

Approaches to Bangla-Arabic Translation: Subtleties and Solutions

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Abstract—This study addresses some significant issues related to Bangla-Arabic translation and their possible solutions. It describes the types of translation and the role played by the translator in the overall process. As translation is a complex and a subtle area of language studies, translators must be conscious of all the probable professional intricacies. They primarily deal with the meanings; however, they also manipulate the transfer of all the corresponding characteristic elements of the source language into the target one. Translation from Bangla to Arabic is more complicated since it manages two languages with entirely different origins. The bulk of the complications in translation arises because of the fundamental differences between the two languages' grammar, lexicon, usage, stylistics and phonology. This research tries to equip the Bangla-Arabic translators with the necessary knowledge about the related problems and the skills that may help them find smart solutions. Finally, some practical recommendations are given to the experts as well as student translators and feasible suggestions are also extended to the future researchers.

Index Terms—Bangla-Arabic translation, text, context, transfer of meaning, source language, target language

I. INTRODUCTION

Translation, one of the essential means of human communication and interaction, has a significant effect on the daily life of the individuals, specially working in a local or an international organization. It basically sets up an association between the written texts of two or more languages and their contemporary cultures. In the present era of globalization, where immigration is the order of the day, and trade, commerce, science, culture and technology are crossing the national borders, the need for translation is continually rising. In this regard, Bassnett (1980, p. 21) states, "Translation involves the transfer of 'meaning' contained in one set of language signs into another set of language signs through competent use of the dictionary and grammar; the process involves a whole set of extra-linguistic criteria also". Dubois et al. (1973; as cited in Bell & Candlin, 1991, p. 22), define translation as "the expression in another language (or target language) of what has been expressed in another source language, preserving semantic and stylistic equivalences". So, translation from Bangla into Arabic, which is the focus of the current study, needs the command of the techniques used to transfer the 'meaning' of the source language (SL), i.e. Bangla, into Arabic—the target language (TL). These techniques may include, in addition to many others, the use of newly coined Arabic equivalent words of Bangla, the use of Bangla words formally borrowed by Arabic as foreignism and the use of Bangla foreign words which only follow the rules of Arabic pronunciation.

II. HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

Bangla and Arabic are among the languages that a substantial portion of the world population speaks. Bangla belongs to the Eastern branch of the Indo-European language family. It is spoken in Bangladesh and some parts of India, including West Bengal, Assam and Tripura. The history of the Bangla language goes back to the eighth century AD; however, it has never enjoyed a high prestige until the advent of the Muslim rule in the Indian subcontinent in the early thirteenth century. The Muslim era in the region started with the Turk conquest and, after passing through the brief period of Afghan rule, reached its logical end with the fall of the Mughal dynasty. This period of the Muslim rule in Bengal roughly coincides with the Middle Bengali period, extending from 1204 AD to the inception of the British rule in 1764 AD. Throughout the Muslim rule in Bengal, Persian had been the language of administration, whereas Arabic had been the language of religion not only of the rulers but also of the ever-growing Muslim population of Bengal. However, in this region, Bangla unanimously remained the language of communication for the typical person of all religious communities: the Muslims, the Hindus, and others (Dil, 2012). On the other hand, Arabic is the most predominantly used language of the Afro-Asiatic family. After the Islamic conquests in the 7th century, Arabic spread far and wide across the Middle East, North Africa, Central Asia, Western Asia and parts of China. It enjoys enormous significances among the global

community for two main reasons: the Arab world is a naturally affluent area where Arabic is the *lingua franca*, and it is the language of the Holy Quran—the Muslim scripture which holds equal respect among the Arab and the non-Arab believers.

III. REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Translation, appearing immediately after the establishment of the writing system, has been used by humans for centuries. For the first time, Cicero and Horace, the early western translators of the first century BC, differentiated between word-for-word translation and sense-for-sense translation (Cicero, 46 BC; cited in Frederiksen, 1966). Later on, St. Jerome (fourth century CE), renowned for his translation of the Greek King James Bible into Latin, made a distinction between the translation of religious and non-religious texts (St. Jerome's letter to Pammachius, section V, line 85; cited in Al-Ali & Majid, 2015). He considered the correct translation as the outcome of the translator's command of understanding the original text and his power of expression in the target language. The earlier translations were focused mainly on the religious texts, but he opened the door for translation in other domains of study, and soon there appeared translations in the fields of politics, war and literature. The invention of the printing system in the fifteenth century paved the way for improving both the quality and quantity of translation. Moreover, renowned theorists like Cowley (1721), Dolet et al. (1972), Ovid and Dryden (1712) made significant contributions to the field of translation.

In the twentieth century, as a result of valuable support from many prominent scholars like Vinay and Darbelnet (1958, 1995), Catford (1965), Nida and Taber (1982) and Newmark (1981), this previously unexplored discipline acquired the status of a full-fledged science called 'translation studies'. The domain of translation studies is fundamentally bilingual. As it compares the language systems and the cultures of two languages, it could be approached from the view of contrastive linguistics (Hatim, 1997).

Until the last few centuries, different manual and traditional techniques have been used for transferring the 'meaning' of the source language into the target one. In the present era of science and technology, more sophisticated tools and technologies are used to simplify the work of translation. However, contemporary translators still face several problems, which are mainly caused by syntax (grammar), lexis/vocabulary (word), stylistics (style), phonology (sound) and usage of both the source and target languages. The current study focuses on all these issues individually; however, in order to understand these complicated issues, it is helpful to understand some basics of the field: the main types of translation and the role played by the translator in the entire process.

A. Main Types of Translation

Although translation may be classified into various subcategories based on the different specialized basis of classification, it may broadly be grouped into two main types (Larson, 1998; Newmark, 1981) as explained below:

(a). Literal Translation

Literal translation involves conveying the denotative meaning of words, phrases and sentences in a text from one language to another. In this method, the fluency of the target readers is considered more important than fidelity. Therefore, literal translation works where there is a correspondence between the two languages in terms of semantics and structure. However, in the languages where the grammatical structures of their sentences are different, the literal translation creates complicated problems. It can be illustrated with the help of the following example:

Bangla: নাজিন আবহা থেকে ফিরলেন। || nadʒin abha t̪heke phirlen ||

Arabic: نجين ابها من عاد || nadʒin abha min ʕada ||

As Arabic is written from right to left, the Arabic version of this sentence starting from the right will be like:

Arabic: عاد نجين ابها من عاد || nadʒin abha min ʕada ||

Here, the word order in the above Arabic translation is inconsistent with Arabic structures, which should, in reality, be:

Arabic: عاد نجين من ابها || ʕada nadʒin min abha ||

English Meaning: Najin returned from Abha.

In particular, literal translation often falters, specially in the case of multi-word units like collocations and idioms, as can be illustrated (the proper Arabic expressions are parenthesized) below:

Bangla: 'সাক্ষাৎ করা' /ʃakkʰat̪ kora/

Arabic: 'يُدفع زيارة' /jadfʃ ziyarah/ ('يقوم بزيارة' /jaqumu biziarah/)

English Meaning: 'to visit'

Bangla: 'কড়া চা' /koʃa t̪ʃa/

Arabic: 'شاي قوي' /ʃai qawi/ ('شاي مضبوط' /ʃai madʕbut/)

English Meaning: 'strong tea'

However, in some circumstances, the literal translation may work flawlessly, even in the case of multi-word units. For example,

Bangla: 'কুম্ভীরারশ' /kumbʰirasru/

Arabic: 'دموع التماسيح' /damuwʃ attamasih/

English Meaning: 'crocodile tears'

Bangla: ‘স্নায়ুযুদ্ধ’ /ʃnaudʒuddʒo/

Arabic: ‘الحرب الباردة’ /alharbu albarida/

English Meaning: ‘the Cold War’

Furthermore, the ancient Greeks who translated texts into Latin used the literal method, which could be applied in three different ways: word-for-word translation, one-to-one literal translation and literal translation of meaning. The same classification may be applied to the case of Bangla-Arabic translation. For example,

1. Word-for-Word Translation

The word-for-word translation transfers the meaning of each source language word into the target language with its equivalent word(s). It, being an immature translation practice, is a bit risky since it may distort the original meaning of the given text. E.g.

Bangla: নাজিন হন মেধাবী । || nadʒin ɦon medʒabi ||

Arabic: ذكي يكون نجين || nadʒin jakun ɖaki ||

Since Arabic is written and read from right to left, the word-for-word translation of the above sentence will appear as:

Arabic: نجين يكون ذكي || nadʒin jakun ɖaki ||

English Meaning: Najin is intelligent.

Here, it may be noted that the Arabic verb ‘يكون’ /jakun/ which is equivalent to the Bangla linking verb ‘হয়’ /ɦe/, or ‘হন’ /ɦon/ (i.e. ‘is’) is unnecessary or informal as the Arabic nominal sentence (i.e. ‘جملة اسمية’ /dʒumlatun ismia/) does not need any verbs in simple present tenses (the other type being the verbal sentence i.e. ‘جملة فعلية’ /dʒumlatun fʕlia/). So, the correct sentence should, instead, be written and/or read as:

Arabic: نجين ذكي || nadʒin ɖaki ||

But, the past forms of ‘يكون’ /jakun/, such as ‘كنت’ /kuntu/, ‘كنا’ /kunna/, ‘كنت’ /kunta/, ‘كنت’ /kunti/, ‘كنتما’ /kuntuma:/, ‘كنتم’ /kuntum/, ‘كنتن’ /kuntunna/, ‘كان’ /ka:na/, ‘كانت’ /ka:nat/, ‘كانا’ /ka:na:/, ‘كانتا’ /ka:nata:/, ‘كانوا’ /ka:nu:/, ‘كنتن’ /kuntunna/ etc cannot be omitted or absent in the past tense.

2. One-to-One Literal Translation

It is a form of the literal translation that is broader than the previous one. In this method, we consider the collocation meanings and translate each SL word or phrase into an identical word or phrase in the TL (i.e. a noun to a noun, an adjective to an adjective, an idiom to an idiom, and a metaphor to a metaphor etc) with the same number, grammatical class and type of language. E.g.

Bangla: তারা আমাকে খুব ভালোবাসে । || ɖara amake kʰub bʰalobaʃe ||

Arabic: (انهم) يحبونني كثيرا . || (innahum) jahibbunani kaθiɾo:n ||

English Meaning: They love me very much.

Usually, Arabic sentences embed or disguise personal pronouns by attaching them in the form of affixation to the verbs.

3. Literal Translation of Meaning

This method translates the meaning closely and accurately into the target language. That is why sometimes it is called ‘close’ or ‘direct’ translation. It considers the TL grammar, word order, metaphorical and unique language uses. This method conveys the real meanings in different texts with different word order combinations according to the contexts. E.g.

Bangla: ছেলেরা আপেলটা খেলো । || ɦeɦeɦa (S) apelɖa (C) kʰelo (V) ||

Arabic: الولد أكل التفاحة . || alwaladu (S) akala (V) attuffa:ɦah (C) ||

English Meaning: The boy ate the apple.

In practice, the above Arabic sentence is correct but less formal. The formal pattern in Arabic is: Verb + Subject + Object. So, it could be re-written as:

Arabic: أكل الولد التفاحة . || akala (V) alwaladu (S) attuffa:ɦah (C) ||

(b). Free Translation

Free translation is an act of rendering the SL into TL as closely as possible at all the levels of the lexis, structure, and grammar. Here, fluency is not as essential as fidelity. This type of translation is often made for students and scholars who possess the knowledge of the language they are reading. This method is considered to be better than the literal translation. The free method means to translate without any constraints. A free translation is a translation that reproduces the general meaning of the original text. It may or may not strictly follow the original text’s form and organization. It is associated with translating the spirit of the message, not the letter or the form of the text. It does not translate every single word in a text. The translator can translate the way s/he understands the text (Akan et al., 2019). This method safeguards the convenience of both the translators and the readers. As it reproduces the matter without the manner or the content without the form, it, in fact, is a kind of paraphrase that is, at times, longer than the original and often wordy and pretentious. E.g.

Bangla: ফুটবল অন্যতম জনপ্রিয় খেলা । || pʰuɖbol onnoɖɔmo dʒonoprio kʰela ||

Arabic: كرة القدم إحدى الألعاب الشعبية . || kuratul qadami ihda alalabi aɦɦɖbiah ||

English Meaning: Football is one of the popular games.

Bangla: এক দিলে দুই পাখি। || æk dʰile dui pakʰi ||

Arabic: ضربت عصفرين بحجر واحد || dʿuribatu ʕsfuriana biḥadẓarin waḥid ||

English Meaning: Killing two birds with one stone.

However, in reality, most Arabic translations from Bangla are shorter. For example,

Bangla: আবহা একটি সুন্দর শহর। || abha ækʈa ʃundʒor ʃɔɦor ||

Arabic: ابها مدينة جميلة || abha madinatun dʒamilah ||

English Meaning: Abha is a beautiful city.

Bangla: সবুরে মেওয়া ফলে। || sobure meoḡa pʰole ||

Arabic: اصبر تنل || isʿbur tanal ||

English Meaning: Patience is bitter, but its fruit is sweet.

The methods mentioned above are commonly employed in translation; however, other methods, like adaptive, semantic, idiomatic, communicative, pragmatic, faithful and creative translation modes, are also used according to the need for more specialized texts and contexts.

B. Roles of the Translator

Translators play a significant role in the entire process of translating texts from one language into the other. Pointing to their role and responsibilities in this connection, Thrasher (1998, p. 13) says:

“The translator should strive for the nearest approximation in words, concepts, and cadence. He should scrupulously avoid adding words or ideas not demanded by the text. His job is not to expand or to explain but to translate and preserve the spirit and force of the original.... Not just ideas, but words are important; so also is the emphasis indicated by word order in the sentence”.

He is further supported by Nida and Waard (1986, p. 14), who state that “the translator must be a person who can draw aside the curtains of linguistic and cultural differences so that people may see clearly the relevance of the original message”. Nida (2001, p. 1) considers that “the translator’s lack of awareness of the cultures of the Source Language and the Target Language breaks three key principles of translation”. These principles are faithfulness (i.e. faithful equivalence in meaning), expressiveness (i.e. expressive clarity of form) and elegance (i.e. attractive elegance that makes a text a pleasure to read). While keeping in view this position of responsibility, the translator needs to be well experienced in the customs, traditions and behaviours of the two cultures, particularly their modern, social and political history (Akan et al., 2020). He should recognize the cultural aspects of the SL text and translate it into the TL with the same attitude nominated by the original author, but at the same time, not turn the translated text into a cultural treatise. However, it never means that the entire translation process should be converted into an act of blind mimicry. The translator must apply his creative energy and thought to his work, but not to that extent where the original text’s style, message or unique flavour is marred. He should honestly translate idiomatic expressions, which lend colour and flavour to the translated text.

The translator should also strike a delicate balance between familiarity and the essential ‘foreignness’ of the text and think carefully about substitutions or changes. It is also necessary to keep the structure and the sequence of time and events in line with the SL text. Careful consideration should also be taken in the case of translating humour, puns, jokes and literary allusions, names of places and characters, as well as the cultural references and the ideology into TL.

C. Problems in Translation and Possible Solutions

The problems in translation refer to those difficulties the translators encounter during the translation process, particularly those which necessitate checking, rechecking, reconsidering or rewriting the translated text, either by using a dictionary or a reference of some other kind. These problems may be related to one of the following categories: grammar, lexis, style, usage and phonology—all of which are briefly discussed along with some possible solutions. Moreover, it must be noted that certain problems have more than one solution, or one can be applied to solve more than a particular problem.

(a). Grammatical Problems

As the two languages, Bangla and Arabic, belong to two distantly-related language families, the most significant number of problems encountered during the process of translation are related to their structures, which include:

1. Linking Verb

Bangla and Arabic have no auxiliary verbs, but they have some verbs which could be treated as linking verbs; such as:
Bangla: ‘হই’ /ɦoi/, ‘হও’ /ɦoo/, ‘হয়’ /ɦe/, ‘হন’ /ɦon/ etc— Present

Arabic: ‘أكون’ /akun/, ‘نكون’ /nakun/, ‘تكون’ /takun/, ‘تكونين’ /takuni:n/, ‘تكونان’ /takuna:n/ (i.e. male/female), ‘تكونون’ /takunu:n/ (i.e. male/female), ‘يكون’ /jakun/, ‘تكون’ /takun/, ‘يكونان’ /jakuna:n/, ‘تكونان’ /takuna:n/, ‘يكونون’ /jakunu:n/, ‘تكونون’ /takunu:n/— Present

English Meaning: Verb ‘to be’ (i.e. am, is, are— Present)

Bangla: ‘ছিলাম’ /ɦʰilam/, ‘ছিলে’ /ɦʰile/, ‘ছিলো’ /ɦʰilo/, ‘ছিলেন’ /ɦʰilen/ etc— Past

Arabic: ‘كنت’ /kuntu/, ‘كنا’ /kunna/, ‘كنت’ /kunta/, ‘كنت’ /kunti/, ‘كنتما’ /kuntuma/ (i.e. male/female), ‘كنتن’ /kuntunna/, ‘كان’ /ka:na/, ‘كانت’ /ka:nat/, ‘كانا’ /ka:na:/, ‘كانتا’ /ka:nata:/, ‘كانوا’ /ka:nu:/, ‘كانت’ /kuntunna/— Past

English Meaning: Verb ‘to be’ (i.e. was, were— Past)

However, the Arabic linking verb ‘يكون’ /jakun/ is more formal to omit, specially in the sentence of present simple

tenses or the passive voice of the present. In Bangla, the linking verb is sometimes implied in the present simple tense, for instance: 'নাজিন (?) সৎ' || nadʒin ʃɔʈ || i.e. 'Najin is honest'. Here, the implied Bangla linking verb is 'হন' /hɔn/ (to show respect to the subject 'Najin'), or 'হয়' /he/ (without showing respect) which is equivalent to the English verb 'is'. However, the linking verb in both the Bangla and Arabic languages cannot be omitted or implied in the past tense.

2. Verb 'Have'

As the Bangla and Arabic languages have no use of 'have' as an auxiliary verb, the translator should avoid the direct translation. They could be represented as follows:

Bangla: 'আছে' /aʃhe/ — Present

Arabic: 'لدي' /ladaia/, 'لدينا' /ladaina/, 'لديك' /ladaika/, 'لديكي' /ladaiki/, 'لديكما' /ladaikuma/ (i.e. male/female), 'لديكم' /ladaikum/, 'لديكن' /ladaikunna/, 'لديه' /ladaihi/, 'لديها' /ladaiha/, 'لديهما' /ladaihuma/ (i.e. male/female), 'لديهم' /ladaihum/, 'لديهن' /ladaihunna/ — Present

English Meaning: Verb 'to have' (i.e. have, has — Present)

Bangla: 'ছিলো' /ʃilo/ — Past

Arabic: All present forms of the verb 'Have' in Arabic + 'كان' /ka:na/ — Past

English Meaning: Verb 'to have' (i.e. had — Past)

3. Operator 'Do'

Although there is no use of Bangla verbs as an operator (i.e. Do, Does or Did), the Arabic verb 'هل' /hal/ is equivalent to the operator. So, the translator should avoid the direct translation as it may cause problems in the translation of questions.

4. Negation

In Bangla, we usually add some negative words like 'না' /na/, 'নয়' /ne/, 'নাই' /nai/, 'নি' /ni/ etc just after the verb (linking and other verbs) to form negative expressions. However, Arabic has operators and the negative words are placed preceding the verb (i.e. in the beginning of a sentence). Thus, we have 'ما' /ma:/, 'لا' /la:/ (Present), 'لم' /lam/ (Past), 'لن' /lan/ (Future) etc negative Arabic equivalents for Bangla. For instance,

Bangla: আমি যাই না || ami zai na || (Present)

Arabic: لا اذهب || la: aḏhab || (Present)

English Meaning: I do not go.

Bangla: আমি যাইনি || ami zaini || (Past)

Arabic: لم اذهب || lam aḏhab || (Past)

English Meaning: I did not go.

Bangla: আমি যাবো না || ami zabo na || (Future)

Arabic: لن اذهب || lan aḏhab || (Future)

English Meaning: I will not go.

5. Question

As Bangla has no verbs to be used as operators, the Yes/No-questions are formed by means of the Wh-word such as 'কি' /ki/ for any tenses with all persons and numbers. However, the Arabic verb 'هل' /hal/ is used as the operator 'Do' (both in function and meaning) for the present and past tenses with all persons and numbers. For Wh-questions, as there is a one-to-one equivalent for each Bangla question word in the Arabic language, there is no complication involved in the translation. Here, the Arabic counterparts of Bangla question words are shown in the brackets with the English meanings: 'কী' /ki/ (ما /ma:/ — What), 'কোনটা' /konʈa/ (أي /aiw/ — Which), 'কে' /ke/ (من /man/ — Who), 'কাকে' /kake/ (من /man/ — Whom), 'কার' /kar/ (لمن /liman/ — Whose), 'কেন' /kæno/ (لماذا /lima:ða/ — Why), 'কীভাবে' /kibʰabe/ (كيف /kaif/ — How), 'কোথায়' /koʈʰae/ (أين /aina/ — Where), 'কখন' /kɔkʰon/ (متى /mata/ — When) etc in addition to others. For example,

Bangla: এটা কি একটা বই? || eʈa ki ækʈa boi || ('কি' /ki/ for Yes/No-question)

Arabic: هل هذا كتاب؟ || hal haða kita:b || ('هل' /hal/ for Yes/No-question)

English Meaning: Is this a book?

Bangla: এটা কী? || eʈa ki || ('কী' /ki/ for Wh-question)

Arabic: ما هذا؟ || ma: haða || ('ما' /ma:/ for Wh-question)

English Meaning: What is this?

6. Sentence Pattern

The Bangla and Arabic languages have different word orders. For Bangla, it is: 'Subject + Verb + Complement', but in Arabic, we have the following two structures:

Nominal: Subject + Complement

Verbal: Verb + Subject + Complement

However, Bangla sometimes has a few sentences with implied linking and main verbs (not semantically) and in Arabic, the linking verb is formal to omit in the present simple tense. So, it is one of the translator's fundamental responsibilities to consider this critical difference in the basic sentence structure while translating a given text from Bangla into Arabic.

7. Personal Pronoun

Personal pronouns have male/female distinction in Arabic, but not in Bangla. However, they can be omitted in verbal Arabic sentences if no emphasis is needed. Here, the Arabic subject pronoun is masculine and embedded with the verb E.g.

Bangla: সে খেলো।। /se kʰelo/

Arabic: أكل। /akala/

English Meaning: He ate.

8. Article, Gender and Number

In general, there are no articles both in Bangla and Arabic; instead, they have determiners. However, Bangla has some use of definite and indefinite determiners and in Arabic, there exists only definite determiners equivalent to the definite article in English (i.e. 'ال' /al/— 'the'). E.g. 'الشمس' /aʃʃams/ (i.e. the sun)

In the case of gender, both Bangla and Arabic possess grammatical genders. E.g. 'معلم' /muʃllim/ ('শিক্ষক' /ʃikkʰok/ i.e. a male teacher) vs. 'معلمة' /muʃllimah/ ('শিক্ষিকা' /ʃikkʰika/ i.e. a female teacher)

As long as the case of number is concerned, Bangla has two categories of numbers. E.g. singular ('শিক্ষক' /ʃikkʰok/ i.e. a teacher) and plural ('শিক্ষকগণ' /ʃikkʰokɡon/ i.e. teachers); however, Arabic has three kinds of numbers. E.g. singular: 'معلم' /muʃllim/ ('একজন শিক্ষক' /ækdʒon ʃikkʰok/ i.e. a teacher), dual: 'معلمان' /muʃlliman/ ('দুজন শিক্ষক' /dudʒon ʃikkʰok/ i.e. two teachers), and plural: 'معلمون' /muʃllimun/ ('শিক্ষকগণ' /ʃikkʰokɡon/ i.e. more than two teachers)

9. Adjective

Bangla attributive adjectives usually come before nouns, but in Arabic, it is the opposite. E.g. 'লাল গাড়ি' /lal gaʃi/ vs. 'سيارة حمراء' /saijarotun ʃamra/ (i.e. a red car (female)). So, one of the basic responsibilities of the Bangla-Arabic translator is to keep a close eye on this important aspect of comparative grammar.

10. Adverb

Adverbs are words that can perform a comprehensive range of functions in language. It modifies a verb, an adjective, another adverb, or answers the questions like, *how, when, where, why, how long, how often* etc. Adverbs are, in general, formed by adding some suffixes (for both Bangla and Arabic) and prefixes (for only Arabic) to an adjective. As its use is multidimensional, the translator should pay some extra attention while translating from one language to the other. E.g.

Bangla: আলি সৎভাবে কাজ করে।। /ali ʃoʃʰabe kadʒ kore/

Arabic: علي يعمل بامان. /ʔli ʃʒmal biamana/

Meaning in English: Ali works honestly.

11. Tense

Bangla and Arabic tenses are significantly different. Bangla has three major categories of tenses, such as present, past and future, while Arabic has only two i.e. present and past. In Arabic, the futurity is expressed, in some ways, by using 'س' /s/, 'سوف' /sauʃa/ and 'ب' /ba/ (informal) with the Arabic verb in the simple present tense. Bangla has also four subcategories of tenses, such as simple, perfect, progressive and perfect progressive. However, Arabic has no perfective and progressive forms of tenses. In Arabic, the present and past perfect tenses are considered as the past simple. The present progressive is treated as present simple in Arabic translation, but to indicate the fact that it is happening 'now', the word 'الآن' /alan/ is used instead. Similarly, past progressive is used as the past simple. Subsequently, the present and past perfect progressive tenses do not exist in Arabic. Therefore, it is the translation-major student's responsibility to initiate a good deal of enquiry into the study of tenses in both the Bangla and Arabic languages before launching their career in the field of translation.

12. Conditional Sentence

Various types of conditional sentences exist both in the Bangla and Arabic languages. However, it is the translators' responsibility to be cautious about their usage, as the translation of the future in one language into the past tense of the other creates the main problem for them.

It is, therefore, part of the translator's role to consider all these underlying differences in the structure of both languages.

(b). Lexical Problems

As words—the basic units of a structure—play a very vital role in translation, they may cause serious problems for the translator, mainly if their meanings are either not understood clearly, or are not found in the standard dictionaries. For the meanings of Bangla words into Arabic, there are the following four possibilities:

- i. Words/phrases/terms already having a direct equivalent in Arabic:
'বাড়ি' /baʃi/— 'منزل' /manzil/ or 'بيت' /bait/ (i.e. a house)
- ii. New words/phrases/terms having no ready-made equivalent in Arabic:
'ঢাকা' /dʱaka/— 'دكا' /dakka/ (i.e. the capital city of Bangladesh)
- iii. Foreign words/phrases/terms transliterated into Arabic but with native-like pronunciation:
'রেডিও' /redio/— 'راديو' /radio/ (i.e. the radio)

iv. Foreign words/phrases/terms made to fit Arabic pronunciation, spelling and grammar:

‘গ্যারেজ’ /gæredʒ/– ‘كراج’ /karadʒ/ (i.e. a garage)

The other major lexical problems encountered by translators and students are as follows:

1. Synonymy

Synonyms are often found to pose problems regarding the difference between the levels of closeness or absolute identification of the meanings of synonymous words compared with one another, whether in the same language or between the SL and the TL. It is the translator’s responsibility to choose the appropriate word based on its impact on the meaning in the context.

2. Polysemy

This problem of translation occurs when a polysemous word is used mistakenly for a monosemous one, with one meaning assigned wrongly in all texts and contexts. E.g.

‘উঁচু’ /ũtʃu/– ‘طويل’ /tʰawil/ (i.e. tall)

‘লম্বা’ /lɔmba/– ‘طويل’ /tʰawil/ (i.e. long)

Such problems may be avoided if the translator has a deep knowledge of both SL and TL vocabulary. However, monosemous words and terms cause no serious problems in translation.

3. Parallelism

It refers to two identical structures such as two words, phrases or clauses within a sentence and complicates the role of the translator. E.g.

Bangla: ‘সড়ক, নৌ অথবা আকাশ পথে’ /ʃɔɾɒk, nou ɔtʰɔba akaf pɔtʰe/

Arabic: ‘براً، باهراً أو جواً’ /barran, baharan aw dʒawan/

English Meaning: ‘by road, by sea or by air’

4. Idiom

A phrase which has fixed forms and special meanings that cannot be known from the direct meaning of their words is called an idiom. They demand technical handling skills on the part of the translator because their meaning may change for a little carelessness. E.g.

Bangla: ‘বক ধার্মিক’ /bɒk dʰarmik/

Arabic: ‘صاحب وجهين’ /sʰa:hibu wadʒhain/

English Meaning: ‘a hypocrite’

In fact, the Arabic language does not have regular idioms like Bangla or English.

5. Proverb

Proverbs are popular fixed sayings. As they are part of the culture, they often carry their own set of problems, complicating the task of translation for everybody, specially students of translation. E.g.

Bangla: ‘যেমন বাবা তেমন ছেলে’ । ॥ dʒæmon baba tæmon ʃʰele ॥

Arabic: ‘من شابه أباه ما ظلم’ ॥ man ʃabaha abahu ma ʔʰalam ॥

English Meaning: Like father, like son.

6. Metaphor

Metaphors are used to say one thing but mean another. They are usually quite problematic and challenging for translators. Metaphorical translations involve the translation of SL metaphors into TL metaphors. In creative metaphors, the vehicle (i.e. the form) and the tenor (i.e. the content) become intertwined and subsequently inseparable, as they are by way of illustration. E.g.

Bangla: ‘আলি একটা সিংহ’ । ॥ ali ækʈa ʃiŋɦio ॥

Arabic: ‘علي أسد’ ॥ ʕliun asad ॥

English Meaning: Ali is a lion.

However, as metaphors are not always creative, the author of the SL may have used them merely for decorative purposes and may better be converted into simple languages.

7. Morphology

Morphology refers to a branch of linguistics which is known in Bangla as ‘রূপতত্ত্ব’ /rɒptɒttɒ/ and in Arabic as ‘علم الصرف’ /ʕlm asʰsʰrf/. It deals with the formation of words. E.g.

‘ذهب’ /ðahab/ (i.e. the root word for ‘go’)

‘يذهب’ /jðhab/ (i.e. go/goes)

‘ذاهب’ /ða:hib/ (i.e. can go)

‘ذهب’ /ðahaba/ (i.e. went)

‘سنذهب’ /sanaðhab/ (i.e. (We) shall/will go)

In the case of Bangla-Arabic translation, the problem stems from the Arabic morphological system being comparatively

more flexible than Bangla, with a few exceptions. Thus, it is the responsibility of the translator to exhibit flexibility to a certain extent while dealing with the morphological structure, for instance, deriving an adjective form from its root words. For example,

Bangla: 'বৃহৎ' /brifɔt/, 'বৃহত্তর' /brifɔttɔro/, 'বৃহত্তম' /brifɔttɔmo/

Arabic: 'كبير' /kibir/, 'أكبر' /akbar/, 'الأكبر' /alakbar/

English Meaning: big, bigger, the biggest

8. Collocation

The term collocation means 'to go with'. Some words have a natural tendency to be used together in any languages. So, two or more words usually occur together consistently in different texts and contexts and are considered an essential factor in translation, of which the translator should be aware. For example,

Bangla: 'ঠাণ্ডা আবহাওয়া' /tʰanda abhiawa/

Arabic: 'طقس بارد' /tʰaqsun ba:rid/

English Meaning: 'a cold weather'

The Bangla-Arabic translation-major student should, therefore, have a flair for learning the collocations of the target language and use in his translation of the Bangla language, the Arabic collocations which are contemporarily in vogue.

9. Connotation

Connotation stands for the concept that a word can suggest in addition to its denotative meaning. For instance,

Bangla: 'সিংহ' /ʃinɦo/

Arabic: 'أسد' /asad/

English Meaning: 'a lion'

In Arabic, in addition to the dictionary meaning given above, it also possesses the meaning of 'brave'. Words acquire their connotation from the culture to which they belong, as in every culture, people associate particular signification with particular words, which ultimately become the shades of those word meanings.

10. Paraphrase

The term paraphrase is a brief explanation used when there is no way to make an unclear term or idea understandable in the TL. A paraphrase is usually longer than the original. Therefore, the Bangla-Arabic translator should paraphrase the vague terms from Bangla to Arabic with a short but straightforward explanation.

11. Naturalization

Naturalization is a translation strategy whereby specific linguistic usage of SL is converted into normal TL usage. This naturalization process occurs at lexical, collocation, and structural levels. By way of illustration,

Bangla: 'মনোযোগ আকর্ষণ' /monozog akɔrʃɔn/

Arabic: 'يعير الانتباه' /jaʃirul intibah/

English Meaning: 'to draw attention'

The naturalization of usage is inevitable in translation, as a literal translation would produce unnatural expressions in the TL in cases where naturalization is essential.

12. Localization

Localization is a new domain for language experts to use digital media for launching local innovations. Localization has become known as a profession directly linked to translation where the local products can only be made relevant if they are presented in the global perspective or vice versa.

13. Arabicization

Arabicization is a kind of naturalization that occurs either at the sound level, where an SL spelling and pronunciation are converted into Arabic or at the concept level, where an SL concept is loan-translated into Arabic. Here, the translator's role is to use the borrowed words, which are foreign words loaned out into Arabic and the subsequent Arabicization in terms of spelling and pronunciation. E.g. the word 'كراج' /karadz/ is Arabicized after borrowing from English 'garage'.

14. Equivalence

Equivalence is a crucial concept in translation, where the notion of equivalence relates to the ordinary sense of the text being translated. This is why it is often asked to translate subjective feelings into words. In general, there are three types of equivalence: formal, functional and ideational.

Firstly, the formal equivalence seeks to capture the form of the SL expression. Form here relates to the image employed in the SL expression, as can be illustrated by the underlined Bangla idiomatic expression and its underlined formal Arabic (i.e. TL) equivalent below:

Bangla: নাজিনের দেশ ছেড়ে বিদেশে যাওয়ার সিদ্ধান্ত ছিল অপরিণামদর্শী— উত্তপ্ত কড়াই থেকে আগুনে বাপ।

|| nadziner deʃ tʰere bidese dʒaʔar ʃiddʰanto tʰilo ɔporinamdorʃi— utʰtɔptɔ kɔrai tʰeke agune dʒʰap ||

Arabic: لم يكن قرار نجين بمغادرة البلد حكيمًا — (كالقافز) من المقلاة إلى النار.

|| lam jakun qarrar nadžin bimuyadaroti albaladi ĥakiman– (kalqafaz) minal maiqlati ila nar ||

English Meaning: Najin's decision to leave the country for abroad was unwise– (jumping) out of the frying pan into the fire.

Secondly, we have functional equivalence, which seeks to capture the function of the SL expression independently of the image utilized by translating it into a TL expression that performs the same function as it. E.g.

Bangla: নাজিনের দেশ ছেড়ে বিদেশে যাওয়ার সিদ্ধান্ত ছিল অপরিসীমদর্শী – অঙ্গার থেকে অগ্নিতে ঝাপ।

|| nadžiner deŋ ʃʰere biðeŋe dʒaɛar ʃiddʰanto ʃʰilo ɔporinamdorʃi– ɔŋgar tʰeke ognite dʒʰap ||

Arabic: لم يكن قرار نجين بمغادرة البلد حكيما – (كالقافز) كالمستجير من الرمضاء بالنار.

|| lam jakun qarrar nadžin bimuyadaroti albaladi ĥakiman– (kalqafaz) kalmustadžiri minal ramadʒi binnar ||

English Meaning: Najin's decision to leave the country for abroad was unwise– (jumping) from hot to hotter.

Sometimes, functional and formal equivalence may coincide with furnishing what can be called optimal translatability. The following Bangla proverb and its Arabic translation illustrate this:

Bangla: চোখের আড়াল, মনের আড়াল। || ʃokʰer aɽal moner aɽal ||

Arabic: بعيد عن العين بعيد عن القلب || bɛidun ɕnil ɕin bɛidun ɕnil qalb ||

English Meaning: Out of sight, out of mind.

Finally, there is ideational equivalence which aims at conveying the communicative sense of the SL expression independently of function and form. The Arabic translation below of the Bangla example reflects this type of equivalence such as:

Bangla: নাজিনের দেশ ছেড়ে বিদেশে যাওয়ার সিদ্ধান্ত ছিল অপরিসীমদর্শী – কেঁচো খুঁড়তে সাপ।

|| nadžiner deŋ ʃʰere biðeŋe dʒaɛar ʃiddʰanto ʃʰilo ɔporinamdorʃi– keʃo khurte ʃap ||

Arabic: لم يكن قرار نجين بمغادرة البلد حكيما – فقد سارت الأمور من سيء إلى أسوأ.

|| lam jakun qarrar nadžin bimuyadaroti albaladi ĥakiman– faqad saratil umouru min saiɕn ila aswa ||

English Meaning: Najin's decision to leave the country for abroad was unwise– things went from bad to worse.

It is, therefore, the translator's responsibility to consider all these three forms of equivalence while translating a text from Bangla into Arabic and choose the one which may maintain the precise sense of the text being translated.

(c). Usage Problems

Usage is the tradition or convention of language that considers various issues and aspects, such as culture, society, religion, geographical location and politics, all of which affect the entire process of translation directly or indirectly. E.g.

1. Culture

Anthropologists uphold the idea that language is culture-bound. So, a culture-specific expression in SL is only translated into a cultural substitute in the TL. For example,

Bangla: 'শুভ সকাল' /ʃubʰo ʃokal/

Arabic: 'صباح الخير' /sʰabaħul xoir/

English Meaning: 'good morning'

However, 'صباح جيد' /sʰabaħ dʒaid/ is not accepted culturally or socially in Arabic though it may have the same meaning. Therefore, a culture-specific expression in Bangla should only be translated into a cultural substitute in Arabic.

2. Religion

The Bangla lexical item 'স্রোষ্টা' /sroʃta/ could be translated in Arabic as 'الله' /alla:h/ with little change in meaning because the word 'الله' (i.e. Allah– the Almighty) has no male/female and singular/plural distinction, specially in Arabic. So, the translator should have adequate knowledge about religion because the speakers of the two languages are very sensitive about their religions.

3. Politics

The term 'শহীদ' /ʃohid/ (i.e. a martyr) is used politically in the Bangla-speaking society for a person who died for the state. However, it is translated into Arabic as 'شهيد' /ʃahi:d/ which means a person passed away either for the state or for religion.

4. Possibility

The possibility, or impossibility of saying something in the TL is also an essential factor in translation. For example,

Bangla: 'মোটা বেতন' /moʃa beɽon/

Arabic: 'راتب ضخم' /rɔtibun dʰaxim/

English Meaning: 'a fat salary'

However, the translation of some expressions cannot be considered linguistically 'accepted' terms and may be translated into other alternate terms.

5. Logical Acceptability

The logical acceptability of an expression may be a significant factor in translation. For example, the translator should translate the Bangla expression 'নিজের ভুল স্বীকার করা' /nidžer bʰul ʃikar kora/ in Arabic as 'يسحب كلامه' /jashabu

kalamah/, or /jɕtaðir/ (i.e. to eat one's words, or apologies) and avoid using the Arabic term 'ياكل كلماته' /jakul kalimatuh/, as 'eating words' is not a logically correct argument.

6. Frequency

The frequency or non-frequency of an expression or a grammatical structure matters greatly in translation. For example, an expert translator may translate 'আপ্রাণ' /apran/ (i.e. heart and soul) as 'قلبا وقلبا' /qalban wa qaliban/ in Arabic.

7. Familiarity

The degree of familiarity, the strangeness of expression, or a grammatical structure can confuse translation. For example, the familiar translation of 'ভাল কারণ' /b'alo karon/ (i.e. a good reason) is translated into Arabic as 'اسباب وجيهة' /asbabun waḍjihah/. Therefore, the Bangla-Arabic translator should evaluate the source text for the level of familiarity and choose the structure in the target language familiar to the target readership.

(d). Stylistic Problems

The writing style is considered an essential part of the meaning, which may cause problems in translation. It explains how a text means rather than just what it means from the context. The translators, therefore, need to be aware of the following points to avoid any misconceptions:

1. Formality

The language of the SL text can be formal, informal or both in the domains of grammar and lexis. These differences pose problems for the translation-major students because of their limited knowledge in this discipline and demand a good deal of practice in both the source and target languages.

2. Fronting

A word, phrase, or clause can be put at the beginning of a sentence in a usual way. For example,

Bangla: সে একটা গাড়ি কিনলো। || se ækʈa gaʈi kinlo || vs. কিনলো সে একটা গাড়ি। || kinlo se ækʈa gaʈi ||

Arabic: سيارة اشترى || saijarotan iʃtaroit || vs. اشترى سيارة || iʃtaroit saija:roh ||

English Meaning: A car he bought. vs. He bought a car.

Such fronting is done to achieve a stylistic function of some kind: emphasizing the fronted word or drawing attention to its particular importance. The translators must be familiar with this stylistic matter; otherwise, they may ignore the fronting style and possibly diverge the focus of attention.

3. Parallelism

Two clauses or sentences may have the same structure and are parallel. Such a style of parallelism is not always easy to translate from SL into TL. Consequently, the translator should consider the structure of parallelism and avoid disturbing the argument's logical pattern while translating such a text from Bangla into Arabic.

4. Level of Complexity of Style

Translation problems may occur, primarily, with the SL text written with a complicated style and demands expert-level excellency from the translator both in comprehension of the source language and writing command of the target language.

5. Length of Sentence

Combining short sentences into one sentence or dividing long sentences into short ones may also confuse the readers of the Arabic translation. Therefore, the translator should take extreme caution in this regard by maintaining the one-to-one ratio between the sentences of Bangla and Arabic versions.

6. Repetition and Variation

The issues related to repetitions and variations in translation should be considered with extreme care. For instance, the Bangla word 'অশ্রুজল' /osrudʒol/ (i.e. tear) is often used in Bangla literature where the word 'জল' /dʒol/ (i.e. water) is repeated.

7. Redundancy

Employing extra and unnecessary expressive words might have some positive (or negative) purpose in translation and should, therefore, be handled carefully.

8. Irony

It is a figure of speech that mainly involves a complicated style in both source and target languages where the intended meaning is just opposite the stated word(s) and demands the translator to be very careful while dealing with them.

9. Punctuation

Punctuation plays an essential role in conveying the message in clear terms. As both the Bangla and Arabic languages have peculiar systems of punctuation, the translation should have a deep understanding of this aspect of writing skill. It should translate the SL text into TL text, considering the demands of punctuation in both languages.

10. Cliché

There are some expressions in both the languages that have a kind of comparison. This may at times be a difficult task for the translator. E.g.

Bangla: ‘মৌমাছির ন্যায় ব্যস্ত’ /moumatʃir næɛ bæstɔ/

Arabic: ‘مشغول مثل النحل’ /maʃʕulun miθla annaħal/

English Meaning: ‘(as) busy as a bee’

11. Active vs. Passive Style

There are some differences between the passive voice in the Bangla and Arabic languages, which have severe implications for translation. The Arabic passive is predominantly emotive although it can be used for other purposes such as thematization for emphasis. E.g.

Bangla: আলি জাবির দ্বারা নিহত হয়েছিল। || ali džabir đara niħɔɔto hoetʃilo ||

Arabic: قتل علي بواسطة جابر. || qutla ğli biwasitʕoti džabir ||

English Meaning: Ali was killed by Jabir.

The misleading error in this translation is that while the source text explicitly says that ‘Jabir’ is the real perpetrator, the target text implicitly portrays ‘Jabir’ as a sheer accomplice. The TL suggests that ‘Jabir’ did not kill ‘Ali’ by himself but made somebody else kill him i.e. ‘Ali’. The translation of ‘by’ as ‘بواسطة’ /biwasitʕot/ can be avoided by rendering it as ‘على يد’ /ġla jadi/, which confirms the actual perpetrator of the action by the doer i.e. ‘Jabir’ (Akan et al., 2019). For example,

Arabic: قتل علي على يد جابر. || qutla ğli ġla jadi džabir ||

It is to be noted that the translation of ‘by’ as ‘بواسطة’ /biwasitʕot/ can be maintained as a second option in cases where the action is physically done through the agent. E.g.

Bangla: সুদ আইন দ্বারা নিষিদ্ধ। || suđ ain đara niʃiddʔo ||

Arabic: الربا ممنوع بموجب القانون. || arriba mamnʕun bimudʕibil qanun ||

English Meaning: Interest is forbidden by law.

(e). Phonological Problems

Phonological problems are related to sounds and their effects on meaning. They may sometimes be significant for the meaning and text, particularly in places where sounds are more significant than senses. So, careful and repeated reading, specially reading poetry, dropping unnecessary words, and looking for the broadest possible range of synonyms for keywords and rhyming words can help the translators. It is, therefore, essential for the Bangla-Arabic translator to consider the phonological aspect of language while translating a rhythmical type of text such as poetry or a text of advertisements.

Sounds are also important in language when they appear in different patterns to give different shades of meaning. The sound effect could be more important than meaning in translation, as it plays an aesthetic function in language (Akan et al., 2020). In this regard, we have the following points to talk about:

1. Prosody

In Bangla, alliteration is the repetition of a consonant sound at the beginning of a series of words, but in Arabic, it is at the end of words. However, rhyme which is a matching sound found at the end of words, is more common. Both languages use different naturally suggestive words for rhetorical, dramatic or poetic effects, for example, meow, ha-ha etc. Therefore, the Bangla-Arabic translator must analyze the SL text’s literary stylistics and choose the structure that suits the target language’s literary style.

2. Assonance and Consonance

Assonance is the repetition of the same vowel sound in the middle of words while consonance is the such repetition of consonants. They are not as clear in Arabic as in Bangla and are optional for the translator to accommodate them in translation.

3. Tone

Tone is an attitude of a writer toward a subject or an audience, generally conveyed through the choice of words or his viewpoint on a particular subject. Therefore, phonological features where sounds are more significant than senses are an essential factor of translation and should attract the translator’s attention.

IV. CONCLUSION

The differences between Bangla and Arabic which belong to two diverse language families are, in general, the leading cause of almost all the problems related to the field of translation. It is no denying the fact that Bangla-Arabic translation has never been an easy task. The most critical setbacks in this context are: lexical knowledge insufficiency, deficient knowledge and practice of grammar, inadequate cultural backgrounds, inappropriate teaching atmosphere and methodology. As the influence of culture and religion is very strong in both the languages, great attention should be paid to these aspects. It is hoped that teachers, students and translators will benefit from this research work and continue

investigating the issues at hand. A further comparative study in this field may give the readers and/or learners more precise knowledge about Bangla-Arabic translation.

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