

## THE TRANSLATION OF ENGLISH BBC POLITICAL NEWS INTO ARABIC: THEMATIC ANALYSIS

KAIS A. KADHIM<sup>1</sup> AND MASHUDI KADER<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup>University of Malaya, Kaisamir2009@yahoo.com

<sup>2</sup>University Sains Malaysia, mkaderalwiah@yahoo.com.my

\*Corresponding author. E-mail: Kaisamir2009@yahoo.com

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**Abstract-** According to the systematic functional grammar model (for example, Halliday (1985) and Halliday and Matthiessen (2004), language is seen to serve three functions: the ideational macrofunction, the interpersonal macrofunction and the textual macrofunction. This article confines its discussion within the textual macrofunction which expresses the discursal meaning by drawing on the system and network of Theme (T) and Rheme (R) to create a text in actual communicative event. Therefore, this article attempts to apply the information structure (T and R) and syntactic theory in the translation of English political news-texts from the British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC) into Arabic. In the presentation of the word order of the sentence constituents, this article will adopt Culicover (1997) syntactic and structural theory of Principle and Parameters in particular the X' theory along with Halliday's (1985) thematic structure. Finally, to test whether the thematic and rhetoric changes affect the quality of the translated messages, this article will adopt Katz and Fodor's (1963), and Jackson's (1988) notational technique of changes of messages between those of the ST in English and their corresponding messages in the TT Arabic translation. The study reveals that except for those differences embedded in the grammatical structures, the Theme (T) and Rheme (R) structures bearing the author's intention have the tendency to be reproduced in the translation. Also culturally laden lexical items in the TT may provide a variation to the ST message.

**Key words:** translation, theme, rheme, information structure, syntax, grammar and culture.

### 1. Introduction

The rhetorical discipline of *'ilm al-ma'ani* (science of meaning) is concerned with the juxtaposition of sentence constituents in various word orders that lead to distinct pragmatic significations or functions, Abdul-Raof (2006:97). In the context of a preference word order to express certain pragmatic function, he contends that translating from Arabic into English and vice-versa will have some controversies in the sense that there will often be mismatches. He suggests that one seemingly obvious reason for the mismatch is that Arabic maps onto the verb in an unmarked case where the sentences start with the verbs in a Verb-Subject-Object (V-S-O) word order while English basic sentences observe the Subject-Verb-Object (SVO) word order. According to him, the Classical Arabic grammarians regard verb initial sentences as the ones displaying the normal syntactic word order system in Arabic, Abdul-Raof (1998); and that the NP-first sentences in Arabic are by and large transformationally derived from V-first structure, Schreiber and Anshen (1974:21). Consequently, they note that translating a noun initial construction

in an Arabic ST as a corresponding noun initial construction in English will often modify the discourse organization of the ST which may yield a variation in its pragmatic effect. Similarly, they contend that a dislocation may result in translating a noun initial construction of an English ST as a noun initial construction in Arabic. Also according to them, despite this tendency, for different communicative functions Arabic also permits many other ways of ordering the constituents of the sentence. In fact, Bakir (1980) affirms that Arabic does tolerate variations in the order of words in its sentences. Similarly, besides the basic SVO word order, English also observes numerous variations in its surface syntax via transformational processes, Chomsky (1982) and Culicover (1997). Within the many allowable and grammatical ways of sentence ordering in either an English ST and its corresponding Arabic TT, however, functionally there still exists in a text a regular information structure (i.e. the thematic structure) of theme-rheme (T-R) that is typically English for the ST and typically Arabic for the TT. The Theme (T) is the

point of departure of the message, Firbas (1992), which is often referred to as known information, while the rheme (R) is the resultant message or the new information, Firbas (1992). Using some ideas from the functional grammar model of Halliday and Matthiessen (2004) and the X' theory (Culicover' (1997) version), this article attempts to compare the thematic structure of English political news-texts from the British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC) with those of the thematic structure of their corresponding Arabic TT. In the comparison we will see the patterning of the information structures of the ST and the corresponding TT and observe the translating tendencies of the information structures by the translator(s) in the translation of the BBC English news text to Arabic. We will also examine whether such translating tendencies (strategies) result in any differences in the quality of the TT messages.

#### **. Theoretical Backgrounds**

The study invokes a number of ideas from different writers but they are employed here eclectically and compositely. In our assessment of the rhetorical changes (i.e., the order of the sentence constituents) in particular, we will invoke the ideas of Chomsky (1982) and Culicover (1997). In evaluating the nature of the structure of the thematic changes in the Arabic translational output, we will use Halliday (1985), and Halliday and Matthiessen (2004) on thematic analysis. As for assessing the effect of the rhetorical changes on the content in the Arabic translation, we will employ the semantic notation of Katz and Fodor (1963). That is, the different messages will be stated in terms of presence and absence of the semantic features denoted by [+] (present) and [-] (absence) of a feature.

#### **3. Chomsky (1982) on Syntax**

Chomsky (1982) suggests that language is organized with a D-Structure and a S-Structure. He further suggests that the former which is regarded as a cognitive-abstract structure is mapped to the latter via move-alpha mechanism of the transformational component. The move-alpha mechanism may move a sentence-constituent (a word, a phrase or a clause) usually left-wards on certain condition of movement from its original site in the D-Structure or the Intermediate-Structure somewhere else in a syntactic string. Within this theory, the final landing site of the moved-constituent must also meet certain syntactic condition yielding an S-Structure. He also indicates that the S-Structure is connected separately to a Phonetic Form (PF) which gives the sentence its phonetic manifestation and its Logical Form (LF) which provides the corresponding semantic interpretation. Commencing from the thematic structure of a verb, according to Chomsky (1982)

and Culicover (1997), a sentence is generated beginning from a D-Structure, moving on to the S-Structure via move-alpha (i.e., a mechanism which moves a sentence constituent – a word, phrase or clause- leftwards in a sentential string) whose output becomes an input to the PF and LF. The syntactic structures are presented using an X' theory of phrase markers (tree structures), Culicover (1997). This article only takes cognizance of the ideas of the S-Structure that are presented in the X' theory along with the idea that a sentence variation can be manifested through movements of a sentence constituent via move-alpha.

#### **4. Halliday (1985) on Theory of Thematic Structure and Trask (1993)**

Vilem Mathesius, one of the pioneers of the Prague School Linguistics, is said to have been the linguist who was responsible to propose the concepts of theme (T) and rheme (R), Halliday (1985: 38-39). Later the concepts are seen to be popularized in the works of the other Prague School Linguists such as Firbas (1992) and Vachek (1997). As mentioned by Halliday (1985), the T is the point of departure for a message and it is the element with which the clause is concerned. In studying the coherence of a text, Halliday & Hasan (1976) reintroduce the T-R concepts and the idea of Thematic Progression. They contend that Vilem Mathesius, first put forward the ideas of T and R in his work on *Functional Sentence Perspective* (1939). They add that according to him, T is the part that comes first in a sentence, and R remains the following part. In general, T holds the old or *known* information, and R carries the new information. Later on in 1970, according to Halliday, in a paper "On Linguistic Analysis of Text Structure", F. Dane introduces the term Thematic Progression to signify the intricate relations between the themes in a text, and states clearly that such Thematic Progression reflects the framework of the text. Based on these Prague School concepts of functional sentence perspective, Halliday (1985) conducts a full study on T structure in functional term; that is, he analyzes this subject from the perspective of the function of the constituents in a sentence. From this standpoint, he sees a sentence constituent in a text as serving three metafunctions: ideational, interpersonal and textual. As this article only uses the textual functioning of a constituent in a sentence, it will henceforth elaborate on this one only. The textual metafunction covers language that is used as an instrument of communication with which cohesive and coherent sequences are build up. It considers each clause carries a message. So each clause is seen as fulfilling a message function; and therefore each clause is very closely connected to the information structure in a sentence. In Halliday (1985), it is stressed that as a general guide, in a

sentence the T can be identified as that element which comes in first position in the clause. Hence in this article, when one examines the thematic structure of a sentence, one refers to "The structure of a sentence seen from the point of view of the distribution of information within it," Trask (1993: 278). In such a distribution of information in a sentence, Trask, however, employs three thematic notions of topic, comment and focus all which refer to the, "... semantic role borne by an NP expressing an entity which is in a state or a location or which is undergoing motion, such as *the ball in The ball is dirty, The ball is on the table and She threw me the ball.* In our presentation in this article, while we will take cognizance of the ideas propounded by Trask, but we will use the terms as employed in Halliday (1985), and Halliday and Matthiesen (2004).

### 5. Componential Analysis.

The meaning of denotative words (i.e., the dictionary meaning) can be expressed by employing the methods of componential analysis, Katz and Fodor (1963). Using this technique, meanings of lexemes can be decomposed into components, and which can be compared across lexemes or groups of lexemes, Jackson (1988:79). Components have distinguishing functions which are used to distinguish features of lexemes within a specified semantic domain, (Jackson, 1988:81). Katz and Fodor exemplify this notion with the word *bachelor* which is (i) human, (ii) male, and (iii) unmarried. According to them, with respect to the word *bachelor*, such information can be indicated in terms of semantic features which are expressed by way of the plus symbol [+] signifying the presence of an information while the minus symbol [-] denoting the absence of such information. Hence English *bachelor* is seen to have a combination (among other things not stated here) of the semantic features [+ human, + male, - married]. In the case of *hydra* which is biologically both a male as well as a female, it carries the information [+ male] as well as [-male] in which its unique characteristic can be stated as [ $\pm$  male]. This technique is a method of decomposing the meaning of a linguistic unit into smaller semantic primes which they compositely and integratively evoke the meaning of the linguistic unit, which can be a word, a phrase, a clause or a sentence. Through the differences in the semantic features (minimally a difference in one feature) it has been suggested that the meanings of different linguistic units (a word, a phrase or a clause) can be distinguished from one another.

### 7. Data and Methodology

The data for this study are the BBC political news texts. They have been sourced online from January 2005 through April 2006. As part of our study one hundred texts were collected. For the

purpose of this article, however, we present only five significant pieces of the data. The analysis has adopted a comparative methodology of the ST data with the TT data in syntagmatic term as envisaged by de Saussure (1916); that is, sentence constituents have a syntagmatic (syntactic) relationships with one another. The comparison of the syntactic structures and the points of grammar will highlight the structural and syntactical difference using the X'-Theory (as found in Chomsky (1982) and Culicover (1997) either linearly or using the phrase markers (i.e., tree configuration). The effect on the content of the information (T and R) structure due to structural and other grammatical differences will be assessed using the grammatical and thematic analysis of Halliday (1985), but wherever necessary will be annotated using the componential analysis of Katz and Fodor (1963) and Jackson (1988). In our presentation, each datum is produced in five different respects, namely: (a) the original English text (ST), (b) the corresponding Arabic translation (TT), (c) the Arabic output in transliterational notation (Trs.), (d) the form of the back translation (BT), and (e) the message in the TT.

#### 7.1 Analysis of the Data

Observe the data in (1a) through (1e) below:

(1a) ST: '**US warns Russia over aid to Iran**'  
BBC Wednesday, 19 April 2006.

....said Mr. Burns, the US  
undersecretary of State

(1b) TT: مطالبة أمريكية لموسكو بوقف  
مساعدة إيران نووياً  
وقال برنز، نائب وزير الخارجية الأ  
مريكية.....

(1c) Trs: *wa qala barnz.... naaeb wyzaarat al*  
*khaarejiiyah al amrykiyah ...*  
(

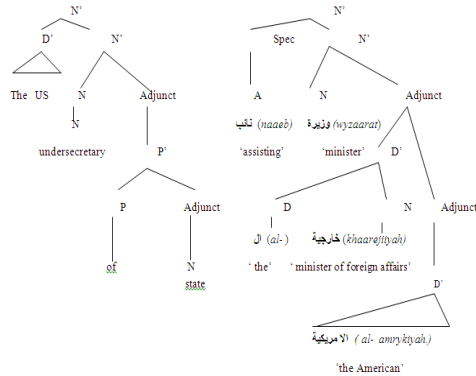
1d) BT: and said Mr. Burns ...assisting Minister  
the foreign affairs the American...

(1e) Message of TT: and said Burns, the deputy  
minister of the American foreign affairs...

We are concerned with the underlined texts. The text *...the US undersecretary of state...* has a structure in (a') while the structure of its corresponding Arabic translation is in (b') below:

(a') ST: ...the US undersecretary of State...  
(b) نائب وزير الخارجية الأ مريكية

*naaeb wyzaarat al khaarejiiyah al amrykiyah*



It is observed that the English phrase *the undersecretary of state* is a sequence of a determiner phrase, a noun and a prepositional phrase: [D'-N-P'], while the Arabic translation of **نائب وزير الخارجية الأمريكية** (*naaeb wyzaarat al khaarejiiyah al amrykiyah*) is of the structure containing an adjective, a noun and two determiner phrases, [A-N-D'-D']. Obviously, the translator has not literally translate each element, but instead has used structural-rhetorical changes that are inherently Arabic to create a syntactical and structural equivalence between the ST and the TT. The definite article ال (*al-*) 'the' in **الخارجية** (*al khaarejiiyah*) 'the exterior, foreign' and **الأمريكية** (*al amrykiya*) 'the American' are used in determiner phrases (D') to define the nouns and to express new information about Mr Burns. The same corresponding expressions in the ST are undefined. In terms of Abdul-Raof 's (2006) views on rhetoric, however, the structural change in the Arabic TT is in line with the 'lim al ma'aani (word order) and is in keeping with a formal style of the ST.

In terms of Halliday's (1985) view of macrofunction of the linguistic unit to express the discursive meaning, it seems that there has not been any change in the information structure in the sense that in both the ST and the TT, the flow of the information structure remains intact, namely as T-R as follows:

ST: T- (said Mr. Burns) – Rheme (the Undersecretary of State).

TT: T- (وقال برنز) (*wa qala barnz*) 'and said Burns) – Rheme **نائب وزير الخارجية الأمريكية** (*naaeb wyzaarat al khaarejiiyah al amrykiya*) 'and said Burns, deputy minister the foreign the American'

Looking closure into the message as it is seen by an ordinary Arab reader, there seems to be some difference in the finer aspects of the message of the output TT to the message of the ST. In the ST, the American Undersecretary of State has either [+foreign] or [-foreign] feature for he can function as both Internally within the American Political borders or Internationally outside America; but the TT sees Mr Burns more of a deputy Minister for Foreign Affairs only with the semantic features of [+deputy,

+minister, + foreign affairs, -local] where his internal function within America is absent. That is, the Arab translator has seen the Undersecretary's designation as just exclusively being special for merely serving the Foreign Affairs, an information obviously not found in the ST.

Now consider another example of English political news text within this type in (2a), its Arabic translation in (b), its transliteration in (c), the back translation (BT) in (d) and the message of the output text as in (e).

(2a) ST: 'Iraq shia alliance to vote on PM'

BBC: Friday, 21 April 2006

Iraq's largest parliamentary bloc, the United Iraq Alliance (UIA), is to vote on a candidate for prime minister. The Shia Muslim coalition's vote could see Prime Minister Ibrahim Jaafari retain power or introduce a new leader.

(2b) TT: الجمعية الوطنية العراقية تنضرب في ترشيح المالكي

تعقد الجمعية الوطنية العراقية (البرلمان) اجتماعا اليوم السبت للمصادقة على عدد من المناصب السيادية في الدولة بما فيها اكثر هذه المناصب اثارا للجدل و هو منصب رئيس الحكومة .

(2c) Trs: *ta'qyd al jam'ya al waTaniyya al 'raaqiyya (al barlamaan) ejtemaa'n al*

*yaum al sabb lil muSadaqa 'la 'dad min al manaaSeb al seyaaseeyah fi al dawla bima fiha akthar haadheh al manaaSeb ithaara lil jadal wa huwa manaaSeb raees*

*al hukuma.)*

(2d) BT - Back translation of (c): ...making the association the national the Iraqi (the parliament) meeting Saturday for endorsing on number of posts political in the country such as most of these argument posts is the post president the government.

(2e) Message of TT: *the association the national the Iraqi (the parliament) convened a meeting on Saturday to endorse a number of political posts one of which was the Presidential post.*

The ST has the following linear structure:

I[ N[ N[Iraq's A[ A[largest ] N[ Parliamentary N [block]]]]] N' [the United Iraq Alliance

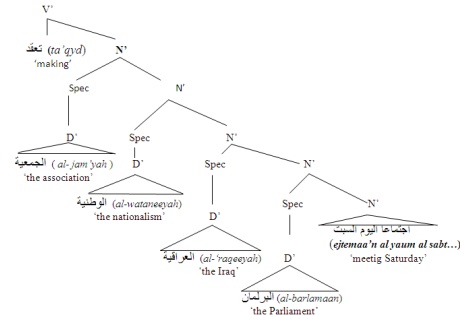
(UIA)] v [ is COMP' [to vote P[on a candidate P[for prime minister]]]]

In the above linguistic unit, there are two known information, namely: (i) *Iraq's largest Parliamentary block* and (ii) *the United Iraq Alliance (UIA)* in the sense that these are the information that are known to be shared between the interlocutors. In Halliday's term, these are the T of

the sentence. The remainder of the text which is a complex predicate (...is to vote for on a candidate for prime minister) holistically forms the R of the sentence. The nature of the information structure of the ST is T-R.

We now compare it with the TT which has the following linear structure:

تعقد الجمعية الوطنية العراقية ( البرلمان ) ... [ اجتماعا اليوم السبت ]



١ [ ... ta'qyd al jam'ya al wataneeya al 'raqeeyah (al barlamaan) ejtemaa'n al yaum al sabt

'making the association the national the Iraqi (the parliament) meeting Saturday'

COMP [ الدولة بما فيها اكثر هذه المناصب اثاره للجدل و هو للمصادقة على عدد من المناصب منصب رئيس الحكومة ... السيادة في ]

COMP [ lil muSadaqa'la 'dad min al manaaSeb al seyaasiiyah fi al dawla bima fiha akthar haadheh al manaaSeb ithaara lil jadal wa huwa manSab raees al hukuma. ]

'for endorsing on number of posts political in the country such as most of these argument posts is the post president the government.'

The known information, تعقد الجمعية الوطنية العراقية ( البرلمان ) اجتماعا اليوم السبت (al jam'ya al waTaneeya al 'raaqeeya (al barlamaan) ejtemaa'n al yaum al sabt) 'making the association the national the Iraqi (the parliament) meeting Saturday', precedes the complement which forms the new information, namely:

الدولة بما فيها اكثر هذه المناصب اثاره للجدل و هو منصب للمصادقة على عدد من المناصب السيادة رئيس الحكومة في (lil muSadaqa'la 'dad min al manaaSeb al seyaasiiyah fi al dawla bima fiha akthar haadheh al manaaSeb ithaara lil jadal wa huwa manSab raees al hukuma).

In general sense, then, the information structure of the ST has been sustained in the same flow: T followed by R.

Upon further examination of the T itself, namely: تعقد الجمعية الوطنية العراقية ( البرلمان ) اجتماعا اليوم السبت (... ta'qyd al jam'ya al waTaneeya al 'raaqeeya (al barlamaan) ejtemaa'n al yaum al sabt), the Arabic TT text begins with the verb تعقد (ta'qyd) 'making' as in the following tree below:

TT: تعقد الجمعية الوطنية العراقية ( البرلمان ) اجتماعا اليوم السبت

(...ta'qyd al jam'yah al wataneeyah al 'raqeeyah (al barlamaan) ejtemaa'n al yaum al sabt)

In terms of Halliday's (1985) view, the Arabic structure commences with the lexical verb تعقد (t'qyd 'making') which is the R and is followed by the constituents الجمعية الوطنية العراقية ( البرلمان ) (aljam'yah al wataneeya al 'raqeeya al-barlamaan) which is the T of the Arabic clause. This structure is consistent with the VSO unmarked word order in Arabic. In other words, within the general T-R structure of the TT, the information structure at the T itself has a microstructure of R-T: تعقد (t'qyd 'making') followed by الجمعية الوطنية العراقية ( البرلمان ) اجتماعا اليوم (al jam'ya al waTaneeya al 'raaqeeya (al barlamaan) ejtemaa'n al yaum al sabt. Moving on to the content of the output message, it is quite obvious that the changes in the information structure of T-R in the ST to a mixture of T-R and R-T in the TT have an effect in the content of the output message. In one sense, the TT saw the phenomenon not one of voting [+voting, -endorsing], but one of endorsing: [+voting, +endorsing]. It was seen in this manner by the translator probably because in the circumstances of that particular election, the voting itself might not really matter as the result would be the same any way. The other is possibly that the occasion was not for voting one particular office only, [+voting, -endorsing, + position, +single], but rather for several positions, one of which was endorsing the Presidential post: [+voting, +endorsing, -single, +President]. On the whole, then, the different information structure yields a variation in the output message.

The Arabic translation such as the one here is in keeping with the Arabic formal writing style where the text commences with a verb followed by the other constituents containing long string of juxtaposed determiner phrases and conjoined clauses. The first determiner phrases containing known information (T), الجمعية الوطنية العراقية ( البرلمان ) (aljam'yah al wataneeya al 'raqeeya al-barlamaan), are followed by another series of prepositional and determiner phrases and joining clauses by a conjunction:

من المناصب السيادة في الدولة بما فيها اكثر هذه المناصب اثاره للجدل و هو منصب رئيس الحكومة

(min al manaaSeb al seyaasiiyah fi al dawla bima fiha akthar haadheh al manaaSeb ithaara lil jadal wa huwa manaaSeb raees al hukuma)

Next observe the following English data in (3) below together with the corresponding Arabic translation in (b), the transliteration in (c), the BT in (d) and the content of the TT as in (e):

(3a) ST: 'Maliki endorsed as new Iraqi PM'.

US President George W Bush said the " historic achievement by determined Iraqis will make America more secure..."

BBC

Saturday, 22 April 2006

(3b) TT: المالكي : اريد تشكيل حكومة تمثل اطياف المجتمع العراقي

ورحب الرئيس الامريكي جورج بوش با لا تفاف الذي توصلت اليه الكتل السياسية في العراق و اعتبر ان هذه الخطوة " ستجعل الو لايات المتحدة اكثر امنا"

(3c) Trs : *wa rahaba al-raees al-amryky jorj bush bi-alitifaq alathi tawasalat elih al-kutal al-seyaseeyah fi al-'raq wa a'tabar ana hathih al-khitua "sataja'l al-wilayat al-mutahida akthar aman"*

(3d) BT- the back translation of (c): ...and welcomed the president the American George Bush for by the agreement which reached the politicians in Iraq and considered the step " will make the United States more secure"

(3e) Message of TT: ...the American President George Bush welcomed the agreement that that was reached by the Iraqi politicians and regarded that it will make the united States more secure ...

The information structure in the ST is one of T-R as follows:

T<sub>1</sub> [US President George Bush R<sub>1</sub> [ T<sub>2</sub> [ said the historic achievement by determined Iraqis R<sub>2</sub>[will make America more secure...]]]

Here, while the general information structure is that of T<sub>1</sub>-R<sub>1</sub>, within the R<sub>1</sub> itself there is a sub-information whose structure is also T<sub>2</sub>-R<sub>2</sub>. In another words, between the interlocutors (writer and a reader, there are two known information, namely (i) George Bush as the US President, and that (ii) the determined Iraqis had made some kind of achievement. What is new in general term is that the Iraqis' achievement will make America more secure. However, within that new general information, one information is older than the other in the sense that the component '...will make America more secure' is more dynamic than the new information on 'the historic achievement by determined Iraqis...'

The English ST information structure has been translated as follows in the Arabic TT:

ورحب الرئيس الامريكي جورج بوش] ( *wa rahaba al-raees al-amryky jorj bush* ) 'and welcomed the president the american George Bush' ] R [ با لا تفاف الذي توصلت اليه الكتل السياسية في العراق و اعتبر ان

هذه الخطوة " ستجعل الو لايات المتحدة اكثر امنا" ( *bi-alitifaq alathi tawasalat elih al-kutal al-seyaseeyah fi al-'raq wa a'tabar ana hathih al-khitua "sataja'l al-wilayat al-mutahida akthar aman"* ) "for by the agreement which reached the politicians in Iraq and considered the step " will make the United States more secure"

That is, the general flow of the original information of the ST as T-R has been sustained as T-R as well in the Arabic TT whereby the T is the constituent *ورحب الرئيس الامريكي جورج بوش* (*wa rahaba al-raees al-amryky jorj bush* 'and welcomed the president the american George Bush') and the R is the remainder of the sentence: *...با لا تفاف الذي* (*bi-alitifaq alathi* 'for by the agreement which...') *...الو* (*al-wilayat al-mutahida akthar aman* 'the United States more secure'. However, as Arabic is mainly a VSO language, the TT commences with the conjunction *و* (*wa* 'and') as a liaison followed by the verb *رحب* (*rahaba* 'welcomed') and this is followed by the actual known information *الرئيس الامريكي جورج بوش* (*al-raees al-amryky jorj bush* 'the President the American George Bush'). Consequently, in the TT, within the general T itself, one information is more dynamic (i.e. newer) than the other in that George Bush being the President of the America is an older information than his act of welcoming the news about what the Iraqis had done. Here then is a phenomenon where the grammatical structure of Arabic has influenced the original flow of information structure T-R in the ST to one of a R-T in the TT. This is so because the verb *رحب* (*rahaba* 'welcomed') is more dynamic (newer) than the constituents *الرئيس الامريكي جورج بوش* (*al-raees al-amryky jorj bush* 'the President the American George Bush').

On the matter of the whole message, there have also been some variations not amounting to a shift in the finer aspects of the information. The general tenor that an event had taken place and that the event will make America more secure seem to have been sustained; but the perception that emanates from the ST and that one from the TT seems to be somewhat different. That is, while the ST text saw the phenomenon as an historic achievement with the features [+ event, +achievement, +historic, +perseverance], the translator has downplayed the phenomenon and left out the features [+achievement, +historic, +perseverance] and instead projected the event as was merely an agreement arrived at by the politicians in Iraq with the features [+ event, +agreement, +politicians]. Here, while the translator had absorbed the main thrust of the message, he had side-steps the details which in his perception are not important to the Arabic readers.



Now consider the following data in (4a), its corresponding Arabic translation in (b) and its transliteration in (c):

(4a) ST: Iran fears drive oil to new high.  
 Crude oil prices have risen still higher amid fears about continuing tensions between Iran, a key exporter, and the International community. BBC: Tuesday, 18 April 2006

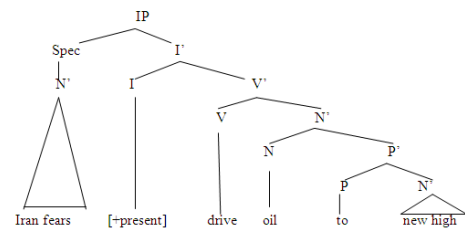
(4b) TT: ازمة الملف النووي الايراني ترفع اسعار النفط و الذهب  
 و يرى محللون ان استمرار التوتر سيدفع الـ اسعار في اتجاه المزيد من الارتفاع بشكل تتجاوز معه قريبا سعر دولار للبرميل .

(4c) Trs: ...Azmat al malaf al nuuwawi al irani  
tarf' as'aar al nafT wa al thahab

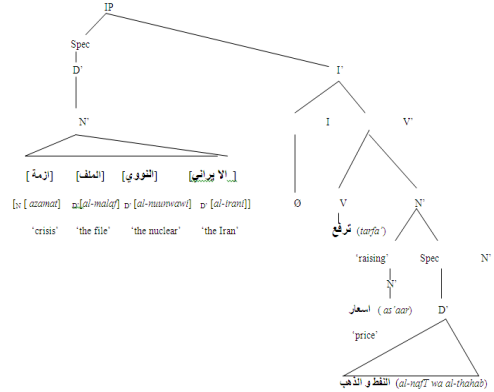
(4d) BT of (c): crisis the dossier the nuclear the Iranian raise the oil and the gold  
 Arabic.

(4e) Message of TT: the crisis on Iran's nuclear (activities) raises the oil/gold price. Here we are concerned only with the text that is underlined, namely: Iran fears drive oil to new high. The structure of (4a) is as in (a') below and its corresponding Arabic translation has its structure as in (b') below. They show syntactically the rhetorical differences and similarities between the SL and the TL.

(a') ST: Iran fears drive oil to new high...  
 IP [ I [ N' [Iran fears] V' [ drive N' [oil P [to N' [ new high ]]]]]



(b) ازمة الملف النووي الايراني ترفع اسعار النفط و الذهب  
Azmat al malaf al nuuwawi al irani tarfa' as'aar al nafT wa al thahab



That is, they are generally similar in that both structures are basically observing the SVO

word order, namely S (Iran fears)-V (drives) -O (oil) -

Adjust (to a new high) for the ST, and S (ازمة الملف النووي الايراني) - V (ترفع -tarfa) -O

(ازمة الملف النووي الايراني) - V (ترفع -tarfa) -O (النفط و الذهب اسعار (as'aar al nafT wa al thahab) for

In terms of Halliday's (1985) view, the headline consists of T in the ST as *Iran fears* and its Arabic version *ازمة الملف النووي الايراني* (*Azmat al malaf al nuuwawi al irani* 'crisis the dossier the nuclear the Iranian'), though it is not the direct translation of the ST; but here the translator seems to have used a communicative translation with the introduction of different lexical words. In terms of the T-R structure, the sentence *drive oil to new high* in the ST is considered to be the R while in its Arabic version the constituent *النفط و الذهب اسعار (tarfa' as'aar al nafT wa al thahab* 'rising price the oil and the gold') is an R as well. In other words, the general T-R information structure of the ST has been sustained in the TT although the nature of the internal structure of the constituents within the T and R are quite distinct from each other.

With respect to the message *per se*, the semantic features of the ST include [+fear-Iran, +move, +oil price, + high, +new]. These decomposed senses have been supplemented in the TT with additional features like [+ nuclear, + gold] by two constituents: the lexical items *النووي* (*al nuuwawi* 'the nuclear') and *الذهب* (*al thahab* 'the gold'). What happens here seems to have something to do with the differences in *weltanschauung* (world view) and perception: culturally, economically and ideologically. With respect to the oil, the translator seems to have perceived that for the Arabic readers it would be more fitting and culturally as well as economically palatable to attach some precious value to the oil by analogously referring it as gold as well. As for the *النووي* (*al nuuwawi* 'the nuclear'), in the TT the phenomenon seems to have been perceived by the translator not as an event creating 'fear' at all, but rather as a misunderstanding of sorts perhaps on points of strategies and ideologies relating to the alleged

nuclear development in Iran. Hence, while the T-R information structure within the ST *vis-a-vis* the TT has been sustained and the general content has been largely retained as well, the finer aspects of the information, however, have been colored by differing cultural world views as well differing ideological perception about events resulting in some variations in the message of the output translation.

The apparent similarity of S-V-O word order in both cases makes the Arabic translation somewhat literal and marked in nature. This is so because the S-V-O word order which is basic for English is not normal in the Arabic translation and also is not in keeping with the norm of Arabic syntax, which is basically a VSO word order. In addition, although the object (complement) of the verb in the English ST is merely a simple noun *oil*, its counterpart in the Arabic translation is a conjoined noun phrase *النفط و الذهب* (*al naft wa al thahab* 'oil and the gold'). It has added a new element *the gold* in it. Apart from that, the Arabic sentence still keeps the formal nature of the original English ST.

Now consider the English example in (5), its Arabic translation in (b) its transliteration in (c) the BT in (d) and the message in (e) below:

(5a) ST: " **Bin Laden call falls on deaf ears**  
'Our goal is not defending the  
khartum government but to defend Islam its  
land and its people', he said.  
 BBC Monday , 24 April 2006

(5b) TT: " **بن لادن " حرب صليبيه غريبه ضد لا سلام و**  
**اضاف " ان هدفنا ليس الدفاع عن حكومة الخرطوم و**  
**انما الدفاع عن الا سلام و ارضه و شعبه "**

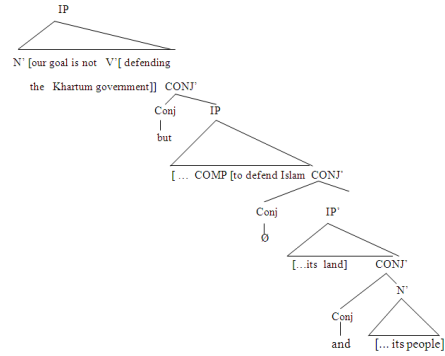
(5c) Trs: (*wa aDafa ina hadafana lysa al defa' 'an Hukumat al khartum wa inama al defa' 'an al islam wa arDeh wa sh'bih.*)

(5d) BT of (c): and added that our goal not the defense about government the Khartoom and but the defense about the Islam and its land and its people.

(5e) *that our target is not the defense of al-Khartoom government but the defense of Islam, its land and its people*

We are concerned with the underlined constituents of the texts in (5a-c) above. Sentence (5a) above has a structure as depicted by the phrase marker in (a') below while its Arabic counterpart has a structure as in the phrase marker (b'):

(a)'Our goal is not defending the khartum government but to defend Islam its land and its people',



The information in the sentence has a T-R structure in which the T is the determiner phrase 'our goal', while the remainder of the sentence is the R which is a concatenation of new information in the form of conjoined clauses comprising the following: '...is not defending the Khartum government, but to defend Islam, its land and its people'. This is similar to the general information structure of the Arabic TT in the sense that T-R information structure of the ST has been sustained in the Arabic TT as in (b') below:

(b') **واضاف " ان هدفنا ليس الدفاع عن حكومة الخرطوم و**  
**انما الدفاع عن الا سلام و ارضه و شعبه "**  
*(wa aDafa ina hadafana lysa al defa' 'an Hukumat al khartum wa inama al defa' 'an al islam wa arDeh wa sh'bih)*  
 CONJ' [Conj [ *wa* V[*aDafa* COMP [*ina* P[*hadafana lysa al defa' 'an Hukumat al khartum*]]]  
 CONJ [ *wa inama* N[ *D'* [*al defa' P'* [*an al islam*]  
 CONJ [*wa arDeh*] CONJ [*wa sh'bih* ]]]]

That is, the T (*واضاف* (*wa aDafa* 'and added')) precedes the R which is the remainder of the sentence- *ان هدفنا ليس الدفاع عن حكومة الخرطوم و انما الدفاع عن الا سلام و ارضه و شعبه* (*ina hadafana lysa al defa' 'an Hukumat al khartum wa inama al defa' 'an al islam wa arDeh wa sh'bih* '...added that our goal not the defense about government the Khartoom and but the defense about the Islam and its land and its people'). In other words, the translator has respected most of the words when translating the ST into Arabic text. It is noticed also that there is some structural and rhetorical correspondence between the ST text and the TT text. That is, basically both are similar: one principal clause followed by a series of conjoined clauses. Consequently, in general term the content of the ST message has been successfully captured and manifested in the Arabic TT. Notwithstanding that, some differences do occur in the finer aspects of the message not due to the nature of the information structure of T-R, but rather due to the nature of the grammatical phenomena of Arabic language itself. These include the fact that the Arabic sentence is introduced by a complementizer *ان* (*ena* 'that'). In addition, there is an obvious introduction of the definite article *ال* (*al* 'the') in some of the Arabic words such as *الخرطوم* (*al-Khartum* 'the Khartum'), *الدفاع* (*al-defa'* 'the defence'), *الا*



سلام (*al eslam* 'The Islam') when these definite articles do not exist in the corresponding ST. Despite all these finer distinctions, it seems that the similarity in the information structure T-R has been able to sustain the quality of the ST message and is manifested in the TT.

### CONCLUSION

In any text, the thematic structure is organized on purpose by the writer of a ST. In our study, it seems that wherever possible, the translator seems to have attempted to sustain the messages of the information structure of ST in the TT. The study reveals that except for those differences embedded in the grammatical structures such as the uses of the definite article ال (*al* 'the'), the use of the conjunction و (*wa ánd*) as a clause introducer and a conjoined element, و إنما (*wa inama* 'and but'), the complementizer ان (*ena* 'that'), the verb in clause-initial position, the T-R structure bearing the intention of the author of the ST seem have the tendency to have been reproduced in the translation. In some finer aspects of the information structure, however, there are cases where the T-R structures have been shifted to R-T structure. This seems to be mainly attributable to the VSO basic word order of the Arabic languages as opposed to SVO basic word order in English. With respect to sustaining the quality of the ST message, it seems that the translator has not followed any particular procedure of translating the ST, but one thing that seems to be somewhat apparent is that the translator has given a lot of priority and respect to adhere to the *emics* (i.e., the semantics, the syntax and the rhetoric) of the target language (Arabic) especially the sustenance of the VSO word order, the uses of the definite articles in series of determiner phrases, and the uses of the conjunction that are inherently Arabic. In terms of the content of the message itself, it seems that whenever the thematic structure is similar, except in cases where some new lexical (especially cultural) elements are brought-in to express the *weltanschauung* (world view) of the Arabs which might provide culturally laden information, the original messages of the ST have generally be captured and manifested in the TT. The following cases with are significant on this point:

خارجية (*khaarejiiyah* 'minister of foreign affairs') from data (1),

للمصادقة (*lil muSadaqa* 'for endorsing') (data 2).

النووي (*al nuuwawi* 'the nuclear') and الذهب (*al thahab* 'the gold'), (data 4).

In general, this way of translating the English BBC political news into Arabic has in many respects been able to sustain in the TT the minimum quality of the ST messages.

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