The Use of Micro- and Macro strategies and the Challenge of Translating American and British Military Texts into Arabic Language: Military Discourse

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Abstract

This paper aims to investigate the use of micro- and macrostrategies and challenge of translating American and British military texts into Arabic language. These challenges are of three broad classes include: promoting military translation competence; generating subject field knowledge; and promoting authenticity in the military translation and learning environment. Our research attempts to reveal the difficulties those EFL military cadets face when they are asked to translate military texts, terms, ranks and signs from American and British English into Arabic language. This is qualitative and quantitative study included 100 senior cadets from the Military Wing at Mu'tah University in Jordan. The findings of the study showed that cadets face difficulties and real challenge particularly within the same language variation when translating from English (American and British) into Arabic language. The study recommends that educationists and decision-makers be concerned with incorporating military texts translation course materials into the military cadets' curricula.

KEYWORDS :*Challenge, translation, military text, discourse, genre, microstrategy and macrostrategy*

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استخدام Macrostrategies و Microstrategies والتحدي المتمثل في ترجمة النصوص الإنجليزية العسكرية الأمريكية والبريطانية إلى اللغة العربية: الخطاب العسكري

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ملخص

تهدف هذه الورقة البحثية إلى التحقيق في استخدام Macrostrategies و Microstrategies والتحدي المتمثل في ترجمة النصوص الإنجليزية العسكرية الأمريكية والبريطانية إلى اللغة العربية. حيث تكمن أهمية هذه التحديات في تعزيز كفاءة الترجمة العسكرية، توليد المعرفة في حقل الموضوع وتعزيز صحة الترجمة العسكرية وبيئة التعلم. يحاول بحثنا الكشف عن الصعوبات التي يواجهها هؤلاء الطلبة العسكريين في حقل EFL عندما يطلب منهم ترجمة النصوص والمصطلحات العسكرية في اللغة الإنجليزية الأمريكية والبريطانية إلى اللغة العربية. شملت هذه الدراسة الكمية 100 طالب سنه رابعة من الجناح العسكري في جامعة مؤتة في الأردن. وأظهرت نتائج الدراسة أن الطلاب يواجهون صعوبات وتحديا حقيقيا لاسيما في اختلاف نفس لغة عند ترجمة النصوص الإنجليزية العسكرية (الأمريكية والبريطانية) إلى اللغة العربية. توصي الدراسة بتصميم مناهج ترجمة تشمل ترجمة النصوص العسكرية في المناهج الدراسية للطلاب العسكريين.

Introduction:

Translation is a process that needs a lot of efforts. That is, a translator should be professional in the field so that he/ she can translate varied texts. Therefore, research is a prominent component in translation. A translation process should maintain the information in the target language similar to that of the source language without any gain or loss in the translated texts. There are many significant aspects that contribute in succeeding the translation process include the target audience and text, source language as well as the cultural and stylistic aspect (Munday 2005; Poiter and Karin 2007; Douglass 2003; Gorlee 2004).

There is no doubt that translation is an important area of studies for many purposes, in which the translation of military texts and terms is essentially required by today's military cadets to encounter challenges of one's national security setting (Schjoldoger 2008; Vennuti 2000). But, there is a lack of standardizing military terms which doesn't only apply for dialects of the same language but also for variations of those terms within the same language. This serious situation offers a great challenge for some military cadets when translating from one language to another (Dyvik 2004; Basil & Mason 1997).

Translation poses a big challenge for Arabic students majoring in English, in general (Basil and Mason 1990). Meanwhile, translating military texts creates a lot of difficulties for military cadets, in particular. One of such difficulties is due to the fact that American and British military texts are completely different. Such difference is triggered by the variation in the American and British military cultures. This variation causes a difference in the selected Arabic equivalence, posing a state of confusion for the translator (Poiter and Karin 2007; Fawcett 1997). Interestingly, neither the differences between American and British military texts are studied from a translation perspective, nor the difficulties faced by Arabic military cadets studying this domain is investigated or explored. Consequently, the goal of this paper is to investigate the challenges of translating American and British military texts into Arabic language.

Literature Review:
English as foreign language learning has become the most commonly used language in the world since the end of the Cold War. It has developed to be extremely significant for armed forces of several nations (Christiane 2007; Gollins and Sanderson 2001). Every NATO has pledged to develop military texts' translation with the support of academic and military agencies such as the Institute of Defence Language in USA, the British Council in UK and the BILC (Bureau for International Language Cooperation). According to Alderson (2003) language is assessment in no longer an exception. This reveals that the politics and military language has as significant role in several fields of life.

Munday (2001) states that, defining translation process is a main question that does not have an explicit answer in the field of translation; it is not the basic objective of this paper to explore the definition of translation, but it is significant to relate the definition of translation in this regard, provided that this paper is about an important aspect within the area of military translation.

According to Hardwick (2000) the term translation may relate to many things. That is, it may refer to the general field of translation including the translation's product, text or process. He adds the definition of the tern translation associates with different types of translation such as intralingual, interlingual and intersemoitic. Likewise, Schojoldager (2008) states that translation refers to the transfer process of information or knowledge takes place from one source texts into the target text. This means that there is a kind of replacement of source language (SL) materials by means of equivalent into the target language (TL).

Attempting to define the term "military translation", a variety of related literature is reviewed and examined so as to conclude an explicit view of military translation as possible. It refers to significant the process of translating basic military composites / terms (Sharoff 2006). The need for explaining military terms or language is the way by which any work of military translation or product can achieve its essence. Trosborg (1997) states that no matter how military translation might be expressed its impacts are definitely obtained through

language. Military translation, therefore, as its name suggests, is concerned with translating texts written in a military language and terms that are different from any other kind of language.

Research Questions:

In order to achieve the objectives of this study, this paper addresses the following questions:

Q1: What is the challenge that military cadets face when translating military texts from American / British English into Arabic language?

Q2: What differences are found when cadet categorizes the source and target domains for that challenge in the source and target language while translating military terms?

Q3: What are the translation strategies used by the military translators?

Methodology:

Taking into consideration the nature of the study, a qualitative and quantitative design was adopted. The use of a combination of research methods is found the most appropriate in the analysis of social phenomena in their real contexts (Gay, Mills and Airasian 2009). This research paper is basically revolved around the investigation of the challenge of translating American and British military texts into Arabic language. In the pursuit of this endeavor, two English (American/British) military texts are analysed for the challenging variations and differences in the use of military texts. The military terms obtained in this process then were listed and their frequency throughout the selected military texts. The list of the military terms found in these texts were then analysed based on the skills, knowledge and background of the participants. The theoretical frame of this study is based on Skopos Theory 1970 of analysing translation texts.

The sample of the research contained the senior Jordanian military cadets currently studying English language and literature at the Military Wing at Mu'tah University in Jordan. The names and addresses of the translators were anonymous as part of the research methods ethical consideration as well as based on their request. These

respondents first were encouraged to translate four English military texts, in which two of them was in American English and the other two were in British English into Arabic language. They were assigned the translation topic as a sessional project usually given to them by their English language instructor a part of their academic assignment to be returned within three months. Also, they were asked to identify the most common strategies used in their translation experiences such as microstrategies and macrostrategies.

The cadets then were asked to talk about military texts' translation experience, and any military terms they had trouble translating as they translated. Next, in as second session, the respondents were encouraged to respond to a list of questionnaire items examining the military terms they attribute to the potentially problematic varied military terms translated from the analysis of the two translated military texts. After that, we engaged in short interviews with each participant, to investigate the cadets' reactions toward military texts or terms' translation and the challenge each respondent faced in ascribing translating military terms to the questionnaire items.

The research study included textual analysis, elicitation of translated data from the respondents, collecting the questionnaire items and conducting two interviews that may most appropriately be called as informal meetings with the respondents. We conducted the study at Mu'tah University- Military Wing, as we were acquainted with them and met us regularly where they considered as insides to their cultural setting. This helped us gain their willingness and confidence to participate in our study.

Since the first section of this research included the investigation of the military texts, enough care was given by us to select target language military texts. Both the texts were appropriate and translatable as possible into Arabic language from their academic texts. This study involved different types of elicited data. First, the military English texts were analysed for their military terms' translation content. Then, the interviews were analysed based on themes that emerge. However, the questionnaires were analysed using SPSS in which the data was computed and explained.

Discussion and Findings:

This paper sets out with the basic research question of what is the appropriateness of Micro- and Macrostrategies and the challenge of translating American and British English military texts into Arabic language cadets face. This study employed Skopo's Theory and Schjoldoger Taxonomy (2008) perspectives in which they relate to the use of micro- and macrostrategies. Also, their model has been employed by professional translators and trainers in training and teaching courses where it appears to be appropriate for the purpose of this paper. This is because the military texts are translated through a general strategic approach. That is, it is possible to select preeminently source oriented macrostrategy military texts or predominantly military target text oriented macrostrategy.

In order to answer the question of this research, it was essential to investigate what military discourse is, and what kind of text genre military translation texts is, assume that it is a genre. In addition, it was essential to investigate how to define and specify genres for the purpose of military translation. This discussion will result in a model may be employed to examine and translate military speeches or texts associated with both source language context and target language contexts, and through comparative analysis the differences in the military genre conventions may be found.

It was also essential to investigate what military translation actually means and what are the other approaches that relate to this field. By concisely analysing difficult theoretical concepts, Skopo theory could be classified, and further analyses especially those that refer to Skopo's analysis as depicted by Schjoldager (2008), provide the conclusion that this is a valid analysis for this paper. This is because it includes both theoretical concepts, despite the fact that this theory is criticised for not being "genuine" and a pragmatic approach to refer to translation and examine translations. Also, this approach takes into consideration the challenges of the cultural aspects not only within different varieties of the same languages but also within the same dialect.

The data was chosen employing criteria that made sure that the data is accessible and comparable with regard to both source military

texts and target military texts as well as between the military translation and the provided military source texts. The provided military source texts are necessarily "genuine" source texts deployed for the translation, as the translation of the military target texts could have been employing any type of military transcript or prepared indications as their source texts. This makes it possible that our source texts could have many discrepancies with the military source texts deployed by the military translator, and they should be considered in the results.

Based on the analysis, it was found that all military texts' translation the most employed microstrategies was the direct translation, with the oblique translation as the second most common micorstrategy as shown in the following examples; when translating the military rank **"Lieutenant"** which was historically the deputy to a **"Captain"**, using direct or literary translation strategy, the translator faces some difficulties with regard to which translation to pick since the rank differs based on the military situation. That is, the word lieutenant in the United States is different from that in the United Kingdom as displayed in Table 1.1:

	Army Ranks	**Naval Ranks**	**Air Force Ranks**
United States	Lieutenant	Lieutenant Commandant	Commissioned Officer
United Kingdom	First Lieutenant	Lieutenant / Commander	Flight Lieutenant
Jordan	1st Lieutenant "MOLAZIM AWAL" (ملازم أول)	1st Lieutenant "MOLAZIM AWAL" (ملازم أول)	1st Lieutenant "MOLAZIM AWAL" (ملازم أول)

As displayed in the table, it is observed that the word lieutenant or first lieutenant (American and British) which is used in English to refer to a specific military rank indicates varied usages (army, naval and air force) whether in American or British English. Thus, such variation causes a challenge or difficulties for Arab military translators particularly when they attempt to translate that from English into Arabic where the word 1st Lieutenant "MOLAZIM AWAL" (ملازم أول) is the only equivalent for all ranks (army, naval

and air force) in Jordanian army unlike that of the United States or United Kingdom. This is an example where the challenge of direct or literary translation appears leaving the translator at a pace which rank to choose when translating.

This literary translation challenge appears when translating other military ranks from English into Arabic such as 2nd Lieutenant "MOLAZIM THANI" (ملازم ثاني), Captain "NAQEEB" (نقيب), Major "RA'ED" (رائد), Lieutenant Colonel "MOQADDAM" (مقدم), Colonel "AQEED" (عقيد), Brigadier General "AMID" (عميد), Major General "LIWA" (لواء), Lieutenant General "FAREEQ" (فريق), General or Full General "FAREEQ AWAL" (فريق أول) and Field Marshal "MOSHEER" (مشير). This is not the only challenge they face when conducting translation task from one language to another but also within the same language where the same military rank may refer to something different in American contexts such as Navy or Marine, Air Force, Army etc compared to that of British English. In addition, there were instances of paraphrasing and deletion in all military translation but these were not common enough to affect the general impression of the military translations. Moreover, most of the deletion, as well as the few instances of substitutions and condensation, appeared to be unintentional and not intentional strategy.

Concerning cultural references, there were all translated. In one aspect, these cultural inferences were translated directly, while explicitation was employed in other instances. The influence of rhetorical elements was occasionally regenerated in the military translation, and this appeared to the situations when the semantic meaning and the rhetorical impact where related including some metaphors. When the rhetorical elements, depended basically on grammatical constituents or rhyme to generate this impact, such impacts where commonly not generated. This showed that the military translator did not possess a preference for the rhetorical but did for the semantic content. There were no remarks for any intentional attempts to decrease the formality of military translations. This involved the military translations of rhetorical elements and the cultural references, which showed that there were no intentional attempts to adopt to the connections of the military target language contexts.

As shown in the translated military ranks in Table 1.1, different military ranks and positions were used as well in both British and American English. This was a completely explicit remark that the military target text was attempted to function and document as who translated what and when. In the case of the military target text there clear-cut view about the fact that military translation in fact being translation of other senders' communications. That is, all of these military translations contained new senders and new receivers in a newly culturally communicative situations, where the purpose was to state what another military translator had translated to other military groups in different cultural settings. This viewed military translation completely overt. In addition, it showed a challenging change in the general communicative military and translation purpose, from being native like in the military source texts to being referential in the military target language texts. All of these findings assumed that the military translators had been employing approaches that are relevant to the military source texts at both word-for-word and sentence-for-sentence levels. It showed the word-for-word and sentence to sentence level translation, with the intention given to the semantic content of the word rather than the rhetorical impact, but intentionally to translate idiomatically fancy Arabic. In brief, this part of the findings shows that there is a tendency by the military translators to use a general strategic approach to how these military source texts are translated in which such aspects agree very strongly with military source-texts' oriented macrostrategy. This indicates military translators tend to highly depend on macrostrategies in their translation process compared to that of microstrategies as presented in Figure 1.1 below.
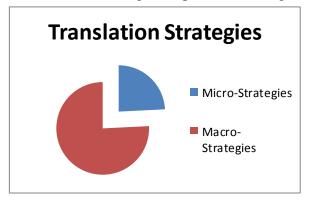

Figure 1.1

But this result does not demonstrate that all military texts can be translated based on this approach. This is because there were some translation relate to this research. Finally our results assume that there is a general translation approach that may be used to translate military texts, but the results are necessarily limited to translations used by military translators / cadets. In addition, due to the limited number of military texts used, the results only reveal a general strategic approach. In order to specify whether or not this approach as a matter of fact is general, it would be suggested to examine a larger corpus of military texts, as the findings of this paper can only be generalised to military cadets at Mu'tah University in Jordan. The data was chosen based on criteria that provided the accessibility and ease of comparison between the target and source texts. The chosen translation texts are not as a matter of fact genuine, as the cadets / translators could have been deploying any type of transcript as their source language text. This provides the opportunity that the source language texts to have many discrepancies with similar SL texts employed by the translators, and this should be considered when discussing the findings.

Based on the final analysis of the data we found out that in all the translation texts, the basic employed micorstrategy was literary translation, with the direct translation as the second most commonly used strategy. The translators indicated to face great challenges in translating military texts not only from American or British English texts in Arabic language, but also translating military texts within the same language. That is, the findings showed that the translators had difficulties in translating the same military ranks in the same language, as those ranks stood for different meanings in different military contexts such as Air Force, Special Forces, Navy, and Police etc. The other challenge that the findings revealed is the appropriateness of the military term to be used within specific military context. This shows that in some situations the translators found it very challenging whether to use American or British English Military terms. Also, the findings showed that the translators experienced a high level of confusion and complexities in translating relevant military texts or terms. When examining the translated military texts where the target

texts are compared with source texts through the segments found in all the texts (93 segments), we found 70 instances of what we would categorize as instances of microstrategies known as direct translation. In addition, we found 9 instances of oblique translation, 4 instances of deletion, 3 instances of calque, 3 instances of explicitation, 2 instances of addition and 2 instances of condensation. In fact these microstrategies can be explained but as the purpose of this paper is concerned the authors find it applicable to just indicate them. This shows that the military translators are very relevant and close to the word level of the military source target texts.

When translating from Military British English texts, the translator seems most likely to make his translation based on source-text oriented macrostrategies. The pattern in these strategies and other aspects explained in here show this. This also makes sense when taking into consideration the military translation situations of the target texts, as it would be explicit to any Arab reader of such a military text that it would be a military translation of earlier written military texts in culturally different contexts.

Figure 1.2 in the next section depicts the comparability between the source text and the military text in terms of using the microstrategies in military translation. The findings indicated that 85% of the participants showed that they face great challenge in translating English language military texts into Arabic language.
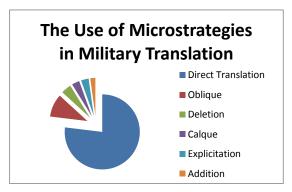

Figure 1.2

Whilst 15 % of them faced no challenge in translating those texts into Arabic language as depicted in Figure 1.3 below:

The Challenge of Translating English Military Texts Into Arabic Language

Figure 1.3

As observed in the discussion of the findings and results of the current research, we briefly note that there is a high percent of the military translators who have a tendency to depend on the use of macrostrategies when translating compared to that use of microstrategies. Also, we found out that 85% of the participants find translating military texts, terms and ranks from English language (American and British) very confusing and full of complexities. This is not only demonstrated at the level of different dialects of the same language such as American English and British English, but also at the level of the same language such as the use of military ranks, terms and expressions within American English which varies from one state to another as well as in different military fields including police, air

force, special forces et. Hence, the participants stated that one of the challenging and complex issues is the selection of which, what, when and how since using a military in one field differs from that of other field inspite of the fact it is the same military rank but differs in translation usage from one English varieties to another governed by the cultural genre, context or discourse.

Conclusion:

It has been demonstrated that translating military texts from English Language into Arabic language is very challenging for military translators due to the cultural genre discourse differences within the varieties of the same language and this could be even realized within the variety of the same language such as American or British English. That is, this criterion causes great complexities, difficulties and challenges for these translators. Also, we found out that military translators used different types of translation strategies to translate certain military texts, terms or expressions, but they far depended on macrostrategies compared to those of microstrategies. That is, there should be a systematic approach for teaching and training military translation such as that of Skopo and Schjoldager (2008) taxonomy or analysis of translation. This study recommends that further investigations in the field of military translation should be conducted in the future to examine a larger corpus of military texts, terms and ranks so that decision makers may take the necessary measures.

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Note: The names and addresses of proofreaders and translators were not included based on their request as applied in the research procedures and ethical considerations' issues.

Appendices

Appendix (A)

Questionnaires on the Military Language Target Text
1. How is the military translation presented?
2. Where the military translation was made available?
3. When the military translation made available?
4. Is it a written military translation, oral or mixed media translation?
5. Who is the military translator?
6. Is it a professional military translation?
7. Is it overt or covert military translation?
8. Who commissioned the military translation?
9. Why was the military translation commissioned?
10. Who is the presenter of the military translation?
11. What was the function of the military target text?
12. What is the specific interest about the military target text and its communicative situations?
13. How would you expect the military translator to be affected by the military translation situations?

Appendix (B)

Questionnaires on the Military Language Source Text
1. How the military source text is given?
2. Who is the presenter?
3. Who is the interpreter of the text?
4. When was the military text translated?
5. Where was the military text communicated?
6. Why was the military text written?
7. Is there a predominant military language function?
8. What is the military genre? What are the military characteristics?
9. What is the field of military translation?
10. What is the connection between the presenter of the text and the translator of the text?
11. Are the military language characteristics of its medium?
12. What is the level of military language formality?
14. What is specifically exciting about this military text as a

source of military translation?

Appendix   (C)

Questionnaires on Macrostrategies
1. Could you identify the macrostrategies in the military translation?
2. Could you deduct at the military translators' reasons?
3. How do the macrostrategies refer to the military translation situation and its function?
4. Is the macrostrategy appropriate for the military text translator?

Appendix (D)

Questionnaires on Macrostrategies
1.   Could you specify some microstrategies in the military texts' translation?
2.   Could you deduct at the military translator's reasons?
3.   Could you specify a pattern?
4.   How do the microstrategies refer to the assumed macrostrategies in the military texts' translation?
5.   Are the microstrategies appropriate in the military texts' translation?