On the Translation of Metaphor: Notions and Pedagogical Implications

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Abstract: *This paper investigates the main distinctions between two main figures of speech, namely, metaphor and simile, with a view to pointing out the relevance of these distinctions to the translation decision involving the rendering of a source language (SL) metaphor into a target language (TL). Prior to the distinctions, the study examines the relationship of similarity between the two parts of a metaphor, the so-called 'object' and 'image', and clarifies a number of facts and misconceptions about it. In light of these discussions, the study attempts to view critically a set of translation procedures proposed by some theorists as alternative solutions to translation problems posed by metaphors that do not lend themselves easily to translation. It is concluded that the proposal in question falls short of achieving the desired result: it gives student translators the false impression that any one of the alternatives suggested is as good a translation procedure of a given metaphor as any other.*

1. Introduction

Metaphor, the figure of speech in which a comparison is made between two seemingly unrelated subjects, is a distinctive feature of human communication. It has been described as the omnipresent principle of language (Richards 1936: 92); "our speech is so riddled with metaphors that we can hardly say a sentence without one" (Matthews 1979: 31). Metaphors are widespread in all social activities and at all levels of formality; in addition to literature, where they find the richest soil, they also abound in the languages of journalism, politics, law, philosophy, advertisements, and even science and technology. Furthermore, their presence is not confined to the domain of language but also extends to that of thought and action; "our ordinary conceptual system, in terms of which we both think and act, is fundamentally metaphorical in nature" (Lakoff and Johnson 1980: 3). Much has also been said about the particularly important role metaphors play (with other figures of speech) in making our speech more meaningful and more specific, in producing images, in extending the significance of what we say, and in making the abstract concrete and vice versa (in addition to the foregoing sources, see, for instance, Kreuzer 1955; Nowottny 1962; Hawkes 1972; Gray 1992). Rather than being mere ornaments of discourse, figures of speech in general, and metaphors in particular, are thus looked at as essential tools of expression that are bound to be utilized whenever we have strong feelings to express.

Metaphor has also been widely discussed in the literature on translation, where it has been given more or less the same definition, viz., 'the description of something in terms of another as a way of illuminating or developing meaning', or "the application of a word or collocation to what it does not literally denote" (Newmark 1988: 104). The issue, however, has proved to be a challenging one. Research into the cross-linguistic and cross-cultural dimensions of metaphor as well as its treatment in actual translations have shown that the SL image cannot always be retained in the TL. Recognizing this problem, Dagut (1976) makes the following remarks:

> Since a metaphor in the SL is, by definition, a new piece of performance, a semantic novelty, it can clearly have no existing 'equivalence' in the TL: what is unique can have no counterpart. Here the translator's bilingual competence ... is of help to him only in the negative sense of telling him that any equivalence cannot be 'found' but will have to be created. (Dagut 1976, quoted in Bassnett-McGuire 1980: 24).

In an attempt on their part to provide alternative solutions to this problem, some translation theorists and teachers (e.g. Newmark 1980; Larson 1984, Croft 1988; Ghazaala 1995) have proposed a number of translation procedures whereby to translate metaphors from one language into another. These procedures include: (1) retaining the same SL metaphorical image in the TL, (2) replacing the SL metaphorical image with a TL simile, keeping the image, (3) replacing the SL metaphorical image with another established TL one, (4) retaining the same metaphorical image plus sense, (5) converting metaphor to sense, and (6) omitting the metaphor (when it occurs in an anonymous text).

Criticizing the above view, Maalej (2005) rightfully argues that "the scheme does not say anything about how the choice from among the aforementioned procedures is made", and that "the translation of metaphor cannot be 'decided by a set of abstract rules, but must depend on the structure and function of the particular metaphor within the context concerned' (Snell-Hornby 1988-1995: 58)". The foregoing view could also be criticized for overlooking some significant characteristics of metaphor that are not available in the types of rendition suggested to substitute it, including simile; such substitution will, consequently, often result in some kind of translation loss.

An investigation of the treatment of metaphor in English-Arabic translated works would also reveal some misconceptions about the notion of similarity or comparison underlying metaphorical expressions, and what constitutes the primary function of metaphor: whether it is always used for practical description and understanding, or may also be used for purely aesthetic purposes. Another observation relates to the tendency among student translators (and even practicing translators sometimes) to apply one or other of the aforementioned translation procedures (e.g., the literal translation of the so-called 'dead metaphors', or the conversion of an SL metaphor into a TL simile) rather mechanically, often resulting in renditions that either sound unnatural and foreign, or fail to produce a textual effect equivalent to that of the SL expression.

It is the aim of this paper to bring into focus the foregoing misconceptions and observations about metaphor and consider them from the point of view of translation, with a view to illustrating the pros and cons of the translation procedures adopted.

The instances of figurative expressions cited in this paper are for the most part drawn from literary works that form part of the material the writer has been using in his teaching of the 'Translation of Literary Texts' to senior Arab university students. It is felt that the translation of literary works is one type of translation where (serious) translators try their best to be as artistic, creative, and skillful as possible, and where methodological stands are generally more discernible than elsewhere.

2. Definitions: Metaphor and Simile

Metaphor is almost invariably defined as a figure of speech in which an expression literally denoting one object or idea is applied to another in order to suggest a similarity or likeness. In metaphor, that is to say, a comparison is made between two seemingly unrelated subjects. Statements along these lines can be traced back to such early sources as the celebrated Greek Philosopher Aristotle (see Stanford 1936: 9-10) and the 11th-century Arab linguist and rhetorician al-Jurjaanii (1954: 9). More recently, on the other hand, metaphor has been more appropriately defined as, not just a comparison, but "an implied analogy which imaginatively identifies one object with another and ascribes to the first object one or more of the qualities of the second or invests the first with emotional or imaginative qualities associated with the second" (Holman 1985: 264). For example, when we refer to a man or some aspect of his character by saying 'That man is a fox', we in fact ascribe to that man such attributes as cunning and craftiness for which the animal *fox* is proverbially known.

The other figurative device dealt with in this paper, viz., simile, involves nearly the same prerequisite for metaphor – the perception of some likeness between the two objects of the comparison – except that whereas the latter implicitly identifies one thing with another, the former explicitly expresses the comparison by means of such words as 'like', 'as', 'than', etc.. The above given example of metaphor may thus be turned into a simile by saying 'That man is as crafty as a fox'.

We shall use the terms below (suggested by Newmark 1988: 105) in our analysis of the metaphors cited in this study; the metaphor 'angelic face' is provided as an example for illustration:

Object: the person, thing, or idea described or qualified by the metaphor ('face' in the example)

Image: the item in terms of which the object is described ('angel' in the example).

Sense: the literal meaning of the metaphor; the similarities between the object and the image ('such attributes as kindness, beauty, gracefulness, purity, etc. which an angel and the person being described have in common').

Metaphor: the figurative word used ('angelic' in the example); a metaphor may also extend over many lines, in which case it is termed 'extended metaphor'.

3. Metaphor and the Notion of Similarity

Statements about metaphor are often misunderstood to mean that the primary function of a metaphorical expression is to demonstrate direct or pre-existing similarities between the components of that expression, i.e. the object and the image. This, however, is not, at least not always, precisely the case, as metaphor can be used to serve other purposes (Ali 1998). The issue acquires even further importance in translation where additional (linguistic and extralinguistic) factors come into play. The following discussion is intended to illustrate these facts.

3.1 Cases of 'direct resemblance'

There *are* of course cases where metaphors may be said to work through some direct resemblance between object and image (see Richards 1936: 117). The point to be made here, however, is that in such cases the sense of a transferred image is not present; the metaphor normally goes unnoticed, largely due to the relative ease with which the area of semantic overlap can be found between the two things being compared. For example, the comparison between the 'leg of a horse' and the 'leg of a table' is based on the fact that both the animal and the piece of furniture have their legs to hold them up and to keep them in a standing position, the difference being that, unlike horses, tables do not walk with their legs.

Instances like the one just exemplified are understood almost literally rather than figuratively, and cannot actually be described as metaphorical in any creative sense of the word because they have lost their initial power to produce comparison (see Kreuzer 1955: 87). Hence they are commonly referred to as 'dead' or 'fossilized' metaphors. It is also for this reason that translation theorists hold the view that "dead metaphors are no part of translation theory, which is concerned with choices and decisions, not with the mechanics of language" (Newmark 1982: 86).

As far as translation is concerned, it can be stated generally that dead metaphors are not difficult to translate. This is largely due to the fact that they have universal applications for all languages. Consider, for example, the use of English 'head' and its Arabic counterpart 'رأس' to denote the part that resembles a head (its shape, position, and/or function) in a wide variety of things, such as 'pin', 'nail', 'hammer', 'matchstick', 'lettuce', 'company/organization', 'state', 'list', 'table', etc. SL expressions involving such usages are usually rendered into the TL through direct translation. One, however, should hasten to warn against the overgeneralization of this procedure to cases where it may not be applicable for one reason or another. For example, the use of English 'foot' in expressions like 'the foot of the page/wall/mountain' is not similarly

counterparted in Arabic where the word أسفل, meaning 'the lower part' is normally used. And while English uses 'eye' to refer to the 'hole of a needle', Arabic has a special name for it, viz. سَـمّ . On the other hand, the word for 'eye' in Arabic, i.e. عين, is used with a variety of meanings which are nonexistent in English, e.g. 'an important person', 'a reconnoiter', 'prime: of the very best quality' (as in عيون الشعر, meaning 'the choicest works of poetry'), etc. The aforementioned tendency to overgeneralize is a widely observed phenomenon among student translators, which is often attributable to the mechanical application of the abstract rules referred to in the above-given introduction concerning the translation of metaphor.

3.2 Implied analogy

It is often the case that the sense of a metaphor cannot be easily found or directly defined. If you call someone 'a snake', for example, what actual resemblance to a snake would you take as the sense of that metaphor? By calling that person a snake, you certainly do not mean that he/she is a limbless reptile, or capable of producing venom, or dangerous to approach. In this case, unlike that in 3.1 above, the relationship of similarity between the object and the image cannot be said to be direct. What may be described as the sense of the metaphor in the present instance would be easier to understand if put in the following terms: *the feeling of caution, fear, and apprehension, which people normally have towards snakes is being felt towards the person referred to in the metaphor*. In other words, the type of metaphor exemplified here works through some common attitude which the speakers of a language take up towards the object and image involved in the figurative expression they use (Richards 1936: 118f).

From the point of view of translation, it should be emphasized that here too no translation procedure can be said to be applicable to each and every instance of this type of metaphor, as speakers of different languages may have different attitudes towards more or less the same creatures, objects, and/or phenomena in their respective cultures. Translators often encounter cases where a metaphor meaning one thing in one culture has an entirely different interpretation in another. For example, 'a rainy day' in most European countries is a time you need to make provision for ('save something for a rainy day'), but a very welcome occasion in the scorching deserts of the Middle East, where people *pray* for rain. Furthermore, the choice of a particular translation procedure may be subject to the type of the text to be translated and the purpose it is designed to serve. For example, Nida's (1964) tendency to replace SL metaphors by TL non-metaphors reflects a theoretical stand based on his experience in translating the Bible, which is not seen as a work of art, but as an educational or instructional text aimed at spreading the message of the Christian faith. Clarity of the message, therefore, is given priority over all other considerations. In other words, Nida is more concerned with the denotative content of the message than with its formal features or artistic qualities (see Schogt 1988: 104). Taking other

considerations into account, other translators, however, may opt for other procedures when dealing with the same types of metaphor, as will be illustrated below.

3.3 Are metaphors comparisons?

Some writers go even so far as to deny the claim that metaphors are comparisons, that they simply record pre-existing similarities. There are cases, it is argued, where metaphors *create* similarities rather than give an objective description of them (see Kittay 1987: 17). Evidence for this argument can be found in the following lines from a poem entitled أنشودة المطر 'Rain Song' by the late Iraqi poet al-Sayyaab (1971: 474):

عيناكِ غابتا نخيلٍ ساعةَ السحر،
أو شرفتانِ راحَ ينأى عنهُما القمر
عيناكِ حين تبسمانِ تُورقُ الكروم،
وترقصُ الأضواءُ .. كالأقمارِ في نهر
يرجُّهُ المجدافُ وَهْناً ساعةَ السحر؛
كأنّما تنبضُ في غوريهما النجوم ...

Your eyes are two palm tree forests in early light,
Or two balconies from which the moonlight recedes
When they smile, your eyes, the vines put forth their leaves,
And lights dance .. like moons in a river
Rippled by the blade of an oar at break of day;
As if stars were throbbing in the depths of them . . . (Jayyusi 1987: 427)

Quite obviously, there seems to be no place here for the traditional view that metaphor is a primarily visual or conceptual similarity between dissimilar things. In the above metaphor, it would be futile to look for direct resemblance between object, 'eyes', and image, 'two palm tree forests' (line 1) and 'two balconies ...' (line 2). Indeed, when the poem was first published (1960), it was widely criticized for "the apparent absence of visual similarity" between the two components of the metaphor (Simawe, 2005). In a metaphor like this one, however, the relationship of similarity, instead of being described as direct or visual, would more appropriately be said to lie "in the mind of the maker of the metaphor, rather than in the specific qualities of vehicle (image) and tenor (object)" (bracketing mine) (Holman 1985: 265). Notice that the poet describes the eyes by using a complex metaphor (lights dancing like moons in a river, and stars throbbing in their depths), whereby he expresses both "the complex reality of her eyes as he experiences them and the limitation of language, even poetic language, in fully capturing his imagination" (Simawe, op. cit.).

3.4 An eye for differences

Aristotle is reported to have said that to make good metaphors one should have an eye for resemblances (see Deutsch 1965: 73). In other words, to master the

skill of producing metaphor, which, to Aristotle, is the greatest of a poet's achievements, is to be able to find similarities in seemingly dissimilar things. Modern critics, however, have shown that the making of good metaphors implies an eye for *differences* too. Analytical criticism, as Holman (1985: 265) puts it, "tends to find almost as much rich suggestiveness in the differences between the things compared as it does in the recognition of surprising but unsuspected similarities". An essential feature of a successful metaphor, that is, consists in that there is a certain distance between its object and image: they must be sufficiently different for their juxtaposition to arouse a sense of novelty.

4. Metaphor and Simile: Distinctions and Implications for Translation

It was pointed out in the introduction that the translation procedures proposed by some theorists for rendering metaphor into a TL might prove to be counterproductive because, among other things, no clear principles or guidelines are provided as to 'how the choice from among those procedures is made'. This situation has led to the false impression among student translators that any one of the choices offered is as good a translation procedure of metaphor as any other, which may not necessarily be, at least not always, the case, as we shall see shortly. A metaphor may thus be found to be inappropriately turned into a simile, replaced by a non-metaphor, converted to sense, or its original image unsuitably replaced by another one that is far less suggestive and forceful than the former. Cases like these often reflect unawareness on the part of the given translator of some very significant distinctions between metaphor and other figurative devices. Alternatively, perhaps, he/she is unduly influenced by purely linguistic definitions of metaphor that, again, fail to bring up these distinctions, such as the following one (Perrine 1988: 565) where a comparison is made between metaphor and simile:

> Metaphor and simile are both used as a means of comparing things that are essentially unlike. The only distinction between them is that in simile the comparison is expressed by some word or phrase, such as *like*, *as*, *than*, *similar to*, *resembles*, or *seems*; in metaphor the comparison is implied – that is, the figurative term is substituted for or identified with the literal term.

The above-quoted definition tells us no more about metaphor and simile than that they are similar in function and that the former is implicit while the latter is explicit. The matter, however, is not as simple as that; the following is an illustrative account of the distinctions between these two devices that translators need to bear in mind whenever they are encountered by a situation where they have to choose between two or more translation alternatives.

4.1 Range of comparison

One point of distinction between metaphor and simile is that the former has a wider range of comparison than the latter. In a sentence like 'That man walks like a peacock', what the simile suggests is that the property which the man and

a peacock have in common consists in their way of walking. There is no suggestion of the man's other peacock-like attributes, e.g. fine appearance, colorfulness, perhaps long-neckedness, etc., which can be vividly suggested by the metaphor 'That man is a peacock'. One would therefore agree with Leech (1969: 156) that the very explicitness and circumstantiality of simile is a limitation, while "the ability of metaphor to allude to an indefinite bundle of things which cannot be adequately summarized gives it its extraordinary power to open new paths of expression".

Unless unavoidable for one reason or another, the translation of metaphor into simile would thus result in a considerable translation loss. Let us take as a case in point the metaphor contained in the following lines from Hamlet's famous soliloquy (*Hamlet*, Act III, Scene I) and the way it has been handled in a particular translation:

To be, or not to be: that is the question:
Whether 'tis nobler in the mind to suffer
The slings and arrows of outrageous fortune,
Or to take arms against a sea of troubles,
And by opposing end them?

In these lines Hamlet is wondering which is nobler, to suffer the blows of fortune or fight them. The decision he is trying to make is expressed metaphorically in the third and fourth lines: the objects '(outrageous) fortune' and 'troubles' are described in terms of the images 'slings and arrows', and 'a sea', respectively.

To start with, the above metaphor seems to lend itself naturally to being retained in Arabic; images involving the sea and the various meanings associated with it (e.g. caprice, roughness, vastness, majesty, abundance, etc.) constitute some of the most frequently used metaphors in the language. For example, the very idea expressed through 'a sea of trouble' is more or less similarly rendered in an equally effective metaphor in the following line by the ancient Arab poet al-Mutanabbi (d. 965):

ومُرهَفٍ سرتُ بينَ الجحفلينِ به حتى ضربتُ وموجُ الموتِ يلتطم

This has been translated (Nicholson 1977: 307) as:

And O the days when I have swung my fine-edged glaive
Amidst a sea of death where wave was dashed on wave

Clearly, al-Mutanabbi's metaphor موج الموت 'waves (sea) of death' closely resembles Shakespeare's 'a sea of troubles', where the objects 'death' and 'troubles', respectively, are described in terms of the same image, i.e., 'a sea' to express the idea of immensity or numerousness. The other image in Shakespeare's metaphor, namely 'slings and arrows', can also equally naturally be maintained in Arabic. This being the case, one would expect the above Shakespearean metaphor to be naturally rendered into an equivalent Arabic

metaphor with the same image. In the following translation, however, the situation is quite different. The metaphor in Hamlet's soliloquy is translated (Jamaal 1983: 51-2) as follows:

إني لأتساءل فيما إذا كنت حقا موجودا في هذا الوجود
أم غير موجود. فأي الحالتين أمثل يا ترى؟ أأستكين
للرجم والمظالم أم أنهض لمقاومة المصائب ولو كانت
كرذاذ المطر شدة وقسوة؟

In this translation, the SL metaphor 'sea of troubles' is rendered significantly less forceful by being shifted to a simile in the TL. 'Troubles', the object of the SL metaphor, are described in terms of being "as harsh and as violent as drizzle" ("كرذاذ المطر شدة وقسوة"). Note also that the metaphor is further weakened by reducing the SL image 'sea' to a mere 'drizzle'. The other SL metaphor, 'the slings and arrows of outrageous fortune', is rendered almost non-metaphorically into "should I give way to curses and iniquities?", where neither the SL object nor the SL image is retained in the TL, which, as far as we can judge, is unjustifiable. The metaphors in question may more appropriately be translated into something like the following by Jabra (1986a: 93-4):

أأكون أم لا أكون؟ ذلك هو السؤال.
أمن الأنبل للنفس أن يصبر المرء على
مقاليع الدهر اللئيم وسهامه
أم يشهر السلاح على بحر من الهموم
وبصدها ينهيها؟

Jabra's translation reflects his awareness of the above-made distinction between metaphor and simile; by retaining the SL objects and images, he was able to maintain the force of the original metaphors, their connotations, and their unrestricted range of comparison.

4.2 Difference of effect

The difference between simile and metaphor – that the former is an explicit comparison while the latter implicit – results in a difference of effect. A comparison established through simile keeps us almost equally aware of the two things involved. Consider, for example, the following line of verse by Qays bin DariiH (quoted in Shuusha 1983: 79):

لقد ثبتت في القلب منك مودة كما ثبتت في الراحتين الأصابع

which may be translated as follows:

Your love is as firmly fixed in my heart
As fingers in my palms.

The above simile makes us as much aware of the firmness of the poet's love for his sweetheart (in his heart) as of the fixedness of his fingers in his palms. In a metaphor, however, the fusion of the two elements is such that we remain far more aware of one of them than the other. This characteristic of metaphor can best be illustrated by the following lines from Auden's poem 'As I Walked Out One Evening' (quoted in Kreuzer 1955: 88):

In headaches and in worry
Vaguely life leaks away,
And Time will have his fancy
To-morrow or to-day.

In his excellent analysis of this metaphor, Kreuzer (ibid, p. 89) explains that in these lines "our attention is centered on life; it is not equally shared with a leaky vessel. Yet we have some awareness of the leaky vessel. Actually, the metaphor results in our seeing of life with the characteristics of a leaky vessel made intrinsic to it".

4.3 Economy and immediacy

Another main distinction between metaphor and simile is that the former is more economical and immediate than the latter (see Gill 1985: 19-20). It is possible through metaphor to make a complex statement without complicating the grammatical construction of the sentence that carries the statement. Consider, for example, the metaphor in the following Qur'anic verse: "قَالَ رَبِّ إِنِّي وَهَنَ الْعَظْمُ مِنِّي وَاشْتَعَلَ الرَّأْسُ شَيْبًا" "He said: My Lord! infirm indeed are my bones, and my head is blazing with grey hair". If expressed through a simile, the metaphorical expression "my head is blazing with grey hair" would be something like "The spread of grey hair in my head is like the spread of fire in dry stalks", or "Grey hair is to my head as a blazing fire to firewood", which is quite untypical of the style of the Qur'an which is characterized by succinctness and forcefulness. This perhaps is one main reason why the metaphor under discussion is retained in almost all translation versions of the verse in question (see The Nobel Qur'an: Translations of the Qur'an: Chapter 19, Verse 4, www). The only translation I have come across where it is rendered via a different procedure is that given by Al-Hilaali and Khan (1996: 384) where it is converted to sense: "... and grey hair has spread on my head", but which demonstrates clearly the noticeable translation loss this conversion has entailed in terms of the conciseness, vividness, and suggestiveness of the expression.

Metaphors are also immediate. By 'immediacy', here, is meant the fusion of two things in a single word. Take for instance the following lines from an unpublished poem by the writer:

لا تنطقي ...
الحبُ أنطقَ وجنتيكِ بأنْ سقى
ورداً على خديكِ لونَ الشفقِ.

This might be translated as:

Speak not,
For love has made thy cheeks speak,
That it has tinged them
With the colour of twilight.

In these lines, a personification is used whereby 'love' is talked of in terms of having the power to make 'cheeks' speak. This dramatic picture is established in a single verb, أنطق 'to make (someone or, metaphorically, something) speak'.

4.4 Degree of explicitness

A further feature distinguishing metaphoric utterances from similes is that it is part of the nature of the former to be ambiguous, particularly when taken in isolation. The ambiguity in such cases arises from the uncertainty about which words are to be understood metaphorically, and which literally. Kittay (1987: 25) uses an interesting example to illustrate this point. The sentence 'This man is my mother' may be understood in two different ways:

(1) The man has treated me as I might expect a mother to treat me ('man', in this case, is used literally, and 'mother', figuratively).
(2) I am remarking on the presumed masculine characteristics of a woman who is actually my mother (in which case 'mother' has a literal meaning while 'man', a figurative one).

Turning such a metaphor into a simile (e.g., 'That man is as kind to me as my mother') would allow of only one interpretation, thus rendering the sentence unambiguous. The ambiguity of the original utterance, however, may be, or usually is, intended to achieve a certain stylistic purpose, e.g. highlighting the characteristic of kindheartedness attributed to the man in question (in the case of the first interpretation), or providing a maximally vivid description of the masculine qualities of the mother (in the case of the second interpretation). This, of course, is similarly the case in translation.

5. Justifiable Changes

It was suggested above (4.1) that for one reason or another it is sometimes not possible for a SL metaphor to be retained in the TL, the implication being that, in such cases, the translator may justifiably resort to one of the alternative solutions or translation procedures mentioned in the introduction. The following two cases will suffice to illustrate this point.

5.1 Lack of semantic equivalence

There are cases where the translator finds it inevitable to translate a metaphor into a non-metaphor due to the fact that a given SL referent may have a certain connotation that is lacking in the seemingly corresponding referent in the TL. Consider, for example, the use of the word سابح in the following line of verse (Al-Hamadaanii, n.d.: 66):

ولا شُدَّ لي سرجٌ على ظهر سابحٍ ولا ضُربتْ لي بالعراءِ قبابُ

The basic meaning of Arabic 'سابح' is exactly the same as that of 'swimmer' in English. Metaphorically, however, the former, but not the latter, is also used as an epithet for horses, meaning 'floating', to indicate their high speed; there is, thus, سوابح (pl. of سابح) 'race horses' (Wehr 1961). It is because of this difference in meaning, it seems, that Arberry (1965: 94) uses a literal, non-metaphorical, alternative (viz., 'galloper') in his translation of the above-quoted line:

> No saddle is bound for me on the back of a strong galloper,
> Neither is any tent pitched for me in the desert.

5.2 The general purpose of translation

The question of whether or not a source text (ST) image should be retained in a target text (TT) is sometimes a matter of attitude on the part of the translator towards the general purpose of translation (particularly of literary texts). Translation theorists distinguish between two main types of translation, the so-called 'semantic translation' and 'communicative translation', a distinction similarly reflected, consciously or unconsciously, in translators' products. A semantically oriented translation has as its main objective the rendering of the exact contextual meaning of the ST *as closely as possible*; loyalty to the SL culture thus remains to be a major strategic objective of the semantic translator. 'Communicative translation', on the other hand, is primarily oriented towards the TL reader "who does not anticipate difficulties or obscurities, and would expect a general transfer of foreign elements into his own culture as well as his language where necessary" (Newmark 1982: 39). For the purposes of illustration, consider the image Shakespeare uses in following lines of his sonnet 18:

> Shall I compare thee to a summer's day?
> Thou art more lovely and more temperate:
> Rough winds do shake the darling buds of May,
> And summer's lease hath all too short a date:

In these lines, Shakespeare is wondering whether he would do his friend justice by likening him to 'a summer's day'. The summer referred to here, of course, is not the type of summer familiar to people in some other parts of the world. In the Middle East, for instance, it is an annoyingly hot season and extends over a long period of time, unlike the case in Britain, where it is characteristically pleasant

and much shorter. The transfer of the SL image in this case may thus pose a translation problem if the TL is a Middle Eastern one, Arabic for example: the comparison would sound unsuitable to the Arab reader/hearer. To get around this problem, a communicative English-Arabic translator may thus find it appropriate to replace the SL image 'a summer's day' by an equivalent TL one, الربيع 'spring', thereby avoiding an inevitable cultural shock, as in the following example (Ali 2002: 130):

أأقولُ أشبهـــت الربيـــعَ طبـــاعا
وطباعك الأحنى وحسنك كامـــل
تذوي البراعم والغصون سراعا
فربيع ذي الدنيا قصير زائـــــل

Those in favor of semantic translation, on the other hand, would argue that the TL reader "should get a vivid impression from the content of the sonnet of the beauty of summer in England, and reading the poem should exercise his imagination as well as introduce him to English culture" (Newmark 1982: 50). With this in mind, a semantic translator would thus find it appropriate to retain the ST image in the TL version (FaTiina Al-Naa?ib, quoted in Xaluusi 1982: 35):

منـــذا يقارن حسنك المغري بصيف قد تجلـــــى
وفنون سحرك قد بدت في ناظري أسمى وأغلى؟
تجني الرياح العاتيات على البراعم وهي جذلـــى
والصيف يمضي مسرعا إذ عقده المحدود ولـــى

In a third translation version of the above-quoted Shakespearian sonnet, the translator (Jabra 1986b: 715) goes even so far as to sacrifice the ST formal features of rhyme and rhythm for the sake of producing a semantically equivalent TT. He does so despite the relative importance of those features to the overall structure of the sonnet as a piece of poetic composition:

أبيوم من أيام الصف أشبهك؟
لأكثر جمالا أنت عندي وأشد اعتدالا.
فالرياح العتية تجني على براعم أيار الحبيبة
وعقد الصيف ما أقصر أجله!

6. Concluding Remarks and Pedagogical Implications

The main objective of the present study was to highlight those characteristics of metaphor that distinguish it from other types of figurative and non-figurative expressions, putting special emphasis on the relevance of these distinctions to

translation decisions involving the rendering of SL metaphors into the TL. Following a fairly detailed discussion of some facts and misconceptions about the relationship of similarity between 'object' and 'image', the two parts of any metaphorical expression, a comparison was made between metaphor and simile with a view to pointing out the main distinctions between these two figures and the special importance these distinctions acquire when looked at from the point of view of translation. It was shown that the difference between the two figures is not merely a grammatical one depending on the use of such words as 'like', 'as', 'than', etc; rather, they differ in significance. A metaphor is a method of expression whereby language can be stretched and the rules of literal usage systematically violated. In simile, on the other hand, language is used at its normal or literal level; one thing is said to be like another thing. Further distinctions between the two figures include their range of comparison: that a metaphor is more complex and inclusive than a simile; their effect: the fact that the two objects of a comparison are kept apart in a simile but fused together in a metaphor, thus producing a sense of novelty; economy and immediacy: that a metaphor is more economical and more immediate than a simile; and the degree of explicitness: the fact that metaphors are less explicit and less direct than similes.

In light of the above-made distinctions, the study investigated the dangers involved in the application of the set of translation procedures proposed by some translation theorists as 'alternative solutions' in cases where a given SL metaphor does not lend itself to being retained in a TL. The main argument against this proposal, it was illustrated, consists in that it makes no mention of how the choice from among the various procedures is made, thus turning metaphor translation into a random process, rather than one that is based on the type of structure and function the particular metaphor has within the given context. Apart from cases where change is deemed legitimate, as illustrated above, an SL metaphor may thus be unjustifiably turned into a TL simile, or its original image replaced by a TL one, or it may be converted to sense in the TL, or even dropped altogether, thus incurring considerable translation loss.

Pedagogically, the study warned student translators against the mechanical application of the aforementioned translation procedures, i.e. the misguided notion that any one of the alternatives suggested is as good a translation procedure of a given metaphor as any other. It was shown that abstract rules alone do not necessarily guarantee the successful translation of a SL metaphor into a TL. Rather, the translator's decision should be based on such considerations or guidelines as: a clear understanding of the complex nature of metaphor and the characteristics that distinguish it from other figures of speech; the type of metaphor concerned, i.e., whether dead, original, etc.; the function of the given metaphorical expression within the particular context in which it occurs; the relevance of the SL metaphor to TL culture; the translator's own attitude towards the general purpose of translation, i.e. whether the aim is to produce a *semantic* translation (loyal to the SL culture) or a *communicative* translation (primarily oriented towards the TL reader).

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