Pragmatic Differences in Standard Arabic–English Translation: Implications for Translators with Special Reference to Other Arabic Local Languages: Case study

Lutfi M. Alwash*

Faculty of Languages and Translation, Misurata University, Libya

*l.alwash@art.misuratau.edu.ly

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Abstract:

Difficulties involved in translating Arabic–English–Arabic as foreign Arabic speakers may fall into problems when translating from standard Arabic Language and other local Arabic dialects (languages) such as Libyan, Egyptian, Jordanian, or any other dialect, as they know about Standard Arabic, not the dialects. Quranic Standard Arabic Language (QSAL) is absorbed into various Modern Arabic Languages (MSA) used in Arab countries as dialects, and each dialect turns out to be another lively language. This research paper is conducted under the qualitative descriptive method, trying first to explore the relationship between pragmatics and translation, focusing on pragmatic differences between English and Arabic or vice versa. Anticipating potential translation problems learners of translation face or might encounter at the pragmatic level. Second, it demonstrates the importance of pragmatic competence in translation.

This paper offers an in-depth investigation of pragmatic differences, that foreign learners should have familiarity with to keep their translation correct. Politeness strategies, religious expressions, and indirectness are examples of differences this paper sheds light on. Special attention is given to other Arab countries' dialects, which show unique pragmatic features that require careful handling in translation. This study discusses theoretical frameworks, practical strategies, and case studies. The objective is to provide translators with practical understanding of both macro- and micro-level tools and strategies for maintaining pragmatic equivalence, thereby ensuring culturally and contextually accurate translations. Pragmatic differences are essential for accurate and culturally sensitive translation. Arabic dialects under study, with their unique mixture, exemplify the need for dynamic, context-aware translation practices.

***Keywords*:** pragmatics, politeness strategies, religious expressions, indirectness, euphemisms.

الاختلافات البراغماتية في الترجمة من العربية الفصحى إلى الإنجليزية: آثارها على المترجمين مع التركيز على اللغات العربية المحلية الأخرى: دراسة حالة

د. لطفي محمد الوش*
كلية اللغات والترجمة - جامعة مصراتة - ليبيا
*l.alwash@art.misuratau.edu.ly

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الملخص:

يواجه المترجمون الأجانب صعوبة في الترجمة من العربية إلى الإنجليزية ثم العودة إلى العربية، خاصةً عند الترجمة من اللغة العربية الفصحى واللهجات المحلية الأخرى كالليبية والمصرية والأردنية وغيرها، إذ أنهم على دراية باللغة العربية الفصحى لا باللهجات. وقد اندمجت اللغة العربية الفصحى القرآنية في العديد من اللغات العربية المعاصرة المستخدمة في الدول العربية كلغات، مما يجعل كل لهجة لغةً حيويةً بحد ذاتها. تعتمد هذه الورقة البحثية المنهج الوصفي النوعي، وتسعى أولًا إلى استكشاف العلاقة بين البراغماتية والترجمة، مع التركيز على الفروق البراغماتية بين الإنجليزية والعربية، أو العكس. كما تتوقع الورقة المشكلات المحتملة التي قد يواجهها متعلمو الترجمة على المستوى البراغماتي. ثانيًا، تُبرز الورقة أهمية الكفاءة البراغماتية في الترجمة.

تقدم هذه الورقة بحثًا معمقًا في الفروق البراغماتية التي ينبغي على المتعلمين الأجانب الإلمام بها لضمان دقة ترجماتهم. تُسلّط هذه الورقة الضوء على استراتيجيات اللباقة، والتعبيرات الدينية، والأسلوب غير المباشر. ويُخصّص اهتمام خاص للهجات الدول العربية الأخرى، التي تُظهر سمات تداولية فريدة تتطلب عناية فائقة في الترجمة. تتناول هذه الدراسة الأطر النظرية، والاستراتيجيات العملية، ودراسات الحالة. والهدف هو تزويد المترجمين بفهم عملي للأدوات والاستراتيجيات على المستويين الكلي والجزئي للحفاظ على التكافؤ التداولي، وبالتالي ضمان ترجمات دقيقة ثقافيًا وسياقيًا. تُعدّ الاختلافات التداولية أساسية للترجمة الدقيقة والمراعية للسياق الثقافي. وتُجسّد اللهجات العربية قيد الدراسة، بمزيجها الفريد، الحاجة إلى ممارسات ترجمة ديناميكية وواعية بالسياق.

الكلمات المفتاحية: التداولية، استراتيجيات اللباقة، التعبيرات الدينية، الأسلوب غير المباشر، التعبيرات الملطفة.

1. Introduction:

This study examines a cross-cultural translation, specifically phrases involving polite address markers in Arabic-English translation through a socio-pragmatic attention. Pragmatics is concerned with how language conveys meaning in context, encompassing speech acts, politeness, and cultural nuances (Brown & Levinson, 1987). In translation, pragmatic equivalence is vital for maintaining both linguistic accuracy and the social functions of language (Hatim & Mason, 1997). Translating between Arabic and English introduces complex challenges due to structural and cultural differences. While English often favors directness, Arabic tends to employ indirectness and honorifics to maintain politeness (Baker, 2018). Pragmatic etymology is a key piece of actual statement and social emotional knowledge; through thoughtful and developed pragmatic language skills, people can substitute expressive talks, build relationships, and navigate successfully in a variety of social settings.

This study examines these differences, focusing on Libyan Arabic, a dialect that includes region-specific vocabulary, Italian borrowings, and unique politeness strategies. Pragmatics, as a branch of linguistics, which studies how meaning is predisposed by context, social rules, and speaker intentions. In translation, pragmatic skill is crucial because the same utterance can send different levels of politeness, cultural ethics, religious values or emotional tones depending on the language. Arabic and English differ expressively in their pragmatic structures, which presents challenges for translators who must capture both meaning and social intent. Failure to consider these variances may lead to miscommunication, loss of cultural nuance, or even offense (Hatim & Mason, 1997; Baker, 2018).

Translation, especially between linguistically and traditionally disparate languages like Arabic and English, poses significant challenges. This becomes even more complex when engaging with diglossic contexts such as Local Arabic or sacred, classical texts like the Qur'an. Pragmatic translation, which focuses on meaning in context (Leech, 1983; Levinson, 1983), and syntactic shifts, which address differences in grammatical structures (Baker, 1992; Hatim & Mason, 1997), are essential tools in navigating this complexity. Libyan Arabic, with its colloquial variations, and Qur'anic Arabic, rich in rhetorical and religious nuances, require translators to make informed syntactic and pragmatic adaptations to preserve meaning and communicative function. This review synthesizes relevant scholarship and applies theoretical insights to real-world examples to illustrate how these challenges manifest and how they may be addressed.

1.1 Back ground.

In fact, every translation or interpretation involves a practical element at one level or another. A sound understanding of pragmatism can enrich the practice of translation. Based on this understanding of pragmatism, a translator can, through appropriate contextual situations, grasp the non-linguistic dimensions of verbal communication and translate them effectively. Many Local Arabic utterances can take other meaning than their dictionary meaning, as the idiom Al-malafed Saad (utterances are luckiness) e.g.: in Libyan local language they refer to coal (black colored) with the word (Biad) which comes from the word White. Culturally, for good luck they never mention coal as its color is black but use whiteness to express luck.

1.2 The Connection Between Translation and Pragmatics.

The advantage of studying language from a pragmatics perspective is that it permits for discussion of people's intended meanings, norms, intentions, goals, and the types of actions (such as wishes) they make when speaking (Yule, 2010). The method by which we convey connotation across a communication context is called pragmatics. This meaning consists of verbal and nonverbal components and varies depending on the situation, the topic of the conversation, the relationships between the interlocutors, and other social circumstances. One approach has focused on pragmatics in translation. Farwell and Helmreich (2004, as cited in Khalaf, 2014) provided a much clearer outline... However, the underlying principle of this strategy is that texts significantly underestimate their proposed meaning due to the ambiguity of language. For this reason, translators must assess statements in light of their ideas about the world, its elements, the issue at hand, and any relevant people or current events. It should be clear that the focus of evaluation should be, first, on the similarities and differences between participants' beliefs and the conclusions reached during source and target language interactions, and second, on the naturalness of the target language expression, from a pragmatic translation perspective and in light of the common and important translation variables expected from human and machine translation systems. Furthermore, it should be clear that there are a variety of translations that may be appropriate for a given interaction.

Farwell, D., & Helmreich, S. (1994) are among several researchers who studied the interrelationship between translation and pragmatics. He viewed the numerous levels of linguistic analysis from a pragmatic standpoint, explaining how each contributes in unique ways that must be considered when translating into another language. These pragmatic levels structure the translation process, and he emphasized that the translation outcome should demonstrate a deeper understanding of its multiple functions in this process. Similarly, (Bell, 1991, p.45) suggests that constituents produced in two or more languages require translators to work with them more often. Working documents, meeting minutes, or similar interim reports on the operations of scientific research teams, international bureaucracies, and multinational corporations are typical examples of such materials. In fact, such materials are likely to come from any institutional environment that uses multiple languages. As an outcome, many practical translators have been called upon to work on documents in several languages, and have achieved some success. However, their success has also been a failure for many traditional and non-traditional translation approaches. The representation of such texts requires a pragmatic approach that takes a probabilistic economic stance toward textual authorship and attribution, ultimately allowing source texts to be created in a more multicultural, if not more diverse, environment than translations. Bernardini (2007) demonstrates how the structure of a translated text differs, particularly at the pragmatic level, from other writings created within the constraints of a single context. The translator must ultimately emulate the textual context in all its aspects, as they are required to deal with the pragmatic differences between the source and target contexts. Great expectations are placed on a translator's textual competence to achieve the appropriate impact in their translated material. For this reason, the latter should be incorporated into every translator's training program, and an understanding of pragmatics as a basis for translation may increase translators' productivity. Importantly, although he was not the only linguist to do so, Nida-Rümelin (2000) was among the first to emphasize the value of pragmatic information in translation. Other works has sufficiently pointed to the interaction between pragmatics and translation. For instance, Malmakjar et al. (1998) addressed some translation-related problems that arise due to pragmatic differences between the source and target languages. Based on this, Hatim and Mason (1997) presented a broad pragmatic approach, arguing that maintaining the same pragmatic impact of the source text on the target text is essential for improved translation. In addition, Gott (1991) used the relevance theory developed by Sperber and Wilson (1986), who claimed that translation is a communicative situation in which translators analyze and express communicative information.

1.2.1 Signals in Texts.

In general, translators are disposed to making pragmatic mistakes for several reasons, including absence of pragmatic proficiency in the target language and ignorance of the importance of pragmatics in the translation process. Given that pragmatic awareness is one of the essential components of communicative competence, and that translation, is considered a form of interlingual communication, there is a pressing need to improve pragmatic understanding, and more specifically, to improve translators' awareness and knowledge of other languages and cultures. To prevent translators from making potential pragmatic errors, pragmatic competence can be improved through pragmatic awareness. Thus, practical familiarity and increased awareness of its importance help translators become more accurate in their judgments.

1.2.2 Robinson (2003).

Contemporary translators need to be more conscious of the many aspects surrounding texts. If they can identify and effectively convey the pragmatic elements of texts, this will be achieved. Consequently, translators' pragmatic knowledge is one of the essential pillars of effective translation and cross-cultural communication. Understanding pragmatics and its importance helps uncover hidden linguistic, cultural, and linguistic features and differences between languages, and helps foster rapprochement between different beliefs and languages. This perspective explains an empirical study of the interaction between pragmatics and translation in English-to-Arabic and Arabic -to-English translation cases, by examining studies that address the relationship between translation and pragmatics in specific source/target languages. Pragmatic differences between English and Arabic can cause a variety of translation problems and errors.

1.3 Pragmatics Role in Translation That Translators Should Be Aware.

Pragmatics plays a crucial role in translation by focusing on the context and the proposed meaning of the language, rather than merely the literal meaning of the words. It ensures that the translated text has the same communicative impact on the target audience as the original text had on its target audience, which may require modifying or adapting the original message. Here is a more detailed look at the role and importance of pragmatics in translation:

1- Understanding Context: Pragmatics helps translators understand the context of the text, including the situation, the connection between speaker and listener, and the cultural background. This understanding is vital for interpreting the intended meaning of the source text and ensuring the translation is appropriate for the target audience.

2- Addressing Pragmatic Differences: Languages differ in how they express meaning, particularly in terms of politeness, ambiguity, and cultural references. Pragmatics enables translators to address these differences, ensuring that the translated text is not only grammatically correct but also socially and culturally appropriate.

3- Ensuring Communicative Effectiveness: The goal of translation is often to recreate the communicative impact of the original text. Pragmatics helps translators achieve this by focusing on the intended message and its impact on the reader, rather than simply translating words literally.

4- Avoiding pragmatic errors: Ignoring pragmatic considerations can lead to misunderstandings, misinterpretations, and even abuse. Pragmatic competence helps translators avoid these "pragmatic failures" by ensuring the translated text is accurate, effective, and appropriate for the target audience.

5- Examples of pragmatic problems in translation: Expressions: Words such as "here," "there," "this," and "that" must be modified based on the translation context.

Presuppositions: Assumptions about the reader's knowledge must be carefully considered and adjusted when translating.

Implication: Implied meanings must be appropriately conveyed in the target language.

Speech acts: The intended action of the utterance (e.g., a request, a command, an apology) must be accurately conveyed.

Standards of politeness: Levels of formality and politeness vary across cultures and must be carefully considered.

Cultural References: References specific to a particular culture must be explained or adapted to suit a different audience.

Essentially, pragmatics is not just an optional addition to translation; it is an essential aspect of producing effective and meaningful translations.

1.3.1 The Interrelationship Between Pragmatics and Translation.

The benefit of studying language through pragmatics is that it allows us to talk about people's intended meanings, assumptions, purposes or goals, and the types of actions (such as requests) they make when speaking (Yule, 2010). Pragmatics, then, is the way we convey meaning through the context of communication. This meaning includes both verbal and nonverbal elements and varies depending on factors such as the context, the topic of the conversation, the relationship between the interlocutors, and other social factors. For translation, a pragmatics-based approach is adopted. It is provided a more explicit framework for thinking about the many choice's translators must make when producing their translations. However, the main assumption of this approach is that language is ambiguous, and texts do not specify precise interpretation. For this reason, translators must interpret phrases in terms of beliefs about the world, the phrase elements in context, the subject, the individuals, and the relevant situations. From a pragmatic translation perspective, and given the widespread and significant translation variables expected from human and machine translation systems, it should be clear that the focus of evaluation should be, first, on the similarity and difference between participants' beliefs and inferences made during source and target language interactions. Second, on the naturalness of the expression of the target language text. It should also be clear that there is a wide range of possible appropriate translations for a given interaction.

1.4 Problem Statement.

Understanding with the hidden meaning of a word is a key concern of pragmatics, that can help one form appropriate perceptions in diverse situations. Nonexistence of such experience can lead to practical translation problems. It is also important to note that the program offered by translation departments includes two separate modules on translation and pragmatics. Students are required to understand how these courses intersection, even though they are often taught by different instructors. More importantly, students are not informed or instructed on how to apply their understanding of the interrelationship between pragmatics and translation in their performance as translators.

Translating pragmatic features, in general, is challenging, as translators' task is to match the appropriate social and traditional dimensions of the source and target languages, as well as to translate linguistic particles. Therefore, this article aims to examine the function of pragmatics in translation and identify the important challenges and difficulties translators face when introducing pragmatic components into their translations. If the translation learner is not acknowledged of pragmatics a problem of meaning translation arises, therefore, this study tries to inform readers of this gap and tries to shed light of those differences to help them understand the pragmatic nature in languages.

1.5 Study Objectives.

The main objectives of this study are based on two hypotheses: (1) the importance of pragmatics in translation from English to Arabic; and (2) translators face difficulties in expressing pragmatics. This study aims to examine the nature of translation and the most common strategies used by novice translators when translating from Arabic to English, both spoken and written. The study attempts to answer the following questions:

1- What are the most common strategies used by translators when interpreting from Arabic to English and vice versa?

2- Are there equivalents in English for the translated words in spoken Arabic and vice versa?

3- To what extent did translators successfully translate the selected text into English and vice versa?

2. Literature Review:

According to Leach (1983), Charles Morris (1971) provided the first modern definition of pragmatics, and since then, many other specialists have continued to conceptualize this branch of linguistics. Morris (1971) originally defined pragmatics as "...the science that studies the relations of signs to interpreters, while semantics studies the relations of signs to the objects to which they apply" (as cited in Leach, 1974, p.172). Crystal (1986, p. 240) then defined pragmatics as "...the study of language from the point of view of users, especially the choices they make, the constraints they face in using language in social interaction, and the effects their use of language has on other participants in the communication process." This definition analyzes pragmatics from the perspective of its users. It takes into account the different choices speakers can make when using the target language, depending on the social context of their communication. The concept of choice brings to mind another aspect that is useful for language learners: developing the ability to make appropriate choices among a variety of pragmatic elements. Later, Kasper and Bloom-Kulka (1993, p.3) defined pragmatics as "the study of how people understand and produce a language act in context." Here, the words verb and context are included, two essential elements of speech acts in a language. Kasper and Bloom-Kulka (1993) used the term verb to refer to a learner's ability to produce an utterance. They focus on understanding as well as production, a difference of particular relevance to the daily lives of second language learners.

More lately, pragmatics has been considered the study of language used in communication, and the relationships between sentences, the contexts, and the situations in which they are used. For example, Yule (2010, p. 128) defines pragmatics as "the study of what speakers mean, or 'speakers' meaning,' and the study of 'unseen meaning,' or how we perceive what is meant even when it is not actually said or written." Earlier, in this regard, Fromkin and Rodman (1993) point to the "context" of a sentence or discourse and the importance of context in interpreting language. According to them, the general study of how context affects the way sentences convey information is called pragmatics. Pragmatics is as complex a subject as grammar or semantics. The term pragmatics comes from the field of semiotics, or the study of signs. In semiotics, syntax means "the way signs are arranged," semantics means "what signs mean or signify," and pragmatics means "the relationship between signs and their users." Pragmatics, then, concerns people's use of language in particular contexts and is therefore part of what is called "linguistic performance." In this respect, Stalnaker's definition is more explicit (as cited in Hatim and Mason 1997, p.9): "Pragmatics is the study of the purposes for which sentences are used, and the real-world conditions under which a sentence can be appropriately used as an expression." Through pragmatics, contextual meaning is exploited and analyzed to discover its "true" meaning. In pragmatics, it is important to address the implied and intended meaning, assumptions, purposes, and goals that people seek to achieve in communication and various types of actions. The inability of semantics to satisfactorily explain the sociolinguistic and other non-linguistic components of verbal communication led to the emergence of pragmatics. Thus, pragmatics is a relatively new field of study, sharing boundaries with sociolinguistics and semantics. Pragmatics is a practical discourse, an action determined by society or its speakers. When society determines an action, it becomes somewhat sociolinguistic, but when meaning is more intended, it tends to be expressive.

Since pragmatics is a quite new branch of linguistics that offers a new way of looking at language, Verschueren (1999) describes it as a general cognitive, social, and cultural perspective on linguistic phenomena in relation to their use in behavioral forms. Translation, on the other hand, is the process of transforming a text shaped in one language (the source language) into another (the target language). Skinner (1974, p. 110) stated that "translation may best be defined as a verbal stimulus that has the same (or as much as possible the same) effect as the original text on a different verbal community." The Russian formalist Roman Jakobson (1959, p. 233) divides translation into three parts: intralingual, intersemantic, and interlingual. Intralingual translation is a "reformulation" that consists of interpreting linguistic signs within the same language. Intersemantic translation concerns the interpretation of linguistic signs using nonlinguistic signs. Interlingual translation is translation in its true sense, consisting of interpreting linguistic signs from one language to another. Based on Roman Jakobson's view on the tripartite definition of translation, it can be asserted that translation is as old as humankind is. The primary purpose of translation is the successful transmission of the original message using the medium of different linguistic forms. In the process of reproducing a message and its resulting nuances from one linguistic form to another, the translator often encounters problems with contextual meanings. In this sense, sociolinguistics and semantics are related to translation. According to Newmark (1981), translation is a discipline with interesting connections with a wide range of disciplines such as linguistics, the comparative study of cultures, comparative ethnology, computer science, comparative sociology, etc. Its relationship with linguistics is particularly profound. Newmark (1981) and Coffey (1999) have argued that translation is a subset of linguistics. Proponents of these views consider translation to be part of applied or comparative linguistics. Translation, by its very nature and interdisciplinary nature, draws many of its branches from many other disciplines without necessarily being part of them. One such branch is pragmatics. The relationship may seem obscure, but a closer look at these two branches highlights significant areas of interest.

Although numerous studies have been directed on flattery in unalike languages from multicultural perspectives, no efforts have been made in translation studies regarding the translation of flattery. Most of these studies focus on the domains and topics of flattery (e.g., Dakuhara, 1986; Muqaddadi, 2003; Zaid, 2014; Al-Rousan, 2016); acceptance of flattery (e.g., Dakuhara, 1986; Yu, 2005; Al-Rousan, 2016; Hao, 2017); the structure of flattery (e.g., Holmes, 1986; Nelson, 1993); the factors underlying flattery (e.g., Al-Rousan, 2016); and response to flattery (e.g., Herbert, 1997; Farghal & Al-Khatib, 2001). It is necessary to first clarify what is meant by flattery. Olstein and Cohen (1991) define a compliment as a speech act intended to "express solidarity between speaker and listener and maintain social harmony"(p.158). Similarly, Holmes(1988, p.446) states that a compliment is "a speech act that attributes credit, explicitly or implicitly, to the addressee for some 'merit' (possession, quality, skill, etc.) that the speaker and listener positively appreciate."

In Jordanian dialect, compliments are common in the areas of appearance, performance, and food; responses to these are not only highly acceptable but also include positive comments. Maqddadi (2003) finds that appearance and skill are the most common topics of compliments, accounting for 45% and 24% of the total compliments used in Jordanian society. However, the frequency of compliment topics varies from culture to culture. For example, the most common topic of praise in Japanese society is ability (Daikuhara, 1986). In contrast, appearance is the most common area of praise in America (Wolfson, 1983). However, Al-Rousan et al. (2016) do not consider praise to be a naturally acceptable verbal gift, as some people tend to reject it out of modesty and an attempt to minimize self-praise. Zayed (2014) conducted a study on praise involving 30 students from the United Arab Emirates. Participants complimented others while communicating in English. The results showed that the participants failed to offer praise appropriately, ignoring some forms of praise common in English and using too many forms of praise uncommon in English. As a result, their compliments were unacceptable.

Regarding the cultural dimension of praise, Hao (2017) suggests that when speaking to higher-status individuals in traditional Chinese culture, lower-status individuals should not take the lead. Yu (2005, p.110) similarly notes that "individuals of lower social status, when interacting with those of higher social status, may avoid compliments that might be perceived as flattery." In Arab cultures, compliments are used between people of different social statuses, but they can be avoided interchangeably between people of different genders, especially those who do not have strong mutual relationships. Some compliments in Arab-Islamic culture are usually preceded or followed by the phrase "Inshallah" or "Masha'Allah." Furthermore, a man complimenting a woman he does not know well may be considered street harassment or harassment, especially if the compliment relates to the woman's appearance. Al-

Rousan et al. (2016) assert that Arab-Islamic culture plays an important role in formulating compliments and responses to them, referring to the Jordanian Arab context.

2.1 Dialect.

User-associated language use, i.e., dialects/colloquialisms, depends on the user's contribution to the text. This variation occurs as a result, for example, of geographical, temporal, social, linguistic, standard, and non-standard uses of language (see Gregory and Carroll 1978; Hatim and Mason 1997 Al-Manna, & House 2014). Geographic variation refers to the language varieties used in a particular geographic area, such as Egyptian, Iraqi, Syrian, etc. Therefore, when studying pronunciation, vocabulary, and grammar characteristics, the geographic region to which the language user belongs is taken into account (Al-Manna, & House, 2014, 225).

Temporal variation, on the other hand, denotes to the language varieties used in a specific period. Some vocabulary, for example, was acceptable at one time but either became extinct or acquired new denotations over time. An example of this is the word "trivial," which was used to mean "slow" in Macbeth; however, it now means "trivial" (Hatim & Mason, 1997, 42). In some cases, the primary meaning of a word becomes secondary, and a new meaning takes precedence. For example, the word "gay" today has the primary meaning of "homosexual" and the secondary meaning of "happy."

Social variation, in turn, refers to the linguistic varieties used by members of a particular group or society—for example, urban Arabic or English versus rural Arabic, or the linguistic varieties used by different social classes. The use of "ain't" in English, for example, is a good example of what can be considered a socially distinctive form (Almanna & House, 2014, 225). Social variation is closely related to standard and non-standard language use, for example, Standard English versus Cockney English or Standard Arabic versus colloquial Arabic. Finally, linguistic variation refers to the ways in which an individual uses language. Al-Rubaie (1996, 61), supporting the views of Hatim and Mason (1997), argues that all these "varieties within the context of user-related linguistic variations do not represent categories with clear borders, but rather are a continuity of variation characteristics in constant interaction." When dealing with a text laden with language use variation, the translator's progress will automatically slow down as they try to handle with this type of constraint by using the different types of language available in the source text and functionally accommodate this variety.

2.2 Theoretical Foundations in Pragmatic and Syntactic Translation.

Since pragmatics is a quite new branch of linguistics that offers a new way of looking at language, Verschueren (1999) describe it as a general cognitive, social, and cultural perspective on linguistic phenomena in relation to their use in behavioral arrangements. Translation, on the other hand, is the process of converting a text produced in one language (the source language) into another (the target language). Skinner (1974) stated that "translation may best be defined as a verbal stimulus that has the same (or as much as possible the same) effect as the original text on a different verbal community." The Russian formalist Roman Jakobson (1959) divide translation into three parts: intralingual, intersemantic, and interlingual. Intralingual translation is a "reformulation" that consists of interpreting linguistic signs within the same language. Intersemantic translation concerns the interpretation of linguistic signs using nonlinguistic signs. Interlingual translation is translation in its true sense, consisting of interpreting linguistic signs from one language to another. Based on Roman Jakobson's view on the tripartite definition of translation, it can be asserted that translation is as old as humankind. The primary purpose of translation is the successful transmission of the original message using the medium of different linguistic forms. In the process of reproducing a message and its resulting nuances from one linguistic form to another, the translator often encounters problems with contextual meanings. In this sense, sociolinguistics and semantics are related to translation. According to Newmark (1981), translation is a discipline with interesting connections with a wide range of disciplines such as linguistics, the comparative study of cultures, comparative ethnology, computer science, comparative sociology, etc. Its relationship with linguistics is particularly profound. Newmark (1981) and Coffey (1999) have argued that translation is a subset of linguistics. Proponents of these views consider translation to be part of applied or comparative linguistics. Translation, by its very nature and interdisciplinary nature, draws many of its branches from many other disciplines without necessarily being part of them. One such branch is pragmatics. The relationship may seem vague, but a closer look at these two branches highlights significant areas of interest.

Translation studies have long grappled with the tension between form and function. Nida’s (1964) distinction between “formal equivalence” and “dynamic equivalence” laid the groundwork for pragmatic approaches. Dynamic equivalence—aiming for the same effect on the target audience—often requires syntactic transformations, especially between languages with differing grammatical systems. Baker (1992) categorized equivalence into several levels: pragmatic, textual, grammatical, and lexical. Pragmatic equivalence, which deals with implied meaning and speech acts, requires the translator to account for presuppositions, implicatures, and speech conventions.

Hatim and Mason (1997) argue for “communicative equivalence,” stressing the importance of socio-textual practices. They highlight how syntactic structures in Arabic often convey interpersonal attitudes, such as formality, humility, or reverence. These layers of meaning can be lost without syntactic adaptation. Newmark (1981), while critical of over-domestication, acknowledged that grammatical shifts are necessary for naturalness in the target language. Thus, syntactic shifts become pragmatic strategies that align the source text with the educational and grammatical norms of the target addressees.

3. Methodology:

The study here is descriptive more than analytical as it investigates in semantics and pragmatics style rather than analytical. One of the challenges translators face when translating a text containing colloquial expressions from Arabic to English or vice versa is determining which dialect to adopt in their translation, and which dialect in the target language can be considered equivalent to the one used by the author in the original text. This study aims to examine the challenges translators face when working with dialects. To address this issue in depth, a qualitative research design is used to gain a deeper understanding of the problem. Qualitative research is often characterized by the use of textual data, which can include sources such as interviews, written documents, or observational notes, as Saldanha and O'Brien (2014, 22) explain. This approach enables researchers to explore complex phenomena in detail. To achieve this goal, qualitative data is used, relying primarily on a carefully selected sample of authentic textual data rich in dialects. The data are drawn from two main genres: literature and religion. Each example is examined from a translational perspective, offering a critical discussion of how the translator deals with the dialects contained in the original text.

A descriptive qualitative method is adopted for the explicit meaning of an utterance may not reflect the intended meaning, which can lead to ambiguity in verbal communication. This study aims to illustrate how pragmatics can facilitate the understanding of verbal communication and convey the intended meaning. Furthermore, it demonstrates how the implicit meaning in many pragmatic phenomena can fundamentally influence the nature and quality of Arabic-English translation. In this regard, the study demonstrates the importance of pragmatic theories for translators' work by providing real-life examples of Arabic-English translation. It also discusses how a pragmatically oriented process can achieve balance in human communication to avoid disruption.

4. Discussion & Results:

4.1 Arabic-English Syntactic Contrast: Challenges and Strategies.

Arabic and English represent two distinct language families with substantial syntactic divergence:

- Word Order: Arabic typically employs Verb-Subject-Object (VSO) word demand, while English relies on Subject-Verb-Object (SVO).
- Pro-Drop Feature: Arabic allows subject omission due to verb inflection; English does not.
- Nominal vs. Verbal Sentences: Arabic frequently uses verb less (nominal) sentences; English requires a linking verb.
- Emphasis and Fronting: Arabic uses fronting and repetition for emphasis, particularly in classical and religious texts.
- Passive Constructions: The passive is more prominent in Arabic, often for stylistic or theological reasons, such as obscuring the agent to signify divine action or fate.

These differences compel the translator to shift syntactic forms while preserving pragmatic functions. For instance, a passive verb in Qur'anic Arabic may require an active construction in English to maintain clarity and coherence for modern readers.

4.2 Libyan Dialect and Qur'anic Arabic: Applied Examples.

4.2.1 Word Order Shift (VSO to SVO).

Libyan Arabic:

جاء علي للجامعة. (Jāʾ ʿAlī lil-jāmiʿa) — "Came Ali to the university."

Standard English: "Ali came to the university."

Commentary: This shift, while syntactic, also reflects a pragmatic shift in topic-focus alignment. The subject is moved forward in English to align with subject-prominence.

4.2.2 Subject Omission (Pro-Drop Recovery).

Libyan Arabic:

دخل للمسجد وصلى. (Dakhala lil-masjid wa ṣallā) — "Entered the mosque and prayed."

English Translation: "He entered the mosque and prayed."

Commentary: Arabic verb morphology marks person and number, allowing omission. English restores subjects for clarity. Pragmatic cohesion requires inserting what is contextually implied.

4.2.3 Qur'anic Emphasis via Fronting.

Qur'an, 1:5: إياك نعبد وإياك نستعين — "You alone we worship, and You alone we ask for help."

Literal Order: Object-Verb-Subject.

English Adaptation: "It is You we worship and You we ask for help."

Commentary: The shift to cleft structures in English helps replicate the emphatic function of fronting in Arabic. Without this, the intensity and spiritual gravity of the phrase are diminished.

4.2.4 Passive Recast to Active.

Qur'anic Arabic: خُلِقَ الإنسان من طينٍ. — "Man was created from clay."

English Recast: "God created man from clay."

Commentary: The Qur'an uses the passive to obscure agency, often a stylistic choice to reflect divine mystery. English, favoring explicit agency, may reintroduce the subject to meet pragmatic and theological clarity.

4.2.5 Dialectal Features.

Libyan Arabic: والله غير نجيك اليوم. (Wallāh ġēr najīk il-yōm) — "I swear to God, I'm definitely coming today."

Commentary: This utterance combines oath-taking (Wallāh) and pragmatic intensification (ġēr), both culturally grounded. English equivalents must simulate the performative function without literal translation: "I swear I'll come today, no matter what."

5. Implications for Translation Practice:

Pragmatic and syntactic features must be considered in tandem when translating Libyan and Qur'anic Arabic. Translators must develop sensitivity to discourse norms, speech acts, and cultural idioms, as well as mastery over syntactic restructuring.

Training programs for translators should incorporate:

• Case studies of regional dialect usage,
• Qur'anic rhetorical strategies,
• Exercises on syntactic reordering,
• Corpus analysis for recurring syntactic-pragmatic patterns.

Moreover, translator awareness of register shifts—between informal dialectal speech and the elevated tone of Qur'anic Arabic—is crucial. Each register demands different strategies of syntactic accommodation.

6. Scholarly Outlook and Future Directions:

While scholarship in Qur'anic translation is well-developed (Abdel Haleem, 2005), studies on regional varieties like Libyan Arabic remain underexplored. Emerging interest in dialect translation (Farghal & Shunnaq, 1999) points to a research gap in combining syntactic and pragmatic perspectives. Future studies should:

• Explore corpus-based syntactic analysis of dialectal texts,
• Investigate audience reception of different translation strategies,
• Map pragmatic markers unique to regional Arabic varieties,
• Examine the interface between dialectal pragmatics and classical syntax.

This literature review emphasizes the indispensable role of both syntactic shifts and pragmatic awareness in rendering culturally embedded Arabic texts into English. A holistic approach—grounded in theory and illustrated by real examples—offers translators both the tools and the insight to navigate this intricate linguistic landscape.

7. Basic Syntactic Contrasts Between Arabic And English:

Feature	Arabic	English
Word Order	VSO (Verb-Subject-Object) common	SVO (Subject-Verb-Object) standard
Use of Pronouns	Often omitted if verb inflection suffices	Required for clarity
Passive Structures	Frequently used with flexibility	Less common; active voice preferred
Relative Clauses	Post-nominal, often presumptive	Restrictive and non-restrictive forms
Connectors & Cohesion	Coordinating more frequent	Subordination and punctuation preferred
Emphasis Techniques	Fronting, particles, repetition	Stress, cleft sentences, intonation

7.1 Real-World Examples and Analysis.

7.2 Word Order Shift: VSO to SVO.

Arabic:

ذهب محمد إلى السوق. (dhahaba Muḥammad ilā as-sūq) Literally: "Went Muhammad to the market."

English Translation:

“Muhammad went to the market.”

Analysis: In Arabic, the verb often precedes the subject. To preserve English naturalness, the order must shift to SVO.

7.3 Pronominal Drop (Pro-Drop) and Explicitness.

Libyan Arabic:

مشى للسوق وشرى الخبز. (mšā l-sūq u šrā l-khubz) Literally: "Went to market and bought bread."

English Translation:

“He went to the market and bought bread.”

Analysis: Arabic allows omission of the subject pronoun due to verb morphology. English requires explicit subject pronouns for clarity.

7.4 Passive vs Active Shift.

Qur’anic Arabic:

خُلِقَ الإنسانُ من طينٍ. (Khuliqa al-insān min ṭīn) Literally: "Was created man from clay."

English Translation:

“Man was created from clay.”

Alternative in English Style:

“God created man from clay

Analysis: Arabic often uses the passive for divine actions to imply reverence. English may prefer active voice to avoid ambiguity, though the passive may be kept for theological fidelity.

7.5 Emphasis and Fronting.

Arabic:

إياك نعبد وإياك نستعين (Surah Al-Fatiha) Literal order: “You alone we worship, and You alone we ask for help.”

English Translation:

“We worship You alone and seek Your help alone.”

Analysis: Arabic uses fronting for emphasis. English may maintain the emphasis with reordering or through cleft structures:

“It is You whom we worship, and You whom we ask for help.”

7.6 Relative Clause Differences.

Arabic:

الرجل الذي رأيته أمس جاء اليوم. "The man who I saw yesterday came today."

Libyan Variant:

الراجل اللي شفته البارح جا اليوم.

English Equivalent:

“The man whom I saw yesterday came today.”

Analysis: Arabic allows for presumptive pronouns and flexibility. English avoids presumptive and favors tight clause integration.

8. Strategies for Translators:

1. Anticipate Syntactic Shifts: Identify where Arabic structure differs from English (e.g., fronting, omission, passive use).
2. Prioritize Naturalness: Adjust structures to fit English idiom while preserving meaning and tone.
3. Use Cleft Sentences and Emphasis Devices: Especially when Arabic uses emphatic structures.
4. Clarify Implicit Subjects: Add pronouns or restructure when translating pro-drop Arabic sentences.
5. Avoid Over-Literalness: Prioritize communicative clarity over word-for-word translation.

9. Conclusion:

Syntactic shifts are a key component in producing high-quality Arabic-English translations. Understanding how to move between different grammatical systems, while maintaining the original meaning, emphasis, and nuance, is essential. Whether translating Libyan dialects or classical Qur’anic

Arabic, sensitivity to syntax and context ensures accurate and culturally appropriate translations. Almost every translation or interpretation includes a pragmatic aspect. The study and practice of translation can be improved by a solid understanding of pragmatics. By understanding pragmatics, the translator can accurately interpret the non-linguistic aspects of verbal communication in specific contexts. The main objectives of this study were two hypotheses: (1) the importance of pragmatics in English-to-Arabic translation, and (2) translators face difficulties in expressing this pragmatics. Therefore, it can be argued that pragmatics helps translators achieve an effect or reaction similar to that of the source language, by enabling them to penetrate the minds of the target readers and influence them in a similar way. In other words, learning pragmatics improves, clarifies, and simplifies the translation process.

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