

Translating Silence: An Analysis of Dhofar University Student Translations of Elliptical Structures from English into Arabic

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Abstract : Ellipsis involves the omission of an item or items that can be recovered from the preceding clause. Ellipsis is used as a cohesion marker; it enhances the cohesiveness of a text/discourse as a clause is interpretable only through making reference to an antecedent clause. The present study attempts to investigate the linguistic phenomenon of ellipsis from a translation perspective. It is mainly concerned with how ellipsis is translated from English into Arabic. The study covers different forms of ellipsis, such as noun phrase ellipsis, verb phrase ellipsis, gapping, pseudo-gapping, stripping, and sluicing. The primary aim of the study, apart from discussing the use and function of ellipsis, is to find out how such ellipsis phenomena are dealt with in English-Arabic translation and determine the implications of the translations of elliptical structures into Arabic. The study is based on the analysis of Dhofar University (DU) students' translations of sentences containing different forms of ellipsis. The initial findings of the study indicate that due to differences in syntactic structures and stylistic preferences between English and Arabic, Arabic tends to use lexical repetition in the translation of some elliptical structures, thus achieving a higher level of explicitness. This implies that Arabic tends to prefer lexical repetition to create cohesion more than English does. Furthermore, the study also reveals that the improper translation of ellipsis leads to interpretations different from those understood from the source text. Such mistranslations can be attributed to student translators' lack of awareness of the use and function of ellipsis as well as the stylistic preferences of both languages. This has pedagogical implications on the teaching and training of translation students at DU. Students' linguistic competence needs to be enhanced through teaching linguistics-related issues with reference to translation and both languages, .i.e. source and target languages and with special emphasis on their use, function and stylistic preferences.

Keywords : cohesion, ellipsis, explicitness, lexical repetition

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