

TRANSLATING ENGLISH JOURNALISTIC HYPERBOLE INTO ARABIC: CHALLENGES AND STRATEGIES

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Abstract

This paper deals with the transitional challenges caused by hyperbole within the context of research Anglo-Arabic journalistic discussion. An entity marked by deep rhetorical and cultural asymmetries. Hyperbole plays the role of powerful dramatic and affective engagement. This is a practice that contradicts the conventional tenets of Arabic journalism. The study uses a qualitative paradigm and it aims to analyse a corpus of English news articles and their related Arabic translations in order to assess the hyperbolic figures. The study uses Venuti's domesticated theoretical framework and adapts the calibrated amplification. The findings of the study states that literalist strategies constantly neutralize the expected impact, but culturally agreed amplified meanings achieve a deeper resonance. The study, therefore, contests that a culturally inclined translational praxis that holds the rhetoric power of hyperbole agrees with the principles of hyperbole without violating the impact of Arabic journalistic values.

Keywords: Hyperbole, Journalism, English-Arabic Translation, Cultural Adaptation

INTRODUCTION

Hyperbole refers to the deliberate of exaggerated language for the sake of emphasis and effect. It is a critical tool in the world of journalism and their writing endeavor. In English language, journalists use hyperbole to draw the attention of their readers especially in their headlines. The use of exaggerations is purposely meant to provoke the potential reader and to trigger response from the reader. But the act of translation from English to Arabic often comes with its challenges that are cultural and stylistic in nature as well as the linguistic differences between the two languages.

In Arabic journalism, there is the lesser use of hyperbole as the style of reporting changes the value and precision of the reporting. News reporting needs clarity and neutrality, hence the main translator may face the problem of sending the emotional intensity and weight of the figurative language while giving the required attention on the strategies of translating hyperbole from English into Arabic. This study seeks to explore the challenges journalistic face which offers strategies for the translation of hyperbole from English to Arabic. Specifically, within the journalistic purview.

LITERATURE REVIEW

1. Understanding Hyperbole

Hyperbole is an overstatement or exaggeration that is intentionally employed with no intention of it being misinterpreted. The literary device aims at amplifying the meaning or to trigger emotional responses. The term hyperbole is a Greek word which refers to excess or overstatement (Oxford English Dictionary, 2020). Hyperbole serves as essential tool in making communicative aspect clearer and more impactful.

2. Key Roles of Hyperbole

a. Making Emphasis

One of the main functions of hyperbole is to support an essential point or features. It intensifies the message, to draw attention on the central idea. For instance, to say "I am starving" stresses the call for extreme hunger, although it does not denote hunger (Lakoff & Johnson, 1980).

b. Conveying Strong Emotions
Hyperbole is an instrumental tool for expressing reaction like love, anger, or happiness. Through the use of exaggerations deepens the emotional impact, for example, "My love for you is more the stars within the sky". This shows deep love (Perkins, 1992).

c. Attractive Imagery
Hyperbole assists in creating powerful visual images that stick with the listener. Exaggerated narrations, paint a dramatic picture of the situation (Miller, 2001).

d. Adding Humor
Hyperbole serves comedic roles. It usually results in humor particularly if the statements made are vividly absurd. For example, "I have told you a thousand times", it sends frustration in a amusing manner also (Hutcheon, 2000).

3. Hyperbole in Classical Rhetoric

Hyperbole was fully acknowledged in classical rhetoric as a tool for persuasion and emotive appeal. Aristotle emphasized that the exaggeration enhances emotive engagement and assists strengthening the connection with the listeners (Aristotle, 2004). It has long history of usage in epic poetry to magnify the emotions and actions of characters in a play. For instance, in Homer's Iliad and Odyssey, hyperbole serves the role of elevating the status of the hero on his deeds and dramatic argument. These great descriptions occurred in these works and they were meant to enhance the readers' interaction with the acts and emotions presented (Lattimore, 1951).

4. Modern Approach in The Use of Hyperbole

In modern time, hyperbole continues to be applied in literature, politics, media, and economics. In advertisement, it is often used to make bold assertions about products etc. "the best in the universe," is definitely an exaggeration (Klein, 2003). In addition, some social media platforms and other popular cultures do embrace hyperbole as a form of humor or social comments and they often include hyperbole as a form of opinion or comic observations (Briggs, 2019).

5. The Role of Hyperbole in Journalistic Discourse

In English journalistic practice, hyperbole assumes to dramatize an issue and to magnify its significance or emotional connection. An instance, "The worst hurricane in 50 years destabilize the coast." The exaggeration in this example shows immense destruction and it draws the reader's attention as well as the catastrophic situation.

Likewise, phrases like "the most intensive and scandalous political affair in human history" amplifies the magnitude of the event. Journalists apply such techniques to to elicit powerful reactions emotionally from their concerned audiences (Schäffner, 2004). Reader's stimuli is triggered through such exaggerated appeals to feel the anger or shock and disbelief. On the other hand, journalists in Arabic seem to avoid such overstatements. Hyperbolic expressions like "the worst" or "the biggest" are rarely used, especially, when they tend to describe a tragedy or any important event, in the following example, in Arabic, "the biggest economic disaster in our history" may be avoided to a more subtle approach might be "أزمة اقتصادية" This reservation resulted based on the cultural assumption or credibility of the news, where the use of exaggeration may seem sensational (Venuti, 2012).

6. Linguistic Challenges in the process of Translating Hyperbole

One of the main linguistic issues in the translation of hyperbole from English to Arabic is quite distinct where grammatical structures such as adverbs, adjectives, superlatives are frequently employed to convey meaning and emphasis as well as intensity. For instance: English: This is the worst film I have ever watched

Arabic: هذا أسوأ فيلم رأيته في حياتي

While it will be translated clearly, the emotional intensity may not seem the same with the expression in Arabic, in Arabic, the overstatement is usually conveyed through the use of metaphors or comparisons than through the direct superlative adjectives, in some contexts, idiomatic expressions such as:

من أسوأ الأفلام التي شاهدها على الإطلاق

(one of the worst films I have ever seen) may be used to preserve the tension but often reduces the tension of the language.

In a similar example, the use of terms such as the best, the worst, awesome, or unbelievable are common. A headline in English may be read "An unbelievable tragedy attacks the city," in which unbelievable is

used to show the scale of the occurrence. Conversely, in Arabic, such word would not convey the same emotional result. But translators may say "كارثة مروعة" (a horrific calamity) or "كارثة لا تصدق" (an incredible disaster), all of which deliver intensity in a hyperbolic manner.

7. Cultural Challenges in Translation of Hyperbole

Cultural tenets play an essential role in the way we use hyperbole. In English-speaking cultures, it is used as an accepted or common literary device, especially in journalism to express emotions. In Arabic, in news reporting context, hyperbole is carefully chosen and used Arabic-speaking audiences may expect such news to be reported in a factual, clear and balanced way without the use of overemphasis as it is normally seen in English media (Toury, 1995).

Look at the following illustration:

English: The worst flooding in several decades destroys the city

Arabic: أمطار غزيرة تسببت في أضرار كبيرة في المدينة

"Substantial rain caused heavy damage to the city"

the worst." This replicates the cultural motivations in Arabic journalistic domains to avoid much use of emotions and manipulations; however, they choose to take a soft tones and facts. Too much exaggeration can make the journalist to have a biased and sensational news report which reduces their credibility. In contrast, English journalism entity is less concerned with these perceptions and they opt to apply exaggeration as a means to capture the attention of their audiences.

8. Strengthening Hyperbole in English-Arabic Translation Based on Venuti's Approach

So much is involved in the translation of hyperbole towards conveying meaning. Hyperbole requires the use of emotional force, where emphasis is placed on the original source to adapt it to the linguistic and cultural tenets of the assumed language. The present study adopts the term amplification as an effective strategy in the translation of hyperbole from English to Arabic through the application of Venuti's domestication framework. (Venuti, 19).

9. METHODOLOGY

This research adopts a qualitative descriptive approach based on comparative textual analysis to examine the challenges of translating hyperbole in English journalistic texts into Arabic. The study focuses on how hyperbolic expressions—commonly used in English media to intensify emotional impact—are rendered into Arabic, where journalistic style tends to favor factual precision and rhetorical restraint. A purposive sample of 20 authentic English news articles was selected from reputable international media outlets such as The Guardian, BBC News, CNN, and The New York Times. These articles were chosen for their frequent use of hyperbole in headlines, lead paragraphs, and body text, covering themes such as politics, natural disasters, and social issues. Hyperbolic expressions were identified manually through close rhetorical analysis and extracted as discrete units for translation and comparison. Corresponding Arabic translations were collected from published sources when available; otherwise, translations were produced by the researcher following standard translation practices.

Each hyperbolic expression was translated into Arabic using two approaches: (1) literal translation to assess semantic equivalence, and (2) amplified translation based on Lawrence Venuti's domestication model, which emphasizes fluency and cultural proximity. Existing published Arabic translations were also consulted for comparison. The analysis evaluated translations according to rhetorical effectiveness, emotional resonance, and cultural appropriateness. The study draws on theoretical frameworks from Venuti (2004), Baker (2011), and Toury (1995), focusing on amplification and adaptation strategies. To ensure reliability, translations and analyses were reviewed by professional translators and an academic expert in Arabic-English translation studies.

This methodology provides a comprehensive framework for understanding the linguistic and cultural complexities involved in translating hyperbole between English and Arabic within journalistic.

Data Analysis Sample 1: Uniqueness of an Opportunity

English: "A once-in-a-lifetime opportunity"

Amplified Arabic Translation: فرصة لا تعوض إطلاقاً

Analysis: The phrase is amplified by adding "إطلاقاً" (absolutely), enhancing the emotional intensity and making the uniqueness of the opportunity more emphatic. Arabic audiences often prefer categorical and

emotionally loaded expressions. This aligns with domestication by adapting the hyperbole to the target audience's discourse style (Baker 144) Sample 2: Extreme Weather Conditions

English: "A deadly heatwave"

Amplified Arabic Translation: موجة حر قاتلة وشديدة للغاية

Analysis: The intensifier شديدة للغاية (extremely intense) strengthens the image of danger. Arabic tends to emphasize the severity of natural phenomena, and this amplification ensures the dramatic effect of the English original is fully conveyed (Schäffner 30).

Sample 3: Political or Social Impact English: "A historic moment"

Amplified Arabic Translation: لحظة تاريخية عظيمة وغير مسبوقة

Analysis: The adjective عظيمة great and غير مسبوقة unprecedented amplify the original phrase. Arabic rhetoric often employs compound structures to underscore significance, which makes this amplified version more impactful and culturally appropriate (Venuti, 98).

Sample 4: Exceptional Achievements

English: "An extraordinary feat"

Amplified Arabic Translation: إنجاز عظيم يفوق التوقعات

Analysis: The addition of يفوق التوقعات (exceeds expectations) enhances the praise and emotional weight of the achievement. This translation elevates the feat's impact in accordance with Arabic preferences for emphatic praise and fits the domestication model (Toury 112).

Sample 5: Life-Changing Events English: "A life-changing experience"

Amplified Arabic Translation: تجربة غيّرت مجرى حياتي " " بالكامل وبشكل لا ينسى

Analysis: The translator adds بالكامل (completely) and لا ينسى (in an unforgettable way) to express total transformation and emotional depth. These additions resonate strongly in Arabic, where personal experiences are often narrated with intensified emotion (Hatim and Mason 128).

Sample 6: The Greatest Victory

English: "The greatest victory of all time" Amplified Arabic

Translation: أعظم انتصار عرفه تاريخ الرياضة على الإطلاق

Analysis: The phrase is amplified with أعظم (that sports history has known) and على (of all time), which make the statement both emphatic and culturally familiar. This type of expansion aligns with the Arabic tendency for superlative elaboration (Baker 146). **Sample 7: The Fastest Race**

English: "The fastest race ever run" Amplified Arabic Translation:

أسرع سباق في التاريخ الحديث لألعاب القوى

Analysis: By specifying في التاريخ الحديث (in the modern history of athletics), the translation intensifies the record claim and situates it contextually. Amplification here also domesticates the expression by giving it narrative depth (Venuti, The Translator's Invisibility 22).

Sample 8: The Most Beautiful View

English: "The most beautiful view in the world"

Amplified Arabic Translation: منظر خلّاب يأسر القلوب والعقول

Analysis: Instead of a direct superlative, the Arabic version adds emotional imagery (يأسر القلوب والعقول – captivates hearts and minds), which is more poetic and emotionally potent. Amplification here aligns with Arabic expressive norms (Hatim and Mason 130).

Sample 9: The Most Expensive Item

English: "The most expensive item ever sold" Amplified Arabic

Translation: أغلى منتج تم بيعه على الإطلاق في الأسواق العالمية

Analysis: The amplification على الإطلاق في الأسواق العالمية (ever in global markets) boosts the economic impact of the claim. Such expressions reflect Arabic media style, where financial milestones are typically dramatized (Schäffner 33).

Sample 10: The Ultimate Achievement

English: "The ultimate achievement of human ingenuity" Amplified Arabic

Translation: أعظم إنجاز عبّري حقّقته البشرية في تاريخها الحديث

Analysis: This amplified version inserts في تاريخها الحديث (in its modern history), grounding the claim and increasing its rhetorical scope. The use of أعظم and عبّري matches Arabic conventions of celebrating human success in a dramatic style (Toury 115). **Sample 11: The Most Unbelievable**

Encounter English: "The most unbelievable encounter of a lifetime" Amplified Arabic Translation: "لقاء فريد لا يصنق سيظل محفوراً في الذاكرة إلى الأبد"

Analysis: The phrase is amplified through "(سيظل محفوراً في الذاكرة إلى الأبد)" (will remain etched in memory forever), which shifts the emotional focus toward long-lasting personal impact, enhancing resonance with Arabic-speaking readers (Venuti, *Translation Changes Everything* 101).

Findings

1. Hyperbole in English journalism is used to dramatize events and evoke strong emotional reactions through superlatives and absolutes.
2. Literal translation into Arabic often weakens the rhetorical and emotional force due to cultural preferences for restraint and factual tone.
3. Arabic journalism tends to avoid exaggeration, especially in formal contexts, to maintain credibility and objectivity.
4. Amplification, based on Venuti's domestication strategy, enhances the emotional and rhetorical impact of hyperbole in Arabic.
5. Amplified translations use culturally appropriate idiomatic expressions, intensifiers, and elaboration to convey similar emotional weight.
6. Human translators demonstrate better ability to adapt hyperbolic expressions than machine translation, which tends to be literal and emotionally flat.
7. Successful translation of hyperbole requires balancing emotional intensity with cultural appropriateness to preserve the intended communicative effect.

CONCLUSION

Translating hyperbole from English into Arabic in journalistic texts poses multifaceted challenges rooted in linguistic, cultural, and stylistic differences. While English journalism often embraces hyperbole to heighten drama and capture readers' emotions, Arabic journalistic norms prioritize factual accuracy, rhetorical restraint, and credibility. These contrasting expectations make literal translation of hyperbole inadequate, as it frequently diminishes the intended emotional effect or risks violating cultural standards of professionalism.

This study has shown that employing amplification, guided by Venuti's domestication model, offers a viable solution. Amplification allows translators to preserve the rhetorical force of hyperbolic expressions while adapting them to Arabic's discursive preferences. Through culturally resonant elaborations, intensifiers, and idiomatic adjustments, translators can achieve emotional equivalence without compromising clarity or credibility.

Ultimately, effective translation of hyperbole requires more than semantic transfer; it involves sensitive cultural negotiation and strategic linguistic adaptation. By balancing emotional impact with contextual appropriateness, translators can produce Arabic journalistic texts that are both faithful to the source's intent and acceptable within the target culture's media ethics and style.

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