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TRANSLATION OF STRATEGIC AMBIGUITY: A RELEVANCE-THEORETIC ANALYSIS

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of our current research is to see how Relevance Theory can handle one specific translation problem, namely strategic ambiguous structures. Concisely, we aim to provide a conceptual framework as to how the translator should cope with a pervasive ambiguity problem at the discoursal level. The point of departure from probably all previous models of analysis is that a relevance-theoretic analysis would, we believe, require that a "good" translation be *not* the one that represents *an interpretation* of the text, but the one which leaves the door open for all interpretations which the original text provides evidence for. Hence, *the role of translator is not to 'interpret' but to 'translate'*. If this is true, ambiguity resolution should not be a viable alternative. In other words, what the translator should do is empower the audience with all it takes to let them work out all the explicatures (linguistically inferred meanings) and entertain themselves with the implicatures (contextually inferred meanings) of the original. Direct Translation, along the lines laid down by Gutt (1991/2000), is the method of translation which can, we believe, bring about the desired results because "it tries to provide readers with contextual information that enables them to draw their own inferences" (Smith 2000: 92).

KEYWORDS: Relevance theory; translation; strategic ambiguity; ambiguity structures; Arabic; religious terms.

1. Introduction

Sperber and Wilson (1986 [1995]), Levinson (1990), Scollon and Scollon (1995), Walton (1996), Leitch and Davenport (2002), Harvey (2002), just to mention but a few, argue that language is genuinely ambiguous. According to Levinson (1990), "ambiguity is inherent in all language use". The mount of ambiguity is measured by the level of correspondence (or lack thereof) between the

speaker's intent and the receptor's interpretation. However, in some instances, ambiguity is used strategically. This intentional use of ambiguity is sometimes referred to as *strategic ambiguity* (see Eisenberg 1984), or *deliberate* or *purposive ambiguity* (see Kittay 1987).

Relevance theory has been advocated as a framework that offers a unified account to explain seemingly independent processes. Wilson and Carston (2007) have proposed a unified account for broadening, narrowing and metaphorical extensions, and have forcefully argued that "metaphor, hyperbole, approximation and category extension are all varieties of broadening". Although they were less confident that the same approach can be used to handle other lexical-pragmatic processes such as "metonymy, synecdoche, neologisms, blends, puns, 'transfers of meaning', and so", they were hopeful that future work would support their envisioned unifying account. Sloska (2012), Yus (2012), Díaz-Pérez (2014; 2015), among others, have shown that the same approach can be used for pun translation. The argument hinges basically on the assumption that "[l]exical comprehension involves a process of ad hoc concept construction" (Wilson and Carston 2007: 16). The main purpose of the study reported below is to analyze the translation of *strategic ambiguity, as* a lexical-pragmatic process, from a relevance-theory perspective along the lines proposed by Wilson and Carston (2007). Concisely, we would like to show that "it is the pragmatically adjusted meaning of a word or phrase, rather than the linguistically encoded meaning, that falls within the scope of sentence operators" (Wilson and Carston 2007: 17–18).

However, before trying to work this out, we try in the literature review section below to pull together technical notions from three areas of research, namely relevance theory, strategic ambiguity, and translation. Therefore, we try in Section 2.1 to lay down some of the basic premises of Relevance Theory. In Section 2.2, we introduce the notion of strategic ambiguity at the discourse level. Then we try in Section 2.3 to show how competing theories of translation deal with the notion of strategic ambiguity. In Section 2.4, we try to show how Relevance Theory, in particular, can as a theoretical framework of analysis handle this specific translation problem. In the main body of this research paper in Section 3, we try to compute all the possible competitive translation scenarios for some Arabic strategic ambiguous utterances. In the discussion Section 4, we try to weigh the competing actual translation practices for each sentence example on the premises of the theoretical framework of Relevance Theory (Henceforth RT). Finally, some closing remarks are highlighted in the conclusion in Section 5.

2. Literature review

Translation has often been viewed as an interpretive process in which the translator undertakes the task of creating a text that is equivalent to the original one. According to Nida and Taber (1969: 12), translation is "the reproduction in a receptor language of the closest natural equivalent of the source language message". Venuti (1995: 8) contends, "British and American law defines translation as an "adaptation" or "derivative work" based on an "original work of authorship". Refusing to judge any translation on one-to-one correspondence, he defines it along the following lines:

> Translation is a process by which the chain of signifiers that constitutes the source-language text is replaced by a chain of signifiers in the target language which the translator provides on the strength of an interpretation.
>
> (Venuti 1995: 17)

Gutt (2000: 105) defines translation as "a receptor language text that interpretively resembled the original." Hatim and Mason (1997) believe that translation is "*as an act of communication which attempts to relay, across cultural and linguistic boundaries, another act of communication*" (Hatim and Mason 1997: 1; emphasis in original).

However, although on a theoretical (or even idealized) level the goal should always be complete interpretive resemblance, to use relevance-theoretic terms, almost all leading scholars (even the most optimistic) would agree that this is far-reaching. For, it is impossible to produce a text that interpretively resembles the original completely.[1] At some point, the translator has to make a translation decision "about what properties of the source text (ST) to preserve" (Díaz-Pérez 2016: 238). Adopting a relevance theoretic account, Yus (2012: 125–126) believes that translation is ''an inferential gap-filling activity''. Therefore, functional equivalence (in the sense of interpretive resemblance in relevant respects) has been an optimal choice for decades (De Waard and Nida 1986; Smith 2000). This is probably why the inferential component of the role of the translator is always stressed. She has to infer, given enough communicative clues, the interpretation which the speaker is attempting to convey to her/his audience. In Wilson and Sperber's (2012: 1) terms, the translator should look for the "fuzzier

[1] Interpretive resemblance is measured by the amount of explicatures and implicatures shared between the original text and its translation.

speaker's meanings, consisting not only of what was said, but also of what was implicated".

Optimal resemblance (Gutt 2000) is challenged by at least two kinds of asymmetry. On the one hand, there is unconformity due to the limited resources each language makes available to its users. According to Smith (2008), no two languages share their intrinsic properties so closely as to permit a direct translation of forms and structures. For example, Arabic has two words for the English word 'year', namely *sanah* and *ᶜām* which both translate as *year* in English. Sanderson (2009: 125) calls this interlingual asymmetry. On the other hand, there is unconformity due to the interaction between different minds influenced by independent variables including, but not limited to, class, gender, age, ethnic identity, educational background, occupation and religious belief (for details see Lakoff 1991; Tannen 1990). The classical Arabic word *sayyarah* 'car', for instance, is never identical to a 20th century motor vehicle, which is also *sayyarah* in Arabic. By analogy, the western house is different from the Arab house in terms of its interior/exterior design. We prefer to call this interactive asymmetry. Chafe (2005: 678) refers to these two problems as the "verbalization" and the "interaction" problems, respectively. What this means is that the translator is not only compelled to thoroughly understand the original text (for details see Gutt 1991: 164; 2005), but should also be theoretically informed on the best possible method that allows her to communicate the speaker's intention to the receptor language audience (see Malmkjær 1992). RT could, we believe, be the theoretical platform.

2.1. Some basics of relevance theory

According to Wilson and Sperber (2004: 607), RT "may be seen as an attempt to work out in detail one of Grice's central claims: that an essential feature of most human communication is the expression and recognition of intentions". It capitalizes on the claim that human cognition, and ultimately human communication, is "relevance-oriented", i.e. picking out assumptions that are relevant and processing them productively (Sperber and Wilson 1986a; 1986b; 2002; Wilson and Wharton 2006). What this means is that people pay the utmost of their attention to that which seems most relevant to them, the piece(s) of information that would create a change in their mind due to the interaction between the world of the text and the audience's world. Accordingly, Sperber and Wilson (1986a [1995]: 122) provide the following definition, where relevance is viewed as a "relation between an assumption and a context":

> *An assumption is relevant in a context if and only if it has some contextual effect in the context.*

However, Sperber and Wilson (1986a [1995]) put forward another condition for the maximization of relevance, namely *effort*. By adopting an "extent-conditions format", Sperber and Wilson (1986a [1995]: 125) redefine relevance along the following lines:

Extent condition 1: an assumption is relevant in a context to the extent that its contextual effects in this context are large.

Extent condition 2: an assumption is relevant in a context to the extent that the effort required to process it in this context is small.

Accordingly, the 'interplay between effect and effort is what determines the relative relevance of an assumption. In gross terms, when processed in context, an utterance provides some "analytic implications", which, no doubt, are not processed all at once; for people cannot attend to the whole text at a time. The overall relevance of the utterance increases by the implication that reduces the cognitive effort needed to process it, and by that which increases its contextual effects. This evokes in the mind that the notion of relevance, though relative, is a matter of the number of gains divided by the effort invested to generate them. In Sperber and Wilson's (1986a [1995]: 152) terms, "it is the phenomena which are least likely to be relevant which get filtered out, and those most likely to be relevant which pre-empt attention". The task is then to single out the assumption(s) which will have greater contextual effects and, in the meantime, require less processing cognitive effort (Wilson and Sperber 1981, 1986; Wilson 2000; Sperber and Wilson 1986a[1995], 1990a). At the level of detail we are considering here, this requires exploring "the linkage between linguistic structure and pragmatic interpretation" (Sperber and Wilson 1986a [1995]: 217). Accordingly, a verbal message embodies at least two layers of information:

(a) The informative intention which basically means "to make manifest or more manifest to the audience a set of assumptions" (Sperber and Wilson 1986 [1995]: 58). This encompasses all potential interpretations which can be contextually justifiable.

(b) The communicative intention which basically means "to make it mutually manifest to audience and communicator that the communicator has this in-

formative intention" (Sperber and Wilson 1986 [1995]: 61). This includes the conveyance of the intended meaning that the source language producer really intends to express.

Therefore, it is not just the informative function of communication (i.e. the linguistic meaning) that matters, but the communicative function (speaker's meaning) is ultimately crucial to turn the attention of the interactants to what seems most relevant to them. A major departure that this current approach makes from the traditional Griceian framework is that the explicit and implicit sides of communication are both inferential and worthy of the interlocutors' attention, (for details see Wilson and Sperber 1981, 2012; for a counter argument see Belleri 2013). Despite this, the 'communicative intent' of the speaker is, according to this RT framework, not always equally manifest to all interactants who, ideally, need to compute all possible interpretations that could be combinations of explicit content, context and implied meaning. To figure out which meaning is really intended, is justifiable, and/or makes the most sense, the sole task of the interactants in an exchange is to fill in for what is left unsaid/unstated based on evidence provided for this purpose – a task that requires going beyond surface meanings. According to Smith (2008), there is a gap between the words people speak/write and the message they put across the table. The shared context between the speaker and audience fills the gap, and, by doing so, the message becomes complete and clear. This is an echo to the Reader-Response Theory expounded by Iser (1980) who argues that "as the reader reads, s/he makes his own decision as to how the gap is to be filled". Filling the gaps implies that the world of the reader and the world of the text interact to produce a complete scenario. This is probably so because, according to Grice (see Grice 1957, 1968), communication is an intentional process. In Sperber and Wilson's (1995: 49) terms, communication is an "ostensive" behaviour – "behaviour which makes manifest an intention to make something manifest".

As a major driving force in verbal encounters, intentionality, the predecessor of ostension, sorts itself out from the relationship between the text and its producer. Neubert and Shreve (1992: 72), for example, argue that "intentionality" encompasses (1) "effects of an author's or translator's decisions on the text" and (2) "their subsequent impact on the receptive intentions of the readers". With the advent of RT, the term ostension has been used to refer to what text producers intend to "make manifest or more manifest to their audience" (Sperber and Wilson 1986a: 63). To the advocates of this line of reasoning, ostension plays a key role in communication because the text producer's main goal is to "affect the audience's thoughts by exploiting their natural cognitive tendency to

maximize relevance" (Mackenzie 2002: 20–21). This is often referred to as the *ostensive-inferential communication*, defined by Sperber and Wilson (1986 [1995]: 63) as:

> The communicator produces a stimulus which makes it mutually manifest to communicator and audience that the communicator intends, by means of this stimulus, to make manifest or more manifest to the audience a set of assumptions.

As for the mechanism, *ostension* involves the use of an ostensive stimulus, designed to attract an audience's attention and focus it on the communicator's meaning (see Horn 2004). Contexts of crisis, we argue, are created in secondary communication situations (Gutt 2000), that is, when the interactants do not share the same mutual cognitive environment, defined by Sperber and Wilson (1986 [1995]: 39) along the following lines:

> An individual's total cognitive environment is a function of his physical environment and his cognitive abilities. It consists of not only all the facts that he is aware of, but also, all the facts that he is capable of becoming aware of, in his physical environment

According to Sperber and Wilson (1986 [1995]: 15–16), this includes "expectation about the future, scientific hypotheses or religious beliefs, anecdotal memories, general cultural assumptions, beliefs about the mental state of the speaker". What is of utmost concern to Kolaiti (2008: 346) is "how receivers move from an area X of their cognitive environment … to some other area Y of their cognitive environment in search of the presupposed conceptual information." According to Sperber and Wilson (1986 [1995]: 39), it is the following of a path of least effort until an interpretation which satisfies the expectation of relevance is found. An interpretation is possible only if the mutual cognitive environment of the interlocutors has provided "sufficient evidence for its adoption".[2]

As a remedy strategy, when communicator and audience do not share a mutual cognitive environment, they have to be able to meta-represent, i.e., to think "how other people represent those states of affairs in their minds – even if their own thoughts are different" (Gutt 2004b: 4). Metarepresentation is defined in relevance theory as follows:

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[2] For an alternative approach, Hintzman (1986) suggests the multiple-trace memory model. For an illuminating discussion, see Recanati (1998) refers to work by Hintzman (1986).

> A metarepresentation is a representation of a representation: a higher order representation with a lower-order representation embedded within it.
>
> (Wilson 2000: 411)

When tied to a particular context, the speaker's knowledge and the hearer's knowledge may not match one-to-one. For Cartson (2002: 96) "the relation between the concept constructed by the hearer and that in the speaker's own thought is one of sufficiently close resemblance rather than identity", a good reason that made Wilson and Carston (2007: 16) refute "the idea that only encoded concepts can contribute to the truth-conditional content of utterances". To them, "it is the pragmatically adjusted meaning of a word or phrase, rather than the linguistically encoded meaning, that falls within the scope of sentence operators" (Carston 2007: 17–18). When interpretating the text to make a complete explicature, "the hearer accesses a variety of particular assumptions from the, possibly vast, range activated by the utterance and treats them as potential implicatures of the utterance" (Cartson 2002: 96). Gutt (2004) therefore distinguishes between two modes of communication: the interpretation-oriented mode (i-mode) and the stimulus-oriented mode (s-mode), where the i-mode (or intended meaning) is computed on the basis of the s-mode (stimulus meaning/s).

The processes of meaning construction are, the argument goes, constrained by three parameters that work in tandem. These are encoded concepts, contextual information and pragmatic expectations. In order to get the contextual implications relevant to them, hearers try to make use of all these pieces of information by making some lexical adjustment, and thus creating an ad hoc concept (i.e. occasion-specific sense) from an encoded concept (for details, see Cartson 2002; and Wilson and Cartson 2007). To use some technical notations, WATER, the encoded concept, becomes WATER*, an ad hoc concept (see Cartson 2002). In the main body of the paper below, we will try to show how the construction of an ad hoc concept by the original audience (who do not share the same cognitive environment with the speaker) may not be identical with the ad hoc concept constructed by the translator (who is well-informed about the cognitive environment of the interlocutors) for the same encoded concept.

2.2. Ambiguity at the discourse level

Scollon and Scollon (1995: 50–52) address the notion of ambiguity as a fundamental dimension of everyday discourse, and view it in terms of "external am-

biguity" and "internal ambiguity". External ambiguity requires the audience to construct a context to generate effective and fixed inferences. Internal ambiguity, on the other hand, is concerned with knowing which pieces go together to form a coherent text. It is substantially assumed that external ambiguity poses a challenge to the audience in that it demands knowledge of the world to compute the dimensions of the ambiguity. The challenge presumably lies in the observation that each utterance is not only a property of a language community (i.e. the social facet), but it is also part of the speaker's thinking process (i.e. the psychological aspect). Research has shown that human cognitive activities cannot be devoid of the social context where they take place. To the sociocultural theorists (Vygotsky 1978, 1986), the social context in which cognitive activity takes place is an integral part of that activity, not just the surrounding context for it.

Although it is often believed that clarity is a dominant feature in day to day communication, bringing to the fore transparency as a strategy that yields and enhances a positive and desirable effect(s), transparency, a fallacy in everyday life, may however create confusion and negative behavior, in particular, in contexts of crisis (see Pfeffer 1981). It may cost the speaker, the policy maker, a serious damage to the strategic policy designed and adopted by the sociopolitical and economic institution. Contrary to this, ambiguity is an appropriate avenue/act of communication in both written and verbal dialogue; for, first, it gives the speaker a room to maneuver in critical situations; second, it allows the audience to construct multiple interpretations, with one interpretation being more specific and the other(s) perhaps more general (see Kempson 1988).[3] Infinite interpretations, it is argued, create a state of uncertainty, or a compromise or a diplomatic tactic (Ge'mar, quoted in Harvey 2002: 181). It simply evokes in the mind Wittgenstein's famous term "duck-rabbit effect" whereby the reader may gain one reading or the other, but she/he cannot maintain a hybrid of both (Kardaleska and Tasevska 2011).

In addition to multiple interpretations, strategic ambiguity enjoys greater tendency to expound cultural differences within the same geographical boundaries and across the geo-political borders. An intercultural act of communication in this context poses a challenge to translation as an act of communication between different languages and cultures. In this vein, Pascale and Athos (1981:

[3] Thanks to the anonymous reviewer who suggested that "the difference between Continuous and Simple Tense in the English translations of the source text is rather crucial for retaining or removing ambiguity". However, the original text is communicated in a structural form that encodes both the permanent and the temporary senses. What this means is that whereas English distinguishes between a "Present Simple" tense form and a "Continuous" form, Arabic does not. Only context can help limit the choice.

102) illustrate, "explicit communication is a cultural assumption; it is not a linguistic imperative. Skilled executives develop ability to vary their language along the spectrum from explicitness to implicitness depending upon their reading of the other person and the situation".

However, overemphasis on clarity and openness is not always the optimal choice "to gauge communicative competence or effectiveness" (Eisenberg 1984: 5). Based on her/his judgment, the speaker therefore weighs the scenario and then determines which communication strategy to be persuasively invested in a particular situation to serve the interest of the socio-political institution. Being an act of choice, ambiguity as a strategy helps the policy maker maintain and secure a margin to maneuver and to act tactfully to manipulate the undesirable state of tension. As put by Eisenberg (1984: 230), strategic ambiguity is used in situations where the speaker uses ambiguity to purposefully accomplish her/his goals. It is designed to further individual and organization goals, for transparency, if used in a context of a crisis, may generate a negative response, posing a threat to the sociopolitical and economic institutions. Diplomatically speaking, the speaker orchestrates the situation to persuade her/his audience via wording that combines precision with ambiguity (Bernstein 1976).

To accomplish the utmost desirable goals in any act of communication, transparency may, in critical situations, posit tension and negative repercussion. Put simply, speakers cover up their language with ambiguity in response to an inquiry that may generate negative repercussions if answered with clear and direct communication. Strategic use of symbols, or what Kline et al. (2009: 40) call "strategic language", is then designed to accomplish goals that do in fact serve contingent and strategic orientation. In this sense, Eisenberg (1984) demonstrates that ambiguous acts of communication do, by the same token, yield positive responses in cases of crisis. This implicates that open communication, in one way or another, is not the appropriate behavior to proceed once a crisis appears on the horizon. That is to say, "pragmatic ambiguity" or "open ambiguity" to use Cruse's (2011) term, is a plausible strategic strategy to achieve the desirable goal(s). It permits the speaker to highlight certain dimensions and suppress other dimensions of the scenario.[4]

[4] It is worth noting here that for a number of reasons, we have chosen to keep a line of demarcation between strategic ambiguity on the one hand, and other lexical-pragmatic processes, specifically punning, on the other. First, unlike that of strategic ambiguity, much of the relevance of puns (and/or wordplay) lies in humour and wit (Kosińska 2005: 77; Dynel 2010: 106; Solska 2012a: 389; Díaz-Pérez 2013: 286). Despite the duality of meaning inherent in puns, the humorous sense always prevails. Therefore, the addressee is not expected to stop the research of optimal relevance (and therefore his expectations of relevance are not satisfied) until this humorous sense of the pun

2.3. Translating strategic ambiguity

Due to the intricate interplay between the cognitive and the social (Van Dijk 1995, 1997a, 1997b), research has not yet established one-to-one causal relationships between translation and the various contextual factors affecting it in different contexts. Indeed, this varies from speaker to speaker and reader to reader with reference to age, education, gender, ethnicity, culture and ideology. However, translating a text out of its context means making it say what you want it to say.

At the discoursal level, strategic ambiguity arises in at least two ways. At one end of the scale, some information may be left unsaid/unstated. At the other end, extra information (lexical or prosodic) is voluntarily provided so that more than one positive meaning can be created. In all cases, ambiguity is very likely

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is reached. This is evident when "a literal translation from the source language into the target language fails to reproduce a pun". Díaz-Pérez (2013) lists a number of strategies that the translator can resort to, not excluding of course what he calls editorial means such as footnotes, endnotes, explanations in parenthesis, or commentaries, etc. explain the punning effects which the original text communicates. Because humour and wit are integral to the relevance of puns, the hearer is then encouraged to follow the choice of the speaker. For example, Díaz-Pérez (2014) shows how the use of wordplay in film titles serves, despite the duality of meaning it encompasses, as an attention-getting device. What this means is that the speaker singles out and endorses some particular assumption from the range of all activated assumptions.

When there is a lack of conformity between the source language and the target language, the translator has to make a decision whether to be faithful to content or to the effect produced by wordplay. Research (e.g. Asimakoulas 2004; Díaz-Pérez 2013, 2015; Yus 2012) has shown that translators often choose to create a new pun – a skill that, according to Marco (2010: 280), requires a high degree of creativity – even if (part of) the content had to be sacrificed recreate the cognitive inasmuch the effects of processing of wordplay are produced. For, the cognitive effects here are not only derived from duality of meaning, but also from the processing of the text itself as a pun that is intended to bring about some humorous effects. According to Díaz-Pérez (2014: 110), "The additional cognitive effects are not only derived from the existence of at least two meanings, but also from the presence of a pun and from its processing". Solska (2012b: 180) puts it like this: "cognitive effects are not limited to the additional propositional content, but include such benefits as the appreciation of wittiness or the enjoyment of humour".

Strategic ambiguity, on the other hand, dictates that both meanings are equally competitive because each can be relevant in some context. What this means is that, unlike punning, the speaker encourages the hearer to explore within the range of all activated assumptions without endorsing some particular assumption. What this means is that the implicature that the hearer arrives at is definitely his own choice, and therefore bears total responsibility for it.

All in all, strategic ambiguity poses translation problems that probably need different translation techniques in terms of comprehension and reformulation. For the translation of puns, Díaz-Pérez (2015: 169) lists ten different techniques, which cannot be applied grossly in cases of strategic ambiguity. Following Sanderson (2009: 125), we believe that, due to interlingual asymmetry, pun translation is more demanding than many other translation problems (e.g. strategic ambiguity).

to arise, and is measured, we believe, by the level of correspondence between the speaker's intent and the receptor's interpretation. At the level of detail we are considering here, we distinguish between at least two broad categories of ambiguity, each of which requires a different translation tactic:

(1) *Unintended ambiguity*: ambiguous structures that result from the coding of the message, *but the author does not want them to be so*. In daily encounters, this is always fixed with apologetic expressions (such as *I didn't mean that*, *sorry that you got me wrong*, etc.) from the interactants. In such cases, we find no harm that the translator chooses one interpretation over another, based on enough evidence (salient or inferable) available in the larger context that helps unravel the real communicative intent of the addressor. In such cases, Indirect Translation (henceforth IT) could be favored as a strategy to cope up with the scenario, for there would be no problem if the translator, the decision maker, manipulates the scenario by selecting partial translation, leaving instant impact on the audience.

(2) *Intended ambiguity*: ambiguous structures that result from the coding of the message, *and the author wants them to be so*. Here, the translator should be wary enough not to let herself in for one interpretation over the other. Otherwise, she exposes the manipulation of ambiguity to unwanted scenario, namely, she inflicts upon the source text serious injury, letting the door wide open for the strategic intention to be figured out differently and inviting the interactants to compute different scenarios. Hence, ambiguity is part of the intentions of the addressor as a policy maker. In such a context of ambiguity, the translator strives towards reinstating on complete surface resemblance of the original text. In such cases, Direct Translation (henceforth DT) should, the argument goes, be favored as a strategy to cope up with the scenario, for there would be a serious problem if the translator, the decision maker, manipulates the scenario by selecting partial translation, leaving only instant impact on the audience.

Our current research limits itself down to actual translation practices of the second category of strategic ambiguous structures, thus limiting the discussion to verbal encounters where translators need to cope with those instances that do not promote one-to-one correspondence between the speaker's intent and the receptor's interpretation. It promotes scenarios of more than one persuasive and precise probability.

Based on the major tenets of the pioneering work of Gutt (2000/1991), Smith (2008) postulates a promising mechanism as to how the strategy DT is operating. First, Smith assumes that the translation should enjoy a balance between literalness and naturalness.[5] Stylistically, the translation should sound natural in the target language as the original in the source language. The continuum, in other words, invites the translator to translate literally to the extent it is clear/reader-friendly in the receptor idiom. By literal, what is meant is a question of translating what is "meant" rather than what is "said", a major departure from probably all previous translation frameworks. This means the translator has to be always cautious of adaptation which could be misleading in the sense that it may construct on the surface a negative/alien scenario. Second, to create an effective translation, the translator is required to generate a correct interpretation, an interpretation that, as is put by Winckler and Merwe (1993: 54–55), "goes beyond the lexical choices and grammatical level". This means any act of interpreting the text should flesh out its discoursal features, rhetorical devices and the social conventions. Correctly interpreting the text, the translator will ensure the construction in the TL a "positive communicative act". It is therefore the translator's responsibility to adequately figure the dimensions of the contextual knowledge. Compounded together, these parameters are crucial for the construction of a message, ensuring adequate explicature/implicature information that permits the audience to draw complete and appropriate assumptions on their own.

2.4. Translating strategic ambiguity: A relevance-theoretic framework

Although RT is not originally advanced to be a theoretical and research platform for translation,[6] we hope to show that its application may bring about new insights into hotly debated translation challenges such as the one we are undertaking in this research endeavor, namely the translatability of purposefully-made ambiguous structures (*strategic ambiguity* – to use Eisenberg's 1984 words, or *deliberate* or *purposive ambiguity* in Kittay's 1987 terms). Given Wilson and Sperber's (1987: 14) claim that "every utterance has at most one interpretation which is consistent with the principle of relevance", the research inquiry about strategic ambiguous structures is then like this: *Should translation retain or re-*

[5] Nida (1964: 159) called it "naturalness of expression".

[6] The first serious attempt to advance RT as viable theoretical and research platform to translation was Gutt's (2000), which was based on his PhD dissertation in 1991.

move ambiguity that is eventually designed to achieve and sustain the speaker's ideological goal(s)?

Couched within a psycholinguistic model of analysis such as *RT* as explicated by Sperber and Wilson (1986a [1995], 2012), our current claim is like this: *the translator should not try to explicate the implicatures of the original text, in particular, if the scenario deploys strategic ambiguity*. Instead, she should be able to provide the receptors with all communicative clues which empower them to make their own inferences (see Smith 2000: 92). The translator leaves the contextual clues implicit to permit the audience retrieve the relevant implicatures that are already envisaged by the original audience. Nevertheless, the translator, an interpreter of the original, is responsible for figuring out the dimensions of the linguistically implicit information. This is probably needed because spelling out the relevant linguistic clues helps the audience retrieve the implicit implicatures which the source text (henceforth ST) provides evidence for (see Smith 2008). Accordingly, the translator, as a communicator, must ensure more or less the construction of what is termed by Gutt (1998) "positive communicative effects" across the geographical boundaries, ensuring that any act of adaptation may lead to creating a negative response in the mind of the target text (henceforth TT) audience.

We therefore make the claim that translation, as an act of communication, is optimally successful when the translator provides enough stimuli (verbal and nonverbal) of the source language speaker's informative intention. This can be made possible by providing the stimuli which communicate enough clues that would enable the audience to infer the source language speaker's informative intention on their own. Being advocates of DT as the most viable alternative possibly available to date, we refute altogether the common practice where the translator chooses to disambiguate the message for no reason(s) other than enhancing clarity and mutual intelligibility.[7] From a diplomatic point of view, to disambiguate implies that the translator devalues the strategic objective that is purposefully and ideologically designed to accomplish the text producer's goal, and thus paves the way to a state of tension and confrontation. It levels the multiple interpretations to the zero, denying the reader access to appreciate the aesthetic dimension of the text, let alone the information embedded in it.

[7] Yet, in certain contexts, the translator could be constrained by the structure and the culture of the receptor audience and may fail to give a representation of the semantic components of the ST. For example, gender, with the notion of feminism stretches over a wide spectrum ranging from socialist feminism to new-liberal feminism (Tannen 1990), may act as another constraint, imposing itself a genuine challenge to the translator. Indeed, this is in genuine a thorny issue that may distort this text if the translator modifies it to fit into the discourse of feminism.

All in all, when some utterance is strategically made ambiguous, at least two interpretations are possible (call them interpretations A and B); one is specific, and the other(s) is(are) generic. When translated, four scenarios are possible renderings of the source text. These are:

(1) Remove ambiguity by providing interpretation A.
(2) Remove ambiguity by providing interpretation B.
(3) Remove ambiguity by providing both interpretations A and B.
(4) Retain ambiguity by providing a translation that would allow for both interpretations in the receptor language.

The research inquiry arises as to whether the translator needs to remove or retain ambiguity. It is the translator's responsibility to deploy across the border either a partial resemblance or complete resemblance. The central claim we put forward here is that 1, 2 and 3, which are obtained via indirect translation, deny the reader access to the contextual effects displayed on the surface by the source text. Following Wilson (2000: 411), we believe that these three alternatives are meta-representations (a representation of a representation) of the source text. They fail to retain the utterance semantic representation (explicature) and its pragmatic ambiguity (implicatures), thus denying the audience access to draw the plausible inferences for themselves. Alternatively, we would argue that the last alternative (the one that still leaves room for both interpretations) is the only option that underlies the real communicative intention(s) of the original speaker; hence the original linguistic encoding is purposefully made ambiguous. It is the only rendering that is consistent with the principle of relevance as it provides "the optimal ratio of contextual effect and processing effort" – to use Dor's (2003: 704) words. Therefore, direct translation, along the lines laid by Gutt (1991, 2000), is, we believe, the only theoretical construct that would enable the translator to bring "the translation" of a strategically ambiguous text to its maximum effectiveness.

3. Analysis

3.1. Translation of intended ambiguity: Exemplification

In order to verify the soundness of our claim, two strategically ambiguous texts comprised the data of this study. The two texts were religiously-oriented as they were taken from the story of Muhammad, the prophet of Islam. The first text

was reported when Muhammad's enemies were preparing to wage a war against him. The social context of the story was something like this: the prophet and one of his companions (called Abu-Bakr) were asked by the chief of a tribe (usually called sheikh) about their origin. In order to conceal their identity, the prophet himself replied like this: *We are from* Maa'. Knowing that there is a tribe called *Maa'*, the tribesman thought that his addressee was referring to it as their origin, when the prophet was, in fact, referring to the Qur'anic verse which states that human beings creation was started from *Maa'* (literally *water*):

فَلْيَنظُرِ الْإِنسَانُ مِمَّ خُلِقَ (5) خُلِقَ مِن مَّاء دَافِقٍ (6)

Literal: 'Now let man but think from what he is created! He is created from a drop of water (Maa')'.

The social context of the second text was something like this: Muhammad secretly slipped out of Mecca with his companion Abu-Bakr on what has become known as *'al-hijrah*, or *Migration*. The utmost concern of both the prophet and his companion was again to conceal their identity from the people who met them on their way from Mecca to Medina, so that they did not cause trouble to themselves, as the people of Mecca had launched a manhunt for them. The prophet's companion Abu-Bakr was stopped by someone who knew him. This man inquired from Abu-Bakr about the person who was riding ahead of him (Muhammad). Abu-Bakr replied like this:

هو رجل يهديني السبيل

Literal: 'He is the one who shows me the way'.

The strategic ambiguity loaded into the text is something like this: Whereas Abu-Bakr meant that he (his companion who the inquirer is asking about) was his spiritual preceptor, the inquirer understood that he was some person whom Abu-Bakr had taken with him as his road guide).[8]

In the discussion below, we will try to show that the encoded concepts MAA' and SABEEL, each of which communicates two independent meanings, do not correspond one-to-one in the minds of the interlocutors as ad hoc concepts SABEEL* and MAA'*. However, for the translator, who is able to metarepresent, there is no such lack of correspondence. The well-informed transla-

[8] Available as of 4 Aug 2012 at:
http://www.alislam.org/library/books/muhammad_seal_of_the_prophets/chapter_05.html.

tor knows the eloquence and wit embedded in the two texts as well as the speakers' real purposes in communicating their intensions in this way.

In order to make the discussion more sustained and in order to make the task of the readers who are not familiar with Arabic a bit easier, we tried to make the discussion more focused on just one text. The other text is only used for verification purposes in the discussion section when needed.

For this, ten translators, who understand the linguistic coding of the message and who know the events and the larger situational context of the story (the cognitive environment of the interlocutors), were cordially asked to translate the following Arabic text into English.

Asked to pay special attention to the underlined statement, which is purposefully made ambiguous by the speaker, our informants, came up with the renderings displayed in Table 1.

Table 1. Renderings of the Arabic text into English by 10 translators.

Arabic text:
عندما هاجر الرسول صلى الله عليه و سلم مع أبي بكر الصديق من مكة إلى المدينة, همَّ المشركون بالبحث عن رسول الله كي ينالوا منه و يقتلوه, و بينما كان الرسول و أبو بكر في الطريق لقيهم رجل. فسأل الرجل أبا بكر:من هذا؟ فقال أبو بكر: "هو رجل يهديني السبيل." (الأبشيهي 1986 باب في ذكر الفصحاء من الرجال)

Translator	English translation of the underlined utterance which is strategically ambiguous
Translator 1	*He is a man showing me the way*
Translator 2	*He is a man guiding to the right path of Islam*
Translator 3	*He is a man guiding to the right path of Islam*
Translator 4	*He is a man who guides me to the right way to Madina*
Translator 5	*He is a man guiding me to the right way (to Madina)*
Translator 6	*He is a man who shows me the way*
Translator 7	*He is a man showing me the right way to Madina*
Translator 8	*He is a man guiding to the right path of Islam*
Translator 9	*He is a man who guides me to the right way to Mecca and he guides me to the right path of Islam*
Translator 10	*He is a man guiding to the right path of Islam*

As far as the translation of the strategic ambiguity in this text is concerned, these renderings can be worked out into four possible scenarios. These are:

– *He is a man guiding me to the right way to Madina*
– *He is a man guiding to the right path of Islam*
– *He is a man guiding me to the right way to Mecca and He guides me to the right path of Islam*
– *He is a man showing me the way*

Given a text overloaded with eloquence and wit like this one, combining precision and ambiguity, the translator has to make a strategic decision as to how the underlined ambiguous statement (هو رجل يهديني السبيل) incorporated in the language of the speaker (Abu-Bakr) can be rendered into the target language. Endowing the text with such unique density requires the translator to invest more conceptual effort to process the implicit information. That is to say, the translator has to figure out and compute the speaker's intention (i-mode), which is deliberately designed in this case to construct a descent security measure to the Prophet, to indirectly communicate the speaker's fundamental objective to a new audience. The social entity 'the man the guide', sounds to be, strategically speaking, a prominent figure to the text producer, perceiving the man in terms of, 'my leader', 'my Prophet', let alone 'my companion'. To materialize the objective(s), it is understood that Abu-Bakr produced such an utterance to promote the notion of security to his companion (the prophet), the man whose tribal men have launched a manhunt for him, as someone with an ideology and divine message. What this basically means is that the migration (the encircling context) was not an act of choice for them, but one that the Prophet of Islam was forced to undertake.

Understanding the linguistic coding of the message and knowing the events and the larger situational context of the story of the Prophet and Abu-Bakr on their journey from Mecca to Medina, the translator can quite easily figure out that Abu-Baker (the companion of the Prophet) purposefully communicated the message to the inquirer in a way that misguided him (s-mode). To use more technical jargon, Abu-Bakr puposefuly wanted the i-mode and the s-mode not to be the same in the mind of the inquirer. The linguistic encoding of the message by the original speaker (Abu-Bakr) triggers in the reader's mind the JOURNEY metaphor,[9] and allows for at least two possible interpretations. At one (probably surface) level, it can be understood as if Abu-Bakr does not know the area, and

[9] This metaphor originates from Lakoff's and Johnson's (2003) LOVE IS A JOURNEY metaphor, where the move from the lexically encoded concept (e.g. SABEEL) to the ad hoc concept (e.g. SABEEL*) is effected through preexisting metaphorical schemes (for details see Carston 2002).

so refers to the man with him (the Prophet) as a travel guide (Arabic: هو رجل يهدينى السبيل). Given this, what is underlined can be translated as

He is a man guiding me to the right way (to Madina).

But at another (probably deeper) level, metaphorical one, Abu-Baker had the intention to refer to the man with him (the Prophet) as the one who guides him into the path of Islam, a spiritual guide, triggering in the reader's mind the metaphor of SPIRITUALITY IS A JOURNEY. Therefore, the following interpretation is highly competitive:

He guides me to the right path (of Islam).

When asked why Abu-Bakr chose to be purposefully ambiguous, almost all Islamic interpreters would agree that Abu-Baker did not intend to lie, yet he had had a strong motive to conceal the identity of his companion, exactly in the same way Muhammad himself did when asked about their origin on the other occasion. Put differently, Abu-Bakr used ambiguity strategically to accomplish some goals that, by all means, cannot be achieved if transparency is used. Figuring out the context, the translator, as a policy maker in cases of crisis like this, has to avoid banking on "transparency" as a strategy in rendering a text loaded with grains of ideology peppering the political discourse, simply because transparency in such a context creates a state of tension rather than a sort of peace making. What this basically means is that Abu-Bakr's original wording of the message stimulates at least two CONTEXTUAL IMPLICATIONS, i.e. interpretations "deducible from the input and the context together, but from neither input nor context alone" (Sperber and Wilson 2002: 251):

(1) *He is a man guiding me to the right way (to Mecca)*.

(2) *He guides me to the right path (of Islam)*.

Because a relevance-theoretic approach sanctions only one contextual implication (i-mode) to be consistent with the principle of relevance at a time, the research inquiry that arises here is like this: Which contextual implication should the translator attend to? Would she opt to alternative 1 or 2 but (not) a hybrid of both, for example?

The central claim we put forward here is: None. We argue that these two acts of indirect interpretation deployed in the context may fit well the so called

lazy reader, the non-expert, who enjoys as it were the pleasure of readymade scenarios. Possibly all other meaning-based theories of translation would require the translator, as an interpreter, to figure out which of these two interpretations should be rendered to the receptor language audience (i-mode). We strongly believe that attempts 1 and 2, obtained via indirect translation, partially represent the Arabic text, denying the reader access to the contextual effects displayed on the surface of the source text, and thus leaving only instant impact on the audience.

A relevance-theoretically informed translator, we argue, would choose neither the first nor the second interpretation or even a hybrid of both, a partial representation of the original, because each, in Wilson's (2000: 411) terms, is a "metarepresentation" (a representation of a representation). This probably so because both attempts will depend on the linguistically encoded meaning, not the pragmatically adjusted meaning of the text, and therefore gushing no life into the translated version of the text. Alternatively, she should go for the contextual implication (i-mode) that still underlies the real communicative intention(s) of the original speaker; the one that still leaves room for both interpretations; hence the original linguistic encoding is purposefully made ambiguous. Therefore, this alternative reading *He is the one who shows me the way* is possibly the only interpretation, we argue, that is consistent with the principle of relevance, *i.e. the one which brings about maximum effect for the lowest cost.* This is probably so because it is basically a direct translation of this strategic ambiguous utterance with the ST in mind.

Let us try to show how DT, along the lines laid by Gutt (1991, 2000), is the most viable alternative. According to Gutt (2000: 170), "for an utterance in the receptor language to qualify as a direct translation of some original utterance in the source language, it needs to share all the 'communicative clues' of that original". And that interpretation is the only 'metarepresentation' that is consistent with the principle of relevance (bring effectiveness to the maximum with the least efforts possible). However, because translation depends on what the translator believes to be the intended interpretation of the original text, we need to ponder on the translation that qualifies to share all the communicative clues, especially when the text is purposefully-made ambiguous. Gutt's (2000: 110) suggested answer is like this:

> … it is not simply the first interpretation that comes to mind that the audience is entitled to take as the intended interpretation, but rather the first interpretation that comes to mind *and* that is consistent with the principle of relevance (italics as in original).

As for the machinery, Wilson and Sperber (1995) suggested a path of practical reasoning formulated in Wilson and Carston (2006) along the following lines:

Relevance-theoretic comprehension heuristic

(a) Follow a path of least effort in constructing an interpretation of the utterance (and in particular in resolving ambiguities and referential indeterminacies, enriching or adjusting the encoded meaning, supplying contextual assumptions, deriving implicatures, etc.).
(b) Stop when your expectation of relevance is satisfied (or abandoned).

Using this machinery, let us turn now to demonstrate how effect and effort, as counter forces, interact to yield the most optimal translation (i.e. the one consistent with the principle of relevance) for the strategic ambiguous ST under scrutiny.

3.1.1. Scenario 1: Interpretation A

1. *He is a man guiding me to <u>the right way (to Madina)</u>.*

RT calls for weighing the ratio between the contextual gains and the processing effort in that any additional cognitive effort should be invested in producing additional contextual effects. Equivalence between the source-language text and the target-language text should be evaluated in light of the number of contextual clues they have in common: the more the better. Notice that the translation of Abu-Bakr's statement as in (1) above does not exhaust Abu-Bakr's communicative intentions, or more concisely, the communicative clues of the original. It is true that minimizing the amount of new information helps reduce the amount of effort the translator (and therefore the audience) needs to invest, yet this reduction will never result in maximal relevance as it causes loss of potential contextual effects. To illustrate, given a translation like this one, the audience will never be able to recover on their own the other explicature (that the man guides Abu-Bakr to the right path of Islam). A long time ago, Beekman and Callow's (1974: 20) argument regarding the most appropriate translation was like this:

> All translators are agreed that their task is to communicate the meaning of the original. There is no discussion on this point. There is discussion, however, concerning the linguistic form to be used.

However, this attempt constructs in the target language a representation that permits the reader to enjoy a transparent and fluent text style. Fluent style, as part of the responsibility of the translator, is insufficient a merit to manifest the strategic goal envisaged by the Arabic text.

Because the propositional content of the message along with the context helps us make inferences about the communicator's intent, the sum total of the explicatures and implicatures that some text would convey are context dependent. What this basically means is that one interpretation that yields a few number of contextual effects in one context may yield a large number of contextual effects in another. Abu-Bakr's statement was meant to yield one contextual effect at the time of producing it, namely concealing the identity of the Prophet. For, Abu-Bakr wanted the inquirer (his audience at the time) to get the interpretation that his companion is only a road guide. This is basically how communication is ostensive. In this vein, we could argue that the lexically encoded concept SABEEL is not the same ad hoc concept SABEEL* which is in the minds of the interlocutors at the time. Knowing that the hearer will construct an ad hoc concept of his own that replaces the encoded concept, Bakr was aware that the inquirer's cognitive environment allows his inquirer only to get this i-mode (*He is a man guiding me to the right way to Madina)*. Had the context (including the audience) changed in terms of history, gender, etc., Abu-Bakr might have made (an)other assumption(s) more manifest. For the translator who is well-informed about the cognitive environment of the interlocutors (Abu-Bakr and his inquirer), namely the ad hoc concept SABEEL* that Abu-Bakr has in mind is crystal clear. To use more technical jargon, the translator should attempt a translation of the ad hoc concept SABEEL*, which is in the mind of the speaker not the linguistically encoded concept SABEEL. Nor should she choose to reduce the complexity of the story by just translating the ad hoc concept SABEEL* that the interlocutor had in mind at the time. In Dor's words, this voluntary reduction of the complexity of the story on the part of the translation would, to use Dor's (2003) words "characteristically reduce[s] the number of its potential contextual effects". To put it in the terminology of Venuti (1995), the translator, who adopts Indirect Translation as his theoretical platform, unfolds one dimension of the scenario embedded in the original text. To wrap up this point, we dare to conclude that by providing a translation like this one, the context of the original is modified to fit a particular readership, e.g., children who fancy travel literature and the JOURNEY METAPHOR.

3.1.2. Scenario 2: Interpretation B

2. *He guides me to the right path (of Islam).*

Although this is part of the ad hoc concept SABEEL* that the speaker (Abu-Bakr) had in mind, it is never an i-mode on the part of the inquirer to whom the idea of a man guiding to the path of Islam is still lacking. But for the informed translator, it is manifest along with the other i-mode that the inquirer had had in mind (SABEEL* as a travel guide). In RT terms, whereas the inquirer can stop the search for relevance at the first interpretation because that is the one which his cognitive environment can provide evidence for, the translator cannot stop there as this interpretation is not the one with optimal relevance for him (and therefore for his audience).

Again, an indirect translation like this one will definitely achieve at least two goals. First, it creates maximal clarity by removing ambiguity. Second, in doing so, it reduces the amount of the cognitive processing effort on the part of the audience. Like the previous one, all this is done at the expense of reducing the potential contextual effects the utterance was intended to convey. Reduction in the complexity of encoding has resulted in reducing the number of the potential contextual effects of the original. We have come to the unhappy conclusion that the disambiguation of the message has not resulted in maximal relevance, and, therefore lack of equivalence in terms of the number of the communicative clues between the source language text and the target language text. The audience of the translated text will never be able to recover the other explicature (that Abu-Bakr intended to ideologically say that his companion was a road guide). Having said that, this attempt, however, may fit the non-expert reader who is interested in not investing the appropriate mental processing effort to cope up with the present status quo. Again, domesticating the scenario displays on the surface a fluent text, steering the reader to the TT orientation; yet, the flavor of the Arabic is lost, inflicting serious damage to the ST, and any attempt to compensate the ambiguity, in this case, will be costly for both the translator and the audience. All in all, what this translation does is that it brings to the surface the metaphor SPIRITUALITY IS A JOURNEY.

3.1.3. Scenario 3: Interpretations A and B

3. He is a man guiding me to the right way (to Mecca), and He guides me to the right path (of Islam).

Choosing to disambiguate the original by providing both explicatures as in (3) will definitely create maximum clarity, and (could probably) create more contextual effects (at least two) than the previous two rival translations. However, this increase in contextual effects has not been unpaid for. It has been achieved by putting the audience to more processing effort. The computation of two pieces of new information (as in 3) will no doubt require more processing effort than the computation of one piece of new information as in (1 and 2 above). However, this raises the following inquiry: is this contextual gain worth that additional processing effort? Sure it does, provided that the new text still conveys the communicator's original intent(s). For, we have always wanted the translator's interpretation to be consistent with the communicator's intent. And here where we can glue Wilson and Carston's (2007: 18) proposal that pragmatically adjusted meaning of the word, not its linguistically encoded meaning, that "falls within the scope of sentence operators". We have already argued that the different amounts of contextual gains may be deduced from the same piece of information in different contexts. What this means is that this disambiguation might be welcome had it not been the intention of Abu-Bakr to use ambiguity strategically to achieve some goals, specifically to conceal the identity of his companion. An elaboration (adaptation like version 3) will definitely distort the communicator's original intent, and is therefore not a welcome move on the part of the translator. To use more technical jargon, it distorts the idea that the original speaker wants to highlight the mismatch between his own congintive environment and that of the inquirer. The lexically encoded concept of SABEEL and the ad hoc concept of SABEEL* do not match one-to-one in the mind of the interlocutors at the time, an idea that is well established in the mind of the translator. It is, in other words, a scenario deploying "external ambiguity" in that, the spiritual leader, a renowned figure in his community and with a message/ideology to deliver to a wide audience, acts as a tourist guide. By and large, a road guide could not enjoy such socio-religious status as the Prophet does. Put simply, a road guide is offering service(s) to a particular audience, i.e., tourists. Therefore, the scenario is somehow puzzling in the sense that one social entity acts two irrelevant roles: a "road guide" and a "Prophet". The road guide, for instance, promotes relatively speaking a dimension of the tourist industry whereas the Prophet is promoting a divine message. We could dare to say that the two entities, the road guide and the Prophet, fail to form a hybrid entity too. Therefore, the puzzle remains, bringing to the surface unnecessary ambiguity, consuming more time in processing the scenario that may render upon the reader less/unwanted effect.

3.1.4. Scenario 4: Neither interpretation A nor B

4. *He is the one who shows me the way.*

By way of processing this version, the crucial thing to observe lies in the fact that the TT drives the audience to come forward to drawing the relevant assumption(s) with the context of the original in mind. Giving the audience such a significant role to play in translation, an act of communication explicates to the surface that RT highlights the role of the competent audience/reader, and appreciates her/his decision making process in retrieving the appropriate assumptions. It neatly demonstrates that the translator, a competent reader of the ST, is effectively skilled in computing the implicit assumptions; in turn, she indirectly deploys the assumption(s) envisaged in the original in a new linguistic formula, i.e., the TT.

A direct translation like this one causes the audience more processing effort to compute as it still lacks much of the clarity enjoyed in the previous translations. In relevance-theoretic terms what this means is that sacrificing the degree of explicitness puts the audience to additional processing effort. Being ambiguous, the computation of a more complex piece of new information like this one will definitely require more processing cognitive effort. However, to compensate for this additional processing effort, more contextual effects should be deduced. So is this translation worth its cognitive investment? Yes, we think it is for a number of reasons. First, it still embodies the communicator's (namely Abu-Bakr) original intent. Again, it is the translation which targets the pragmatically adjusted information, not just the linguistically encoded message. Second, being strategically ambiguous, it still stimulates all the communicative clues of the original – a state of affairs that will enable the audience to work out the explicatures for themselves, and therefore allows for the intended personal interpretations (a major goal why Abu-Bakr had chosen to make it ambiguous in the first place). Third, from a theoretical perspective, it is the only rival translation that is consistent with the principle of relevance as it optimizes the ratio between the cognitive processing effort and the contextual gains, exactly like that of the original. Unlike its rival translations in 1 and 2 above, the reduction of the amount of information to be processed did not result in loss of contextual effects. On the contrary, this encoding will definitely yield more contextual gains as it communicates to the audience all of the implicatures and explicatures that can be entertained from the ad hoc concept SABEEL*. To conclude this point, consuming more cognitive effort in processing the text in the case of strategic ambiguity is a merit rather than a disadvantage. This scenario enjoys a balance

between literalness and naturalness too; it does not construct on the surface a sort of foreign-looking version.

4. Discussion

In order for their messages to be maximally effective, speakers may sometimes choose not to be maximally clear; hence clarity narrows down the possible interpretations of their messages – a state of affairs which can be in contexts of crisis face-threatening, especially where speakers need to cope with multiple goals; they purposefully choose to be ambiguous, allowing for multiple interpretations on the part of their audience. This intentional use of ambiguity complicates the task of interpretation for the translator. It becomes almost impossible to assess the level of correspondence between the speaker's intent and his/her audience's interpretation. What should a translator do when translating purposefully-made ambiguous messages? Indeed this question posits a challenge to the translator who has to make an informed decision whether to go for indirect translation or direct translation. Should the translator presupposes a translation that disambiguate the original, or should she design a partial rendering of the original? The major goal of the research reported above.

Converging on one interpretation, usually the one intended by the addressor, is a constraint satisfaction dilemma. Contextual information is oftentimes believed to constrain the interpretation(s) of ambiguous structures/sociocultural knowledge. Communication breakdowns take place when there isn't enough evidence (salient or inferable) available in the larger context to help unravel the communicative intent of the addressor. The real challenge arises when translating ambiguous structures where there is no contextual bias towards one interpretation against the other to resolve potential ambiguities.[10] In this paper, we have considered ambiguous structures where the linguistic and contextual data provide enough clues to the audience of the addressor's multiple informative intentions. In such cases where the text is purposefully made ambiguous, it would be almost impossible to single out which interpretation the translator should choose to communicate to the receptors as the one representing the source language speaker's informative intention. Interpretively speaking, the translator has to construct a text that resembles the original, reinstating on the surface the original cognitive environment.

[10] On how to use context to determine meanings and to resolve potential ambiguities, see Miller (1996).

Designing IT as a strategy to cope up with the scenario of ambiguity implies a sort of simple stance in that it removes the strategic ambiguity tailored by the speaker of the source text/utterance. In other words, it creates a different context because the translator conveys to the TT audience assumptions but not the stimuli. What this basically means is that IT constructs only a partial representation of the implicit scenario. All in all, singling out one interpretation over another would make the text translator-oriented, and the translator more of an author than a translator.

Designing DT translation, on the other hand, as a strategy to cope up with the scenario of ambiguity helps maintain the strategic ambiguity tailored by the speaker of the source text/utterance. In the words of Smith (2000), the translator has become faithful to the meaning of the original speaker, and his decision accounts for the ideology that is manifesting itself in the original. As for translating purposefully-made ambiguous structures, the thrust of the argument we have put forward is that *we do not need to have the translator feel that she is forced to choose one or the other interpretation, but the one that still leaves room for the receptor language audience to figure out for themselves*. Substantially, the translator endeavors to construct in the TT a complete interpretive resemblance, vis-à-vis interpretive resemblance in relevant respects that can be attained through indirect translation (see Smith 2002: 110). To do so, DT would be a fruitful translation strategy, preserving the linguistic and contextual communicative clues. In other words, it is advised that the translator is required to "somehow stick to the explicit content of the original" (Gutt 2000: 129); it enables the audience to generate the appropriate assumptions. In the case of strategic ambiguity, direct translation enjoys certain merits over indirect translation in that it retains the stimuli (the text), stimulating the reader, an expert reader, to compute a number of relevant assumptions via appreciating the sociocultural dimensions deployed in the scenario. Smith (2000: 92) makes this point clear when he says that a "good" translation is the one that would "provide readers with contextual information that enables them to draw their own inferences". This is so because, according to RT, all forms of communication are author-oriented. After all, communication is an ostensive behavior.

Accordingly, we have tried to show that attempt 4 (i.e. *He is the one who shows me the way*) is the only reading of the Arabic strategic ambiguous utterance (هو رجل يهديني السبيل) that is consistent with the principle of relevance: the more appropriate translation which brings about the intended effect the speaker (Abu Baker) hopes to see on his audience (the inquirer). Because Abu-Bakr strategically/ideologically did not want the inquirer to know that the man he is referring to is in fact the Prophet, it makes sense to believe that he just wanted to

misguide the inquirer by having him interpret the message as in (1a) above. For, Abu Baker definitely intended to conceal the identity of his companion about whom the inquirer is asking. This applies well to the message the prophet himself communicated to his inquirer when he asked them about their origin. The prophet was well aware that his inquirer will understand the encoded concept MAA' as the name of a tribe, and therefore stop the search for relevance at this level. The ad hoc concept MAA', as the source of creation, was still not part of the encyclopedic information nor the world knowledge of the tribesman. To the translator who is theoretically informed that an interpretation of a message is an inferential thought process, the speakers' intent should be attended to, specifically, that they do not want the inquirers to get the other meaning at least momentarily. However, the translation should leave room for the other implications to be drawn out. Because optimal relevance is a cost-effect trade-off, a "good" translation is the one which will yield adequate contextual effects for the least cognitive processing effort without scarifying faithfulness to the source text.

Strategically, the translator is invited to adopt DT, as a strategy, to cope up with the status quo because it, the argument goes, furnishes the speaker with a significant space to maneuver. In this sense, Winckler and van der Merwe (1993: 54) explicate, "In making direct translation, the translator has the informative intention to communicate to the receptor language audience all the assumptions communicated by the original in the context envisaged for the original". Although it requires greater processing effort on the part of the translator's audience, DT, once invested in handling the business of strategic ambiguity, yields significant communicative advantage over IT. For DT pragmatically "concerns itself by communicating the assumptions that are communicated to the TT reader" (Winckler and van der Merwe 1993: 128). However, the maximum contextual effects are not always large enough to the extent that all source language speaker's informative intentions are communicated fairly successfully. The message still embodies some meaning(s) which is (are) also manifest (e.g. the one which communicates the intention that Muhammed is the Prophet of Islam). For each assumption, there are always layers of intended meanings which are not equally accessible at any given point in time: some meanings can be more accessible than others. Given the verbal stimulus and the context where it takes place, a theoretically-informed translator should be able to infer the appropriate assumptions about the intentions of the communicator as a strategist, for any miscalculation to the linguistic/contextual information may eventually create the wrong semantic representation of the utterance which un/consciously could construct on the surface a negative experience, inflicting serious damage/distortion to the original and exposing the social institution policy to threats.

To pursuit optimality then rests with the translator, ensuring that his translation furnishes the audience with the "positive contextual effects" (i.e. the intended meaning) without causing them unnecessary effort.

The decision making process is based on computing what is termed by Gutt (2004) the interpretation-oriented mode (i-mode) and the stimulus-oriented mode (s-mode). The i-mode (or intended meaning) is computed on the basis of the s-mode (stimulus meaning/s), whereby the s-mode informs the reader of the communicative clues. According to Wilson and Sperber (2012: 2), because the explicit and implicit sides of communication are both inferential, "utterances are not signals but pieces of evidence of the speaker's meaning, and comprehension is achieved by inferring this meaning from evidence provided not only by the utterance but also by the context". In this case, the translator has to compute that the speaker/writer alludes to ambiguity to achieve her/his goal(s), for ambiguity and not clarity, in this situation, is strategically the right tool invested for the sake of avoiding the release of confidential details. This can be brought about once the translator shies away from alluding to 'adaptation' because, according to Zhonggang (2006), "adaptation would lead to an interpretation different from that of the original". That is, adaptation may un/knowingly construct a different image, yielding negative assumptions.

The translator is always advised to weigh the efficacy of the target text, in particular, whether the intentionality of the speaker could be positively identified in the cognitive environment of the target reader. Translation, as viewed by RT, is a "tripod interaction" among the source writer/speaker, the translator and the target reader (see Jing 2010). Based on this interaction, it is the translator's responsibility to construct in the TL a text that is consistent with the Principle of Relevance, designing the strategy that suits the needs of her audience, especially in contexts of crisis where the interactants of the source language do not share the same cognitive environment.

5. Conclusion

Gutt (1991: 198) believes that "the better our insight into human communication becomes, the better we shall understand translation problems". In this research paper, we have presented argument on how a purposefully-made ambiguous structure (i.e. strategic ambiguity) should be translated from a relevance-theoretic perspective. In principle, for any strategically ambiguous structure, four possible scenarios compete for the maximization of relevance. As for the one we attempted in this study (هو رجل يهديني السبيل), we have tried to show that

– *Two translations (scenarios 1 and 2)* remove ambiguity but reduce the contextual effects to the minimum.
– One translation (scenario 3) disambiguates but sacrifices the communicator's original intent.
– One translation (scenario 4) sacrifices explicitness but creates the desired contextual effects.

Given the basic tenant of RT that only one interpretation is consistent with the principle of relevance, we have argued that the last scenario is the only one that sustains the speaker's ideological goal(s). This is because a translation should yield the intended contextual effects (of which ambiguity itself tops the list) without causing the audience unnecessary processing cognitive efforts. The translator, as a decision-maker, has to make a balance between the contextual/linguistic information the audience is expected to gain with the cognitive processing effort they have to invest. The translator has to construct in an alien soil a text that contains the elements of the scenario addressed to a reader who shares with the text producer the same linguistic, pragmatic and cultural world, or share, in relevance-theoretic terms, the same mutual cognitive environment. By doing so, it is expected that the resultant cognitive stimuli deployed across the border would ease the TT reader's job in gaining (a) similar cognitive response(s).

We have also tried to show that DT, as a strategy, can account for the deployment of strategic ambiguity provided that the representation (the one consistent with the principle of relevance) enjoys the three parameters designed by Smith (2008). In contrast, Although IT may increase mutual intelligibility in case of strategic ambiguity, it dethrones the power of the original text via leveling to the zero the strategic ambiguity orchestrated to cope with a contingent situation. IT may also enjoy the merit of creating transparency and fluency, yet this occurs at the expense of the strategic planning with regard to socio-political and economic issues. In other words "transparency", an act of manipulation, may bring tension to the surface, thwarting the speaker's strategic objective(s). In this sense, Gutt (2000:129) stresses that the translator, as a decision maker, "has to somehow stick to the explicit contents of the original", provided that the implicit information is also computed. Wilson and Carston (2007) made the argument that this cannot be achieved unless the pragmatically adjusted information, not just the linguistically encoded message, is the domain of the search for relevance. For translation purposes, the translator should then attempt a translation of the ad hoc concept of the word or phrase which is in the mind of the speaker at the time. In addition, structure-wise, the new version should

sound natural/idiomatic in the TL the way it does in the SL. Translation, therefore, is "clue-based interpretive use of language across language boundaries" (Zhonggang 2006: 50). All in all, we strongly believe that the principle of relevance with its binary equation of effort and effect adequately accounts for reducing the intuitive aspect of the translator and furnishes us with a better understanding of what we should do in the act of translating strategic ambiguity.

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