

On the Translation of Linguistic Landscape: strategies and quality assessment

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Abstract

This article studies linguistic landscape (LL) from a translational perspective. It aims to examine the translation strategies adopted in translating texts on non-official public signs and assess the quality of their translations. For accomplishing this, the author analysed a corpus of one hundred photos of public signage representing bilingual (translational) content based on two criteria. Namely, the translation strategies employed in translating public signs and the appropriateness of public signage translations for their target readers. The study concludes that several translation strategies are used to convey the informative content of public signs, such as transference, word-for-word translation, generalisation, and omission.

Furthermore, the study reveals cases of inaccurate translations that can be attributed to the translator's linguistic incompetence, improper use of translation strategies, and linguistic incompatibilities between English and Arabic. Such mistranslations distort the informative content of the original text and give rise to different interpretations. The study's implication is to draw attention to the importance of translational content of public signs as it serves as a medium of communication and reflects the image of linguistic cityscape.

Keywords: Linguistic landscape, public signs, translation, adequacy, informative content.

Introduction

The concept of Landscape Linguistics (LL) as a field of study was recently introduced by Landery & Bourhis (1997) in their seminal work *Linguistic landscape and ethnolinguistic vitality*. The linguistic landscape of a territory or urban agglomeration refers to language texts displayed on public road signs, commercial signs, advertising billboards and public signs on government buildings.

Recent studies such as those of Reh (2004), Ben-Rafael et al. (2006), Gorter (2006) and Backhaus (2007), among others, studied linguistic landscape from different perspectives, paying attention to language use, policy, and ideology in the public

sphere. This study takes a different track as it explores the linguistic landscape from a translation studies perspective. The Sultanate of Oman, just as the other Gulf States, is a host of diverse expat communities, which has significantly contributed to the enrichment of the linguistic and cultural diversity in the region. English has become a lingua franca used among large portions of the expat communities. Therefore, there is a need to have English translations of language texts presented in public space to reach a more significant percentage of inhabitants. In this respect, translation plays a vital role in communication and the globalisation and internationalisation of urban agglomerations. For instance, translations from or into English enhance the linguistic globalisation of a geographical area and introduce English as a lingua franca via which foreigners can interact and communicate with others within the original homogenous linguistic community.

In this research, the linguistic landscape of Salalah, a city of Oman's Dhofar governate, is studied from the translation perspective. The study is based on the analysis of existing translations of static non-official public signs that constitute part of this locale's linguistic landscape. The prime focus of the analysis is to identify the strategies used in translating texts on public signs and evaluate the quality of their translations as to whether such renderings are accurate, informative, and communicative. Specifically, this research aims to: a) identify the strategies adopted in translating public signs and b) assess the quality of public signage translations.

Defining Linguistic Landscape

As a domain of language research, the study of linguistic landscape (LL) is considered a fertile field of research in sociolinguistics. In general, LL refers to the study of writings or written language displayed in the public sphere in urbanised communities where written language is needed in bilingual or multilingual signage to facilitate interaction and communication among inhabitants (Coulmas, 2009). More precisely, as defined by Landry and Bourhis (1997: p.25), the term linguistic landscape refers to:

The language of public road signs, advertising billboards, street names, place names, commercial shop signs, and public signs on government buildings combines to form the linguistic landscape of a given territory, region, or urban agglomeration.

Gorter (2006: p.2) points out that the linguistic landscape involves “the use of language in its written form in the public sphere”. In the same vein, Ben-Rafael et al. (2006: p.14) consider the linguistic landscape to include “any sign or announcement located outside or inside a public institution or a private business in a given geographical location”. It is worth noting that public signs are examined in a

top-down and bottom-up dichotomy (Ben-Rafael et al., 2006). The former refers to governmental LL items and the latter to private and individual ones. Sociologically, while top-down items are used to “serve official policies”, bottom-up signs “are designed much more freely by autonomous actors” (ibid.: p.49).

From a functional perspective, Backhaus (2007) defines linguistic landscape as a system of written texts on public signs in an urban community that fulfils two main functions: a symbolic and an informative function. As texts constituting the linguistic landscape of a city or a territory may be monolingual, bilingual or multilingual, depending on the linguistic environment, the choice of code (i.e., language) can have informational and symbolic functions (Backhaus 2007; Spolsky & Cooper, 1991; Landry & Bourhis, 1997). For instance, the omnipresence of English on shop name signs, apart from being informative as English being functionally used as a lingua franca, can serve symbolic functions as it may symbolise foreign tastes, fashions, or associations with English-speaking culture. It may also mark the perception of English as “being more modern and prestigious than local languages” (Torkington, 2009: p.124)

Linguistic Landscape as a Translation Space

The public sphere has always been a welcoming space for transmitting bilingual and multilingual information, particularly in urban settings where multilingual and multi-ethnic communities exist. In such a situation, translation plays a significant role in shaping the linguistic landscape of a locale, giving rise to the emergence of a translation space (Michael & Cronin, 2006). For instance, in societies where migrants and expatriate labour force reside, e.g., in the Gulf region, translation “is not only desirable, it is vital since the city ... is a place of language contact” (Koskinen, 2012: p.73) where translated signage is manifested in the linguistic cityscape.

Multilingual written texts on public signs have been described and analysed from different perspectives. For instance, Reh (2004) proposes a reader-oriented typology of multilingual writing strategies: duplicating, fragmentary, overlapping, and complementary. Duplicating refers to texts presenting the same information in two or more languages. As pointed out by Reh (2004), the duplicating strategy is often used when all members of the target community cannot be reached by a monolingual message or in cases where particular groups such as visitors, tourists, and investors are targeted. As for fragmentary multilingual writing strategies, these refer to cases where the full text is given in one language, but selected fragments or parts of that text are translated into (an)other language(s). Overlapping writing involves situations where the text is written in one language, but only part of the information

is repeated (translated) in another language. Finally, complementary strategies involve composing the text in multiple languages. Knowledge of all languages is required to comprehend the text (Reh, 2004).

From a translation perspective, Reh's (2004) strategies, as pointed out by Koskinen (2012), refer only to the product of the process of translation rather than how the translations of texts on public signs came about and thus cannot provide complete insights into the translation strategies adopted for translating public signage. Building on Reh's categorisation of multilingual writing strategies, Edeleman (2010) proposed a more translation-oriented model in which 'duplicating' is divided into two translation strategies: 'word-for-word translation' and 'free translation'; fragmentary strategies relabelled as 'partial translation', and complementary multilingual writing as 'no translation' (omission) due to lack of translational content. Such a translation-oriented classification can provide more insights into how, i.e., via which translation strategy, public signage translations were produced, indicating that public signage texts can be studied from a translation perspective. Koskinen (2012: p.79) pointed out this, who argues that as translation is "often the process through which any documentation comes to take on a new linguistic form, translatedness is an issue closely related to linguistic landscape research." Furthermore, Koskinen (2012) argues that translation as a discipline can provide valuable tools for studying and analysing LL data. For instance, the bilingual and multilingual content of public signage can be approached and examined using translation strategies such as "overt and covert translations, non-translation, foreignising or domestication strategies, and pragmatic adaptations such as explicitation and implication, additions and omission, simplification, and so on" (ibid.: p.80). Given that the current study is concerned with the linguistic landscape of Salalah, the following section provides an overview of the linguistic situation in this particular locale.

The Linguistic Landscape of Salalah

Salalah is the principal city situated in the governorate of Dhofar in the south of Oman, whose population comprises foreign nationals of different backgrounds. The city was selected as an object of research in this case study because it is a prosperous urban agglomeration comprising a large number of expatriate communities¹ of diverse linguistic, social, cultural, educational and economic backgrounds, not to mention the status of the city as a leading tourist destination in the Gulf region.

¹ The largest group of foreign nationals is the expatriate labour force, comprising nationals from Asian, western, African, and Arab countries.

It is worth noting that the indigenous inhabitants of the Dhofar region speak local languages such as Jibbali and Mehri² and Arabic as an official language. As the local languages, as pointed out by Rubin (2010), have no writing traditions, they are not manifested in the linguistic landscape of the region. Given that large portions of expatriates do not speak Arabic, such as those descending from Asian, western, and African countries, the prevalence of English as a lingua franca and the role of English translations in the city's linguistic landscape have been significantly increasing. Thus, with such an ethnically and linguistically diverse population, the city possesses public spaces and facilities on which its diverse linguistic landscape is manifested.

Like other large cities in Oman, Salalah has witnessed an influx of foreign workers from different Arab, Asian, and western countries. As a result of this inflow and the globalisation and internationalisation of the world, there is a need for bilingual and/or multilingual mediums through which linguistic and cultural communication among nationalities can be facilitated and maintained. The public sphere, as stated above, has always been a hosting place emitting messages to the public via the use of public signs. Thus, as Backhaus (2007: p.5) pointed out, public signs are used to "disseminate messages of general public interest." Such messages may include topographic information, directions, and commercial messages such as advertisements that aim to attract people's attention to a business or a product (ibid.).

In Salalah, there are numerous public signs. The vast majority of those signs are bilingual, presenting translated content from Arabic into English and vice versa. More importantly, it has been observed that some public signage translations in this particular locale raise several issues regarding whether or not the translations of signs are accurate, informative and communicative. In order to investigate this issue, the paper examines existing translations of public signage to identify the translation strategies adopted for translating public signs and assess the quality of translations in terms of accuracy, adequacy and informativity.

Literature Review

Over the past decades, there has been an exponential increase in the studies of the linguistic landscape from a variety of perspectives including, but not limited to, language use, policy, identity, ideology, and awareness, e.g., Landry & Bourhis (1997), Backhaus (2007), Ben-Rafeal et al. (2006) and Akindele (2011) among

² Jibbali and Mehri are Semitic Modern South Arabian languages. Jibbali is also known locally as Shaḥri, Šheri, or Šherēf. See Rubin (2010) for further information on Modern South Arabian languages.

others. However, since the focus of this article is the translational content of public signs, this section reviews studies on the translation of public signage.

To begin with, Al Kharabsheh et al. (2008) conducted a study on the translation of shop signs into English to identify, classify and discuss translation errors. The study is based on analysing a corpus of 165 digital photos of shop signs in three Jordanian cities. The data were analysed in terms of two parameters: the effectiveness and adequacy of shop sign translations. The study concluded that the translations of shop signs contain errors due to linguistic and extra-linguistic factors. The former includes errors related to word order, inadequate lexical choice, and reductionist strategies that result in information skewing, whereas the latter include socio-cultural and promotional factors that negatively affect the translation and verbalisation of signs.

Koskinen (2012) carried out a study on translated public signage in the suburb of Hervanta, Tampere, in Finland, intending to describe the translational practices. The study relied on the analysis of 20 signs reflecting the linguistic landscape of the region. Koskinen (2012) concluded that the translational linguistic landscape of Hervanta, in general, supports the use of translational assimilation in which immigrants translate themselves into the dominant language in order to bridge the linguistic differences. However, translational signage displayed in religious communities or those owned and run by immigrants seems to favour translation accommodation, which involves using translation to preserve their languages of origin. Finally, Koskinen emphasises the usefulness of Translation Studies theories in providing translation strategies such as foreignising or domestication strategies, pragmatic adaptations such as explicitation, addition, omission, simplification, etc., that can translate public signs examining LL data.

Qiannan (2012) studied Chinese-English translations of public signs in China from a cross-cultural perspective. The study found out that existing translations contain errors that provide inaccurate information and cause communication obstacles. Likewise, Shi (2014), adopting functional equivalence theory as a theoretical framework, investigated the strategies used to translate public signs from Chinese into English and concluded that many low-quality translations of public signs contain spelling and grammar errors. Shi (2014) pointed out that such mistranslations leave readers perplexed and negatively affect the city's image and linguistic landscape.

In the same vein, a similar study carried out by Al-Athwary (2014) investigated the translation of shop signs in the streets of the Yemeni capital, Sana'a. The study analysed a corpus of 398 photos of shop signs and concluded that they contain translation errors of three types: spelling, grammatical and lexical. Furthermore, the

study argues that such errors are due to translators' linguistic incompetence and carelessness in addition to socio-cultural differences between Arabic and English.

Finally, Aristova (2016) studied English translations in the linguistic landscape of the city of Kazan in Russia. The study concluded that the translational content of public signage represents transliterations of Russian words, blended words of Russian, English and Tatar, and mistranslations. For instance, several translations of road signs violate the word order of English; others involve inaccurate morphological case marking on names. Misspelt English lexical items are also noticeable in the city's linguistic landscape.

The current study attempts to contribute to the existing literature on the linguistic landscape by providing a descriptive analysis of the linguistic landscape of Salalah city from a translation perspective. This study is the first of its type in the Dhofar region, and it sheds light on both the strategies used for translating public signs and the quality of public signage translations in this specific locale. Therefore, it is hoped that the outcomes of the study will draw attention to the importance of public signage translations not only for communicating information but also for reflecting a good linguistic cityscape image.

Methodology

The data for this study were collected during the year 2020, in June and July, through fieldwork visits to different parts of Salalah's city to photograph and document bilingual signage representing translational content. From a methodological perspective, linguistic landscape data analysis depends mainly on photography and visual analysis (Hult, 2009). Thus, following LL studies, e.g., Gorter (2006), Backhaus (2006) and Ben-Rafael et al. (2006), digital photography was used to compile a corpus of 100 digital photos of non-official bilingual public signs of commercial nature, including signs on shops, restaurants, cafes, and other commercial places. The translational content of public signage was analysed according to two parameters: the translation strategies adopted in translating public signs and the quality of signage translations as to whether or not such translations are adequate, informative, and communicative. The prime purpose of the analysis is not to focus on linguistic errors only but rather on the effects of public signage translations on their respective readers, i.e., whether or not the translations communicate the intended informative content of public signs in the target language accurately. The content of bilingual signs will be presented as source texts (ST) and target texts (TT). The former refers to the original texts, while the latter to the translated texts (the translations of the source texts).

Data Analysis and Discussion

The analysis of public signage translations reveals some linguistic realities of the locale under study. First, most public signage translations are translations from Arabic into English, which marks the use of English as a lingua franca in this particular locale. Second, such a situation can be taken as a sign of linguistic globalisation of the region. English is a high-status lingua franca and is often imported into non-English speaking countries, e.g., the region under study, for various reasons such as a country's plans to employ a foreign labour force, attract visitors, hold international events, and so on (Bila & Vankova, 2019). The need to bring convenience to expatriate communities and promote cultural and economic exchange in the region has led to the vast expansion of English translations and writings, which have become an indispensable and significant part of the linguistic landscape of Salalah city. Third, apart from using English as a means of intercultural communication among expat communities, English, as a lingua franca, is also used to realise an emblematic function such as denoting prestige and modernity in addition to reflecting the social, cultural, economic class of its users (Blommaert, 1996). Thus, as Kasanga (2012) mentioned, the use of languages in the public sphere can be taken as an indication of a given language's relevance, significance, and power in society.

Regarding the translation strategies adopted in translating public signs, the study shows that translators use several strategies to convey the informative content of public signs, such as transference, literal translation, generalisation and omission. However, the translational content of public signs contains mistranslations that negatively affect the communication of the intended informative content of the sign to its target readers. This section provides analysis and discussion of public signage translations, focusing on the translation strategies adopted and translation adequacy and appropriateness for its respective readers.

The use of transference

Transference is one of the widely used translation techniques for translating public signs. Despite its debatable nature as to whether or not it can be considered a translation procedure, transference³, as defined by Newmark (1988), is a process through which a source language word is transferred into the target language using transliteration, i.e., writing the word in the characters of the target language, resulting in the transferred word becoming a loan word in the target language. Transference is

³ Scholars use other names to refer to this strategy, such as borrowing (Vinay & Darbelnet 1995; Dickins, 2017) and translation by using a loan word (Baker, 2011).

often used in translation to fill a semantic gap or add a local cultural flavour in the target text (Vinay & Darbelnet 1995; Munday, 2008). Unless they have recognised translations, cultural items, names of people, streets, companies, shops, institutions in addition to geographical and topographical names are generally translated by transference (Newmark 1988; Dickins, 2017).

In the linguistic landscape of Salalah, there are some public signs which are translated by transference. To begin with, international brand names, whether English, Italian or Spanish, such as those of cafes, restaurants and pizzerias, are transferred into Arabic by transliteration using Arabic characters, as illustrated in texts 1, 2, 3 and 4 below.

ST 1: Pizza Inn

TT: بيتزا إن

ST 2: Snacks ‘N’ More

TT: سناكس آن مور

ST 3: Una Tazza di Caffé

TT: اونا تازا دي كافيه

ST 4: Nuestro Café

TT: نوسترو كافيه

Another class of words that are often translated by transference includes culture-specific items. For instance, text 5, which involves a translation from Arabic into English, involves the translation of a cultural item by transference or, more specifically, cultural borrowing as referred to by Dickins (2017). The lexical item ‘مضابي’ is a cultural item related to the culture and lifestyle of the Dhofar region; it means ‘grilled meat on stones’ or the place that serves such grilled meat. Given that this culture-specific concept is neither lexicalised nor known in the target language culture, the translator adopted transference to translate this item into English. Similarly, other culture-specific items such as the names of local dishes ‘مندي’ and ‘مضغوط’ in text 6, are also transferred into English via transliteration.⁴ The employment of transference for translating cultural references is mainly to overcome

⁴ In public signage translations, there is no consistency in transliterating or Romanizing Arabic words, particularly culture-specific items. Thus, for example, ‘madhabi’ and ‘mazabi’ are used to refer to the same concept.

a lacuna or add local flavour into a translation. It is worthy to note that strategies such as transference or cultural borrowing introduce exotic elements in the target language that may not be clearly understood by the target readers (Dickins, 2017). In the case of public signage, readers often rely on the physical context to interpret transferred cultural items that appear on public signs.

In addition, the translator of texts 5 and 6 adopted literal translation without considering word order differences between the two languages, resulting in erroneous translations. A more appropriate translation for text 5 can be ‘Bin Zanoot’s Madhabi’.

ST 5: مضابي بن زعانتوت

TT: Mazabi Bin Zanoot

ST 6: مطعم الرياض للمندي و المضغوط

TT: Riyadh Restaurant

Mandi & Madgood

It is worth noting that there are cases of mistranslated signage attributed to improper employment of transliteration as a translation technique. A case of inadequate use of transliteration is shown in text 7, where the adjective ‘fried’ in the source text is translated into Arabic via transliteration as ‘فرايد’ though there exists a direct equivalent for the lexical item in the target language.

ST 7: Makdas

Fried Chicken & Pizza

TT: مكداس

دجاج فرايد و بيتزا

Such a rendering is inappropriate, and non-English Arab speakers may not even understand it. The lexical item ‘fried’ is not a constituent of the place name (Makdas). Instead, it is part of additional information specifying a type of food served in the restaurant. Accordingly, it can only be translated into its direct equivalent in Arabic as in ‘دجاج مقلي و بيتزا’. This translation is more informative and communicative since it has a better effect on Arabic readers targeted by the translation.

Another example of inappropriate translation of proper nouns (place names) can be seen in example 8, in which the phrase فندق النيل is transliterated into English as ‘Al-Nile Hotel’. As can be seen, such a translation involves the addition of the Arabic definite article ‘الـ’ to the Standard English equivalent, i.e. the proper noun ‘Nile’. Proper names, as mentioned above, are often translated via transliteration unless they have standard recognised English equivalents (Dickins, 2017: p.42). Thus, given that the lexical item in question has a standard equivalent in English, a proposed translation can be ‘Nile Hotel’.

ST 8: فندق النيل

TT: Al-Nile Hotel

The use of word-for-word translation

Word-for-word translation is often demonstrated as interlinear translation with the target language words placed immediately underneath the source language words. In such a translation procedure, the source language word order and the literal (conceptual) meaning of words are often preserved, particularly if the two linguistic systems are similar; the context is often not considered (Newmark, 1988). As described by Vinay & Darbelnet (1995), this procedure is the most common between languages of the same family and culture. However, translators usually consider such a translation procedure unacceptable because it gives a different meaning and/or is structurally or meta-linguistically impossible (Vinay & Darbelnet, 1995; Munday, 2008).

One of the characteristics of the linguistic landscape of Salalah is that several signs contain long texts either in English or Arabic, which are rendered literally, i.e., word-for-word translation, as shown in texts 9 and 10 below.

ST 9: تأجير وسائل النقل البري للركاب بدون سائق

TT: Rental of Passenger Land Transportation Vehicles without a Driver

ST 10: مطعم نجمة البحر

TT: Sea Star Restaurant

The analysis of public signage translations reveals that there are inaccurate translations due to inadequate use of literal translation. The inaccuracies are often lexical and grammatical and, in many instances, do not seriously affect the intended meaning of the sign. For example, the name of the store shown in text 11 is mistranslated. The English translation indicates that the translator adopted literal

translation, i.e., word-for-word translation, without bearing in mind word order differences between English and Arabic, resulting in an ill-formed English expression. Moreover, from semantic and lexical perspectives, the choice of the lexical item 'rapid' as an equivalent for the Arabic adjective 'السريع' is inappropriate. Even though both lexical items have closely related meanings, they differ in the context of use, and as a consequence, they cannot be used interchangeably. In this specific context, the appropriate equivalent for the lexical item 'السريع' in English is 'express'. Thus, a proposed translation can be 'Al Subah Express Shopping Corner' or simply 'Al Subah Express Shopping'.

ST 11: ركن الصباح للتسوق السريع

TT: Al Subah Shopping Rapid

Another example of grammatical inaccuracy is shown in 12, in which the noun بيع 'sale' in the Arabic text is translated into English by a verb, resulting in an awkward English translation. An adequate translation of text 12 can be 'sale of meat and meat products.'

ST 12: بيع اللحوم ومنتجات اللحوم

TT: Sell Meat & Meat Products

The improper use of literal translation is also noticeable in translations of place names, where transliteration is expected to take place instead of translation. For instance, text 13 is translated improperly, although the informative content of the sign is not seriously affected. The lexical item الرعاية, which appears on a public sign as a constituent of a shop name, is translated literally into English as 'Care', where it should have been transliterated as the case of the place name exemplified in text 14. The same case can be observed in text 15 in which the lexical item الجزيرة, which is the name of the shop, is translated into English as 'island'.

ST 13: صيدلية الرعاية

TT: Care Pharmacy

ST 14: صيدلية النهضة

TT: Al Nahdha Pharmacy

ST 15: فطائر الجزيرة

TT: Island Pies

The use of generalisation as an implication transfer strategy

The process of generalisation occurs when the semantic features of the source text are reduced in the target text by using a more general lexical item. Generalisation, as a transfer strategy, is considered one of the implication transfer operations in which “translators combine the meanings of several SL words in one TL word” (Klaudy & Károly (2005: p.15). The use of such a transfer strategy is manifested in the translations of public signs. For instance, in example 16, the Arabic lexical items *قص و تصفيف الشعر و الحلاقة للرجال* ‘cutting and styling hair for men’ are rendered into English by a general expression ‘hairdressing’. The semantic content of the lexical item ‘hairdressing’ implies the meanings expressed explicitly in the source text. However, comparing the source and target texts, it seems clear that the translation does not convey the total informative content of the sign as it does not refer to the fact that the services offered in the shop are restricted to men. As a result, the translated text suggests that hairdressing services are offered to both sexes, which is not the case. The translator might have thought that such an interpretation is unattainable given the cultural values of the society. An adequate translation can be ‘Gents Hairdressing’ as shown in text 17, or for a more direct translation as ‘Gents Hairdressing: haircuts & styles.’

ST 16: *قص و تصفيف الشعر و الحلاقة للرجال*

TT: Hair Dressing

ST 17: *قص و تصفيف الشعر و الحلاقة للرجال*

TT: Gents Hair Dressing

The strategy of generalisation is also used in Text 18. The Arabic lexical items *قص و تفصيل* are rendered into English as ‘tailoring’. Semantically, the lexical item ‘tailoring’ implies the concepts of ‘cutting’ and ‘adjusting’ expressed in the source text. However, the translator left the two lexical items *تجنيد الأثاث* ‘furniture wrapping/covering’ untranslated, which affects the overall informative content of the sign.

ST 18: *المعشني*

قص و تفصيل السائر و تجنيد الأثاث

TT: Al-Mashani

Curtain Tailoring

Other examples of using generalisation are given in texts 19 and 20 below. In the text 19, the lexical items 'غسيل و كي الملابس' 'cleaning and ironing clothes' are rendered into English by using one lexeme, i.e., 'laundry'. The lexeme 'laundry' refers to a place where clothes can be cleaned and ironed, and it implies the conceptual meanings of all the constituent words of the source text. Similarly, in the text 20, the two lexical items 'التشييد و البناء' 'building and constructing', which are synonymous, are translated into one word in English, 'building'. As the lexical item 'building' has the same conceptual meaning as the Arabic expressions 'التشييد و البناء', the translation is appropriate given that it conveys the intended meaning of the sign.

ST 19: غسيل و كي الملابس

TT: Laundry

ST 20: مقاولات البناء و التشييد

TT: Building Contracting

The use of mission or non-translation

Omission is a translation strategy that involves "leaving out of the TT elements present in the ST" (Armstrong, 2005: p.159). Such elements may include culture-specific segments that are typically hard to translate concisely, in addition to elements containing unnecessary details. A translator's decision "regarding what constitutes 'needless' detail must of course always be taken bearing in mind the skopos or author-reader-text nexus" (ibid.: p.159).

It is a noticeable feature of public signage translations that several lexical items are omitted, i.e., left untranslated, despite being common words. It may sometimes happen due to spatial considerations. For instance, in text 21, the two lexical items 'الطازجة' 'fresh' and 'التمور' 'dates' are left untranslated and thus do not appear in the English translation. It might be argued that such a case of non-translation does not influence the comprehension of the text. However, the translation of text 22 is ambiguous due to the non-translation of the main word 'تأجير' 'rental' into the target text, which negatively affects the informative and communicative effect of the sign. Therefore, as a consequence of leaving out this key and important lexical item, it is not clear for non-Arabic speakers whether the place offers sale or rental services to customers.

ST 21: تجارة الفواكه و الخضروات الطازجة و التمور

TT: Retail of Fruits & Vegetables

ST 22: تأجير وسائل النقل البري للركاب

TT: Passenger Land Transportation Vehicles

As stated above, omission, as a translation procedure, is used in certain situations where omission does not affect the text's intended meaning. However, there are instances of improper use of omission as a translation procedure. To illustrate, a case in which the non-translation of key words affects the quality of the translation in terms of meaning transfer into the target language is given in the text 23. One can notice that in the English translation, the word 'مراجعون' auditors' is left untranslated despite the fact that it is the main word indicating that auditing services are provided. The non-translation of this key word leads to the interpretation that auditing services are not offered. Such an example shows how the non-translation of a word may lead to loss of meaning that affects how its targeted readers interpret a sign.

ST 23: محاسبون و مراجعون قانونيون و مستشارون

TT: Certified Public Accounts & Consultants

Similarly, the inaccurate use of omission as a translation strategy can also be noticed in the translation of text 24, where the key lexical item 'الإنجليزية' 'English', which is used to modify the word 'لغة' 'language', is not translated, resulting in loss of the intended meaning and ambiguity. Based on the current English translation, it is not clear for non-Arabic speakers, what languages are taught and, more specifically, whether or not English is taught at the institute.

ST 24: بتيل معهد اللغة الإنجليزية و دراسات الكمبيوتر

TT: Bethel Institute for Language & Computer Studies

Conclusion

This paper has examined the linguistic landscape of Salalah from a translational perspective, focusing on bilingual public signage to identify the translation strategies adopted in translating public signs and assess the adequacy of public signage translations for their target readers. The study concludes that translation strategies, such as transference, word-for-word translation, generalisation, and omission, are used for translating public signs. Furthermore, the study reveals inaccuracies in the translational content of public signs, which can be attributed to translators' linguistic incompetence, improper use of translation strategies and the linguistic and extra-linguistic incompatibilities between the source and target language, resulting in

erroneous renderings that not only distort the source text meaning but also give rise to different interpretations and often leave readers perplexed. Finally, it is recommended that special attention should be paid to public signage translations, as such translations, apart from fulfilling communicative and emblematic functions, reflect the linguistic cityscape image.

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