral expressions that are not sweet sounding or overly polite (euphemistic),nor harsh ,blunt or offensive(dysphemistic) (ibid). Allan and Burrige (2006:30)consider the three rhetorical devices varietal synonyms ,i.e. words that have the same meaning as other words used in different contexts because they denote the same thing but have different connotations. Consider the following:

<b>Orthophemism</b>	<b>Euphemism</b>	<b>Dysphemism</b>
faeces	poo	shit
toilet	loo	shithouse
menstruate	have a period	bleed
my vagina	my bits	my cunt
Jesus	Lord	Christ! [blasphemy]

Table 1. Contrasting X-phemisms(Allan and Burrige,2006,34)

### **3.X-phemisms &Taboos:**

According to Radcliffe-Brown(1939: 5 )the word taboo, in the languages of Polynesia, means simply ‘to forbid’, ‘forbidden’, and can be applied to any sort of prohibition. A rule of etiquette, an

## **Problems of Translating English Euphemisms into Arabic**

**Asst. Prof . ESSAM TAHIR MOHAMMED**

order issued by a chief, an injunction to children not to meddle with the possessions of their elders, may all be expressed by the use of the word tabu(ibid). According to Allan and Burrige(2006:2)the English word taboo derives from the Tongan tabu, which came to notice towards the end of the eighteenth century). Allan and Burrige believe that taboo and the consequent censoring of language motivate language change by promoting the creation of highly inventive and often playful new expressions, or new meanings for old expressions, causing existing vocabulary to be abandoned. Taboo refers to a proscription of behaviour for a specifiable community of one or more persons, at a specifiable time, in specifiable contexts (ibid,pp:1,11). Discussing taboo and the censoring of language naturally leads to a consideration of politeness and impoliteness, and their interaction with euphemism (sweet talking), dysphemism (speaking offensively) and orthophemism(straight talking). Allan and Burrige argue that because impolite behaviour is offensive, it is dysphemistic, and because polite behaviour is more or less the opposite of impolite behaviour, polite behaviour is non-dysphemistic but the classification is wedded to context, place and time which makes all the difference(ibid:32).In conclusion, the dysphemism is tabooed as the impolite choice and dispreferred; it is the expression most likely to be deemed offensive. Orthophemisms and euphemisms on the other hand, are words or phrases used as an alternative to these words and they are expression most likely to be deemed inoffensive or preferred. Consider the following examples:

**Shit**→ **dysphemistic** →**taboo** →**offensive**→ **not preferred**

**Poo** →**euphemistic**→**inoffensive**→**preferred**→ **colloquial**→**figurative**

**Faeces** → **euphemistic**→ **inoffensive**→ **preferred** →**formal**  
→**direct**

### **4.Death Euphemisms:**

English language has copious euphemisms related to dying, death, burial, and the people and places which deal with death. Grollman (1974) talks about death being disguised through euphemistic language. People do not simply die; they pass away move on , go to a better place . Many people live by the myth that if death is not

talked about, it will pass without the pain associated with the loss of a loved one. (Zilberfein 1999:69). euphemisms have very serious reasons for being. They conceal the things people fear the most—death, the dead, the supernatural. The names of the dead, and of animals that are hunted or feared, may also be euphemized this way(Rawson,1981:2). The bear is called *grandfather* by many peoples and the tiger is alluded to as the *striped one*. The common motivation seems to be a confusion between the names of things and the things themselves: The name is viewed as an extension of the thing. Thus, to know the name is to give one power over the thing . For mere mortals, then, the safest policy is to use another name, usually a flattering, euphemistic one, in place of the supernatural being's true name(ibid).Consider the following examples:

<i>Indirect expressions(euphemisms)</i>	<i>Direct expression</i>
pass away	Die
beyond the veil	
into the next world	
off the earth	
into the next world	
in your checks	
asleep	

Table.2, Selected from Holder, R.W. (2002)

**5.Religious Euphemisms:**

Mason(2014:12)argues that euphemisms for deities as well as for religious practices and artifacts have been recorded since the earliest writings. Protection of sacred names, rituals, and concepts from the uninitiated has always given rise to euphemisms, whether it be or exclusion of outsiders or the retention of power ab. Euphemisms for God and Jesus, such as gosh and gee, are used by Christians to avoid taking the name of God in a vain oath, which would violate one of the Ten Commandments(ibid).Consider the following examples :

## Problems of Translating English Euphemisms into Arabic

Asst. Prof . ESSAM TAHIR MOHAMMED

<i>Indirect expressions(euphemisms)</i>	<i>Direct expressions</i>
goddam or goddem.	<b>God Damn</b>
Geez, Gee, Sheez, Gee-wiz (Jesus-wizard), cripes (Christ), Jeepers, by Jingo, Jeezers, bejeezers (by Jesus)	<b>Jesus the Christ</b>
Lordy, Lawd, Lawdy	<b>Lord</b>
Gol, Golly, Gosh, Gad, ye gad/s, by George, by Jove, Almighty	<b>God</b>
the good man, the great	<b>Devil</b>

Selected from Rawson H., (1981) Table.3

### **6.Sex Euphemisms:**

Sex has a great concern in human life and elicits embarrassment. It is a potent source of euphemism for people of most ages and walks of life. The boundaries of sexual euphemisms are wide, including the sexual act itself, the associated parts of the body, and even clothing that is in direct contact with these body parts, i.e. underwear (Nash, 1995, as cited in Ham,2001:11).The sexual euphemism originated from society's inability to accept sexuality as a normal part of existence(Tate,2007:1). According to Allan and Burrige (2006:144)sexual activity is tabooed as a topic for public display and severely constrained as a topic for discussion. The language of sexual pleasuring and copulation gives rise to a great deal of verbal play and figurative language. Consider the following examples:

<i>Indirect expressions(euphemisms)</i>	<i>Direct expressions</i>
privy parts	human genitalia
play the beast with two backs to copulate	copulate

play mothers and fathers to	copulate
poorly	menstruating
play-fellow	a sexual partner
pro	a prostitute
protector	a contraceptive sheath

Table.4 selected from Rawson H., (1981)

### **7.Data Analysis and Discussion:**

Finding in this research are based on one data source ;the data was collected from the fourth year students studying in the Translation Department at Mosul university(2013/2014)first term. The data collection consists of ( 8) samples of the students' translations of some English euphemisms given to them as a questionnaire which consists of ten sentences include in them underlined euphemistic expressions. The students were required to translate the sentences alongside the euphemisms from English into Arabic. All English euphemism examples were selected from *Oxford Dictionary of Euphemisms* ( Holder,2008) .The researcher then put the in a useful English sentences and underlined them to let the students know in which part of the sentence the euphemism is.

The study will discuss the translation of the student translators then will give a suggested translation that consider the TL culture and norms. Consider the translations suggested by the subjects:

#### *1. I felt sick when I learned she was a working girl*

translation of subject no.1	شعرت بالمرض عند معرفتي أنها تعمل
translation of subject no.2	انزعجت كثيرا لأنها كانت تعمل
translation of subject no.3	كاد يغشى علي عندما عرفت بأنها كانت فتاة عاملة
translation of subject no.4	خجالت كثيرا عند معرفتي بعملها
translation of subject no.5	لم استوعب أنها كانت تعمل
translation of subject no.6	لم تروق لي فكرة أنها تعمل

## Problems of Translating English Euphemisms into Arabic

Asst. Prof . ESSAM TAHIR MOHAMMED

translation of subject no.7	أحسست بالشفقة عليها لمعرفتي بعملها
translation of subject no.8	لم أحب فكرة عملها
translation of subject no.9	لم تروق لي بسبب عملها
translation of subject no.10	شعرت بالمرض لأنها تعمل

### Discussion:

According to Rawson(1981:310) a "working girl" is a **whore** in its dysphemistic sense or direct one. A "working girl" is especially a streetwalker , as distinguished from a higher-class "call girl" or "courtesan". They call themselves "working girls". ' Their work is a business, or even a social service. ' The euphemistic expression ,seemingly ,caused to the student translators a kind of confusion by the nature of the work and consequently no one of them could guess the other meaning of the phrase "working girl" which is used euphemistically to hide the ugly fact about the work. The students provided translations far away of the implied meaning of the phrase so they wrongly provided'(تعمل، عملها، عاملة)'with little variation in the syntactic structure and style of the given translations by the students. Consider the suggested translation:

شعرت بالاشمزاز عندما علمت بأنها كانت فتاة ليل.

The Arabic suggested equivalent "فتاة ليل" is a good euphemistic counterpart in the TL that can convey the same meaning with the same face saving or polite way to the receptor of the TL without any loss of meaning or aesthetic value of the original text.

2. *I'd like to help that woman with a bun in the oven*

translation of subject no.1	أردت إن أساعد السيدة في عملها
translation of subject no.2	أود إن أساعد الامراة بشي ما
translation of subject no.3	رغبت في مساعدة الامراة
translation of subject no.4	أردت مساعدة تلك السيدة بشي من الشواء
translation of subject no.5	أود إن أقدم لتلك السيدة أرنب مشوي بالفرن
translation of subject no.6	-----
translation of subject no.7	أود إن أقدم لتلك السيدة قالب من الكيك
translation of subject no.8	أحببت أن اهدي تلك السيدة قالب كعك
translation of subject no.9	أرغب بمساعدة تلك السيدة في عملية شواء الأرنب .
translation of subject no.10	أريد أن أساعد تلك المرأة بالشواء

Discussion:

According to Holder(2002:47)a " bun in the oven" is a signal of a woman's pregnancy or more specifically "being pregnant". A bun itself is a cake and this expression is used to give a kind of similarity between the cake when it is in the oven and the fetus in the womb of the women and the point of similarity is that between the inflation of the cake and the inflation of the woman's belly. This expression is used euphemistically to avoid the use of the word pregnant which is considered as direct use of not proffered words that make their user looks less polite ,vulgar or rude. Unfortunately ,no one of the student translator managed to provide the correct translation of the expression whether euphemistically or dysphemistically. The student instead provided unrelated translations by giving the literal meaning of the expression or by guessing other things very unrelated to the expression meaning by providing :

"العمل ،الشواء،أرنب مشوي بالفرن، قالب كعك، قالب كيك،بشي ماء،بشي من الشواء،في شواء الأرنب"

Consider the suggested translation:

أرغب في مساعدة السيدة التي تنتظر مولودا جديداً .

The Arabic suggested equivalent " تنتظر مولودا جديدا" is a good euphemistic counterpart in Arabic that can convey the same meaning with the same face saving or polite way to the receptor of the TL text and without any loss of meaning or aesthetic value of the original text.

3. John wanted to skin the cat from the first date with her but she refused.

translation of subject no.1	أراد جون أن يوضح الأمور لها منذ البداية لكنها رفضت
translation of subject no.2	أراد جون أن يضرب القطة من البداية بمساعدتها لكن رفضت الأمر.
translation of subject no.3	أراد جون أن يخيفها من البداية
translation of subject no.4	أراد جون يسلم القطة لكنها رفضت
translation of subject no.5	أراد جون أن يسلم القطة من البداية ولكنها لم تقبل
translation of subject no.6	أراد جون قتل القطة أمامها منذ الأول و لكنها رفضت بشدة
translation of subject no.7	أراد جون أن يعترف بحبه لها من الموعد الأول ولكنها رفضته
translation of subject no.8	أراد جون أن يكون واضحا معها منذ البداية لكنها رفضت
translation of subject no.9	أراد جون أن يفرض سيطرته عليها ولكنه لم يستطع
translation of subject no.10	أراد جون أن يفرض احترامه بتخلصه من القطة من اليوم الأول لكن لم تقبل

## Problems of Translating English Euphemisms into Arabic

Asst. Prof . ESSAM TAHIR MOHAMMED

### Discussion:

In English language the word " cat" is widely used to refer to sex related subjects like " cat house, cat male ,tomcat, skin the cat...etc.". According to Holder(2002:57) the expression "skin the cat" exactly means to make love with. The word " cat "means the female sex organ and it is used euphemistically to avoid the use of the word "vagina" which is considered a highly tabooed word. In the expression "to skin the cat" I wanted to view an example or two on the sex related euphemisms and to see how the student translators guess the meaning and give the euphemistic equivalent. Unfortunately, no one of the students was able to find the hidden meaning of the expression. Instead, the student had the idea of scaring the girl by killing a cat in front of her from the beginning so most of the students translations' translation came holding the same belief and they provided the following irrelevant translations:

يوضح الأمور، أن يضرب القطه، أن يخيفها، أن يفرض سيطرته، قتل القطه، أن " يعترف، أن يكون واضحا معها، يسلم القطه "

The Arabic suggested equivalent "أراد لمسها" is a good euphemistic rhetorical counterpart in Arabic that can convey the same meaning with the same face saving or polite way to the receptor of the TL text and without any loss of meaning or aesthetic value of the original text.

أراد جون لمسها منذ الموعد الأول لكنها رفضت

The word "يلمس" has the same function in Arabic in a specific context which is used also euphemistically to refer to the sexual intercourse. Consider the following example:

في قوله تعالى (لا جناح عليكم إن طلقتم النساء ما لم تمسوهن) صدق الله العظيم  
(there is no blame on you if ye divorce women before **consummation**) (Al-Baqara: 236) (Yousif,A.1989)

#### .4.Mary's in the family way again

translation of subject no.1	ماري في طريقها للزواج مرة أخرى
translation of subject no.2	ماري ستكون عائلة من جديد
translation of subject no.3	ستتزوج ماري من جديد
translation of subject no.4	ماري في طريقها للبيت مرة أخرى

translation of subject no.5	ستتزوج ماري من جديد
translation of subject no.6	ستتزوج ماري مرة ثانية
translation of subject no.7	ستتزوج ماري من جديد
translation of subject no.8	سيكون لماري عائلة من جديد
translation of subject no.9	ستصبح ماري زوجة من جديد
translation of subject no.10	ستتزوج ماري للمرة الثانية

#### Discussion:

According to Holder(2002:204) the expression "in the family way" means pregnancy and it has some equivalents in English as "in the way", "in the increasing way" or "in that way" and all with "in the family way" refer to unplanned pregnancy. In the family way or in the way of having a family are polite ways to say that a woman is pregnant indirectly or politely .The student seemed very affected by the idea that marriage begets a family so when they saw the word family in the text most of them translated the euphemistic expression " in the family way" into " ماري ستتزوج ، ماري ستكون عائلة "، ماري في طريقها للزواج". Unfortunately no one of the could give the right translation of the euphemistic expression which might be like the following:

ماري تنتظر مولود جديد

#### 5.By George, we shall not let them suffer.

translation of subject no.1	قسما بجورج لن ندعهم يعانون
translation of subject no.2	لأجل جورج لن نتركهم يتألمون
translation of subject no.3	قسما بجورج نخذلهم أبدا
translation of subject no.4	قسما بالقديس جورج لن ندعهم يعانون
translation of subject no.5	بمساعدة جورج لن نترككم أبدا
translation of subject no.6	من اجل جورج لن تعانوا أبدا
translation of subject no.7	نقسم بجورج إننا لن نتركهم للمعاناة
translation of subject no.8	نقسم بيسوع إننا لن نتخلى عنهم
translation of subject no.9	قسما بالرب لن نتخلى عنهم
translation of subject no.10	لأجل جورج سوف لن ندعكم أبدا للمعاناة

#### Discussion:

According to Rawson(1981:134) the names " George/Godfrey" are two given names for "God." Dating from the sixteenth and they are usually used in contexts where a true oath-sayer would say "God," e.g., "By George, he *has* got. They are a simple, euphemistic extension of "God," one can see among English

## Problems of Translating English Euphemisms into Arabic

Asst. Prof . ESSAM TAHIR MOHAMMED

speakers. In the questionnaire given to the students the name "George" used for euphemistic purpose in order not to mention the name of God very explicitly and in vain because the religion of the Christians prohibits the use of the name of God in vain .Since the students all were Muslim ,no one of them had any idea about the sacred names used or the regulation of the Bible so they were very expected to commit mistakes in their translations. Accordingly, they gave the following mistaken renderings "قسما بجورج، لأجل جورج، قسما"no one of them could provide the right translation except student no.9 who used the noun phrase "الرب" in his translation. What is worth mentioning here, the use of the name of God explicitly and implicitly .In English we see how the English people tend to use the euphemistic expressions to a void the use of God's name in vain and there are many examples like" Gol, Golly, Gosh, Gad, ye gad/s, by George, by Jove, Almighty". In Arabic, on the other hand, we can notice that people tend to use the name of God " Allah " very explicitly. So the suggested translation might be like the following:

قسما بالله لن نتركهم للمعاناة .

### 6. I am ready to meet the maker.

translation of subject no.1	أنا مستعد للقاء الخالق
translation of subject no.2	أنا مستعد للموت
translation of subject no.3	أنا مستعد لمقابلة المنتج
translation of subject no.4	أنا لا أخاف الموت
translation of subject no.5	أنا مستعد لكي التقى بمن صنع ذلك
translation of subject no.6	أنا جاهز للقاء ربي
translation of subject no.7	أنا مستعد للموت
translation of subject no.8	أنا لا اهتم للموت
translation of subject no.9	أنا جاهز -----
translation of subject no.10	أنا على استعداد للقاء ربي

### Discussion:

The translator into Arabic might smartly and wittingly translate English death related euphemistic expressions . This ultimately relies on the translator's competency in the SL and TL cultures, and his understanding of the text he is translating. Both Arabic and English agree upon using euphemism in death occasions in order to

alleviate the effect caused by hearing death news. The use of the euphemistic expression "the Maker" is another way to refer to God and death euphemistically. People using this expression are referring to God. It refers to the Christian belief that when we die, we are called to account for our lives before God. So if we say " we are ready to meet the Maker" we mean that we are ready to give God an accounting of our life, which means we are ready to die. The students in their attempt to translate the euphemistic expression into Arabic provided the following translations "لقاء الخالق، لقاء ربي،" and these renderings can be considered as euphemistic ones for the original euphemisms while the other translations given by the other students were renderings by dysphemisms so they dysphemistically translated the English euphemism "the Maker" into " ولا اهتم للموت " and " مستعد للموت، لا أخاف الموت ". The rest of the students mistakenly translated the English euphemism into "المنتج، من صنع ذلك" or they just omitted the euphemistic expression in their translations. Consider the suggested translation:

أنا مستعد للقاء ربي.

The Arabic expression "لقاء ربي" is a euphemistic way to say I am ready to die or ready to give God an accounting of my life without mentioning the God's name or death explicitly.

#### 7. They are now at their *final rest*.

translation of subject no.1	هم الآن في محطتهم الأخيرة
translation of subject no.2	لقد وصلوا إلى الاستراحة الأخيرة
translation of subject no.3	هم الآن في آخر استراحة
translation of subject no.4	سيرتاحون الآن للمرة الأخيرة
translation of subject no.5	وصلوا الآن للاستراحة الأخيرة
translation of subject no.6	هم الآن في استراحتهم الأخيرة
translation of subject no.7	لقد ماتوا
translation of subject no.8	هم الآن موتى
translation of subject no.9	هم الآن في المرحلة الأخيرة من حياتهم
translation of subject no.10	هم الآن في دار البقاء

#### Discussion:

According to Rawson(2006:336)the euphemistic expressions " final rest, eternal rest, called to heavenly rest and go to rest" all refer to death where the place of rest is the grave. Arabic language also refers to death by using the euphemistic expressions دار الحق، دار

## Problems of Translating English Euphemisms into Arabic

Asst. Prof . ESSAM TAHIR MOHAMMED

"without mentioning death explicitly. Some students mistakenly translated the euphemistic expression into " محطة " other students translated it dysphemistically into " موتى، ماتوا " mentioning death very explicitly .Only student no.10 managed to translate the euphemistic expression into Arabic by finding the equivalent Arabic euphemistic expression that expresses the meaning euphemistically by providing the following translation which is a suggested translation for the English euphemistic expression. Consider the translation:  
هم الآن في دار الأخرى.

### 8. Things are mixed up since Forsythe passed.

translation of subject no.1	تغيرت الأمور منذ أن مات فورسيثي
translation of subject no.2	الأمور تغيرت منذ أن سافر فورسيثي
translation of subject no.3	اختلفت الأمور جميعها منذ أن نجح فورسيثي
translation of subject no.4	نجاح فورسيثي جعل الأشياء تختلف تماما
translation of subject no.5	اختلفت الأمور بنجاح فورسيثي
translation of subject no.6	تغير فورسيثي بعد نجاحه
translation of subject no.7	بعد موت فورسيثي كل شي اختلف
translation of subject no.8	أدى نجاح فورسيثي إلى اختلافات كبيرة
translation of subject no.9	اختلفت الأمور بنجاح فورسيثي
translation of subject no.10	منذ أن نجح فورسيثي كل شي تغير

### Discussion:

According to Holder (2002:316) the euphemistic expression "pass" means to die which refers to the passage from this world to the next world. Rawson(1981:216) points out that the basic "pass" comes from the French passer, which the French themselves use euphemistically in place of mourir, to die. According to Rawson(ibid)there are many variants that include "pass beyond, pass on, pass out, and pass over, passed over the river and passed over the Great Divide. In Arabic also, the notion of death can be euphemistically expressed by using the past form of the verbs "ينتقل، يرحل" so we can say "انتقل إلى رحمة الله" or "رحل عنا" sometimes we can say "وافاه الأجل أو المنية" to reach the same purpose. The student translators were confused by the word "pass" since our students are very familiar with the phrase "pass away" as an expression used to refer to death euphemistically. It did not occur to the that the word "pass" holds the same meaning of "pass away" and

most of them thought that the meaning of pass is success rather than death. In fact the students did a big mistake when they translated the word pass into "نجح" into Arabic because the word pass was given to them as an underlined euphemistic expression and they were told that the questionnaire is about translating English euphemisms into Arabic. They had to think of the word pass as a euphemistic expression for something not preferable to mention and when it is used as an indication of success there is no need to euphemize or to say it implicitly. As a result what has been mentioned above about the performance of the students, the students provided the following renderings to the word "passed": "سافر، نجح، نجاح، نجاحه". Only students no.1 and no.7 could convey the meaning but in dysphemistic way. A suggested translation could be like the following:

أصبحت الأمور صعبة منذ أن انتقل فورسذي إلى رحمة الله.

### **Conclusions:**

*The study concludes the following:*

1. Mostly the euphemistic expressions were understood on the surface but there is an in-depth hidden related meaning behind them.
2. Due to the cultural differences and the difficulty to find the dynamic equivalent in the TL, the student translators in many cases resorted to the literal translation to translate the English euphemisms which resulted in funny mistakes and loss of meaning of the original text besides the loss of the aesthetic values of the original text.
3. The students' performance indicates their lack for the knowledge in the indirect use of the language and their adherence to the direct use of it. The meaning in this case is more important than the linguistic trait of SL. Accordingly, the English euphemistic expression "pass away" was translated dysphemistically into Arabic (مات).
4. The students believe that the denotative meaning of the words is everything in translation so they preferred the denotative equivalent on the connotative one in their renderings.
5. English euphemism, in many cases, were carelessly translated by the students into Arabic dysphemisms overlooking politeness or face saving.
6. Both Arabic and English societies tend to avoid uttering sex, death and religion related expressions and taboos explicitly and

employ expressions that would diminish the unpleasant implication of them.

### *References*

- Allen, K & Kate, B. (1991). **Euphemism and Dysphemism: Language Used as Shield and Weapon**. Oxford: OUP
- Burchfield, R.W. (1985). "An outline history of euphemisms in English,"
- in Enright, D. J. (Ed.) **Fair of Speech: the uses of euphemism**. Oxford: Oxford University Press
- Burchfield, R.W. (1996 ). **The New Fowler's Modern English Usage**. Oxford: Oxford University Press
- Cruse, Alan. (2006). **A Glossary of Semantics and Pragmatics**. Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press Ltd
- Crystal, D. (1991). **Language A-Z with David Crystal**. UK. Longman Group UK Limited.
- Cuddon, J.A. (1998). **The Penguin Dictionary of Literary Terms and Literary Theory**. England: Clays. Ltd, St Ives plc .
- Cobb, R. (1985). "Euphemism and Argot in France" . in Enright, D. J. (ed.) **Fair of Speech: The Uses of Euphemism**. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Dearborn, F. ( 2005). **Encyclopedia of Linguistics**. vol.2. Oxon: Taylor & Francis Group.
- Durrell, L. (1968). **'Preface' to Lady Chatterley's Lover**. London: Bontam Books.
- Fromkin, V., Rodman, R., Hyams, N., (2003). **An Introduction to Language**. USA: Wadsworth
- Gramley, S., Patzold, K. (1992). **A Survey of Modern English**. USA: Routledge.
- Grollman, A. (1974). **Concerning Death: A Practical Guide for the Living**. Boston: Beacon Press.
- Holder, R.W. (2008). **Oxford Dictionary of Euphemisms**. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

-----,(2002). **How Not to Say What You Mean: A Dictionary of Euphemisms**. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Ham, K. (2001). **The Linguistics of Euphemism: A Diachronic Study of Euphemism Use and Formation**. University of Surrey.

Available at:

www.surrey- ac.ut/ALRG/dissertations/Indexes/index-lit-htm/-izk.

Johnston, B. (2008). **Discourse analysis** (2nd ed.). UK: Rutledge.

Mason, C,T.(2014).**6000 Euphemisms and Catch Words**. USA: Vindoo Books.

Larson ,ML. (1984). **Meaning- Based Translation: A Guide to Cross-**

**Language Equivalences**. United States of America: University Press of America, Inc.

Laszka, J.J. (1990). "Euphemism as Trans-valuation", **Language and Style**. Vol. 23/4 PP.409-424.

Lyons ,J. (1981). **Language and Linguistics: An Introduction**. Cambridge: CUP.

Partridge. (1947). **Usage and Abusage : A Guide to Good English**. Hamondsworth, UK: Penguin.

Radcliffe-Brown, A. R. ( 1939). **Taboo**. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press

Rawson, H. (1981). **A Dictionary of Euphemisms and Other Doubletalk**. New York: Crown Publishers, Inc.

Sanderson, P. (1999). **Using newspaper in the classroom**.The United Kingdom: Cambridge University Press.

Tate,J. (2007).**The Contemporary Dictionary of Sexual Euphemisms**. N.Y. St. Martin's Press

Warren, B., (1992). "What Euphemism Tells us about the Interpretation of Words" **Studia Linguistica**. Vol. 46/2/ PP. 128-172.

Zilberfein, F. (1999). **Coping with Death: Anticipatory Grief and Bereavement** . Generations, Vol. 23, Issue 1, PP. 69-74 .

مشكلات ترجمة عبارات التلطف الإنكليزية إلى اللغة العربية

أ.م. عصام ظاهر محمد

مستخلص

تعد هذه الدراسة محاولة متواضعة للبحث في المشكلات التي قد تواجه طلبة الترجمة عند ترجمتهم لبعض الأنواع الشائعة من عبارات التلطف الإنكليزية بما يخص الموت والجنس والدين إلى اللغة العربية . و نظرًا للاختلاف اللغوي والثقافي ما بين لغتي موضوع الدراسة، يتبين لي أن لثقافة كل لغة مفردات لغوية خاصة بها، لها معاني ضمنية مختلفة عن الثقافة الأخرى. كما أن الاختلاف الثقافي قد يؤدي إلى الاختلاف في المحظورات لغويًا وعبارات التلطف بما في ذلك الاختلاف في المعايير بين اللغتين. ونظرًا لذلك تفترض الدراسة أن ترجمة عبارات التلطف قد تمثل مشكلة حقيقة خاصة للمترجمين الذين تنقصهم الخبرة و الذين لا يدركون الدور الأساسي للثقافة في نقل القيمة التواصلية والمعنى للنص الأصلي ومن ثم فإن هذه الاختلافات ستشكل تحديًا أساسيًا للمترجم وتبين دوره في نقل العناصر الثقافية الخاصة بلغة المصدر كعبارات التلطف وترجمتها إلى اللغة الهدف من دون أي خسارة تذكر في المعنى والتأثير والمحتوى الجمالي للنص الأصلي .