Importance of English and Urdu Reference and Ellipsis in Translation

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Abstract

Cohesive devices play a significant role in shaping the meaning of written and oral messages. Many researchers have analysed such devices in English. On the other hand, the need to explore them in Urdu still exists. This paper aims to juxtapose devices used to achieve cohesion in Urdu and English texts by tracking down the affinities and differences between them. Moreover, it points out the issues and difficulties which arise on account of cohesive devices while translating Urdu to English or conversely. The paper contains the study of reference and ellipsis in short stories of Urdu and English using Halliday frame work of cohesive devices in English. Apart from the qualitative analysis of the selected texts of Urdu and English, a quantitative research has also been carried out to gauge the problems encountered by the translators for the differences in reference and ellipsis of both languages in text. The paper would not only aid the translators for both languages, but it would also assist the teachers of Urdu and English. In addition, its findings would facilitate the readers in learning about the textual cohesion and its role in translation.

Keywords: cohesive devices, reference, ellipsis, Urdu, English, translation

1. Introduction

1.1 Cohesion in the text

Cohesion puts the pieces in writing together and helps the reader comprehend the text fully. It plays a fundamental role in binding the ideas in the text. “Each language has its own pattern to convey the interrelationships of persons and events, in no language may these patterns be ignored, if the translation is to be understood by its reader”, (Callow.1974:30). Beaugrande and Dressler (1981) regard cohesion as one of the seven standards of textuality (p. 3). Cohesion links various parts of a text through lexical, grammatical, and other relations. These relations put different items in the text together and, to some extent, develop a text. Yule believes that a particular kind of reference takes place in discourse: that is, the listener builds a representation or model of what is being spoken about. (Yule.1996). In philosophy and semantics, Wales (1989: 396) observes that reference is concerned with relation between words and extra linguistics reality. In linguistics, care is usually taken to distinguish knowledge of the world from knowledge of language: the extra-linguistic notion of reference is contrasted with the intralinguistic notion of sense, a property arising from the meaning relations between lexical items and sentences, (Crystal, 1985: 391) For the extensive contribution of cohesive devices in a text, many researchers have emphasised the importance of understanding the cohesive devices of the languages being translated. “The topic of cohesion ... has always appeared to be the most useful constituent of discourse analysis or text linguistics applicable to translation’. (Newmark, 1987:295). The literature on cohesion and its importance in translation suggest the need to investigate the devices of cohesion of source and the target language. In Pakistan English and Urdu are the academic languages and often text books are translated from Urdu to English or conversely. Moreover, grammar translation method is still used in the education system. In the environment where bilingualism (English and Urdu) holds the academia, the study that unfolds the cohesive devices may be helpful for the translators, teachers and students.
1.2 Halliday and Hassan on Cohesion

Many researchers have contributed in discovering the role of cohesive devices in a text, but the most comprehensive work done on cohesive devices on English is by Halliday and Hasan. They point out five main cohesive devices in English: reference, substitution, ellipsis, conjunction, and lexical cohesion. They are of the view that text is something that occurs in the form of talking or writing, listening or reading. They believe that cohesion is a semantic relation between sentences within the text: (See the following paragraph from (Halliday and Hasan 1976:6)

Cohesion occurs where the Interpretation of some element in the discourse is dependent on that of another. The one presupposes the other, in the sense that it cannot be effectively decoded except by recourse to it. When this happens, a relation of cohesion is set up, and the two elements, the presupposing and the presupposed, are thereby at least potentially integrated into a text. (Halliday, 1976:6). He delineates the classification of conjunction and regarded substitution and Ellipsis as “Variants of the same type of cohesive relation” in his book An Introduction to Functional Grammar” (Halliday.1994: 137). Cohesive devices that tie the text have been laid down in two categories by Halliday that are grammatical and lexical. Whereas grammatical devices are further disseminate into reference, substitution, Ellipsis and conjunction. Following is division of grammatical devices discussed by Osisanwo also.

![Diagram of Cohesive Devices]

(Osisanwo, 2005:38)

1. Reference

Halliday is of view that reference creates cohesion by creating links between elements. He explains reference as a relationship between things or facts.(Phenomenon and Meta phenomenon). He introduces three types of references that contribute in attaining cohesion in English. These are Exophoric, Anaphoric, and Cataphoric (Halliday; Matthiessen.2004: )
i. Exophoric
Halliday states in his book “Exophoric reference means that the identity presumed by the reference item is recoverable from the environment of the text.” In other words it refers outside the text. He further adds that it does not contribute Exophoric reference does not contribute to the cohesion of the text except indirectly when and the same referents are repeated forming a chain. (Halliday; Matthiessen, 2004)

ii. Endophoric reference
Halliday explains in his book 'Endophoric reference means that the identity presumed by the reference item is recoverable within the text itself. It may point backward to the history of unfolding text that is to refer that has already be introduced and is thus part of the text's system of meaning. This type of Endophoric reference is called Anaphora.' He further breaks Anaphoric references into two that is personal reference and comparative reference. Another category of Endophoric reference introduced by him is Cataphora. This Endophoric reference refers to the upcoming referent in the unfold text. Halliday explaining the Cataphoric reference states, “Cataphora is quite rare compared with Anaphora. The only exception is structural Cataphora which is common. Here the reference is resolved with the same nominal group where reference items appear.” In Halliday's view reference is related to meaning, for example, when anaphoric reference is used it builds a semantic relationship with something pointed out in the previous text. This makes the reference item to be understood either similar with the reference or some way different from it.(Halliday; Matthiessen, 2004)

2. Ellipsis
Halliday discusses in his book that Ellipsis is another form of Anaphoric cohesion in the text which is achieved by proposing something by means of what is left out. He further adds,“ It contributes to the semantic structure of the discourse. But unlike reference, which itself a semantic relation, ellipsis sets up a relationship that is not semantic but lexical grammatical --- a relationship in the grammar rather than directly in the meaning.”(Halliday; Matthiessen, 2004)

3. Substitution
It is out of the scope of this study.

2. Methodology
A qualitative and quantitative research was carried out to determine the contrast and affinities between cohesive devices like reference and Ellipsis in English and Urdu and to gauge their impact on translation. Number of short passages of Urdu and English were analysed using Halliday Model of Cohesion to discover the differences between the patterns of reference and ellipsis in English and Urdu (see Appendix 1) . Moreover, a quantitative study was also conducted to find out the impact of Urdu and English reference and ellipsis over the quality and accuracy of translation. The study was comprised of 40 students who were asked to translate an English text in Urdu and then an Urdu text in English (see Appendix 3). In the end their translated scripts were evaluated to check their ability to maintain references and ellipsis of the target language.

3. Research Findings
Extracts from six eminent English and six Urdu writers were analysed to identify Exophoric, Anaphoric, Cataphoric references and Ellipsis in the texts (see Appendix 1 and 4). It has been observed that both in English and Urdu, Exophoric, Anaphoric, Cataphoric references exist, but Anaphoric and Cataphoric references in Urdu appear to be complex for the dual role of pronouns

4. Complexities in Urdu Reference
In Urdu text cohesion is achieved through a complex network of references. This can be understood by the following examples taken from the data in Appendix 1. In the text 1 (see table 1) the words like Usay, Woh, Issnay refer back to Aliya and so are Anaphoric references. (see fig ii). This reference system becomes complicated when two subjective pronouns refer to the same person irrespective of gender or number like Woh and Issnay. For such an intricate reference system, it may be hard for a translator to translate from Urdu to English .Similarly, it can be noticed in the text 2 that pronouns Woh and Isay refer to the same person as third person
subjective displaying the complexities of Urdu reference system. In the text 3 the same could be concluded as there are two pronouns Mei and Mujay which refer to the same person as first person subjective case.

Table 1

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Urdu text</th>
<th>English text</th>
<th>Ellipsis</th>
<th>Ellipsis</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Aliya nay herat say parchay ko dobera parha. Khala jan nay usay bolaya</td>
<td>woh us ki khala jan ki khak bi na thi. Isnay kuch adat hee rishta jor</td>
<td>never seen any reason to be frightened of</td>
<td>whoo ( Nominal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Abida bi holai hui dakhil huien. (Woh apna) burka utaar kr phoot phoot</td>
<td>saying Voldemort's name. (clausal)</td>
<td>saying Demodulator's name. (clausal)</td>
<td>group)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mai nae inaae ge bhar kae ronay dia. Mujhae</td>
<td>&quot;you do not think they are watching the house?&quot;</td>
<td>who ( NG)</td>
<td>wo ( NG )</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Woh palang ki pati pakar kar dhan say bistor charta hay Isay khayal</td>
<td>... &quot;I have never seen any reason to be frightened of saying Voldemort's</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Mohallay ki bari galee kay morr par teen char tangay walay her waqat</td>
<td>hay kay kahi shor na ho. Bano Kudsia ( Tinkay ka shara )</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Ellipsis in English and Urdu</td>
<td>Ukrainian text</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
6. Role of Ellipsis and Reference in Translation from Urdu to English

The evaluation of the students’ translations from Urdu to English reveals that the students made errors translating the sentences which had ellipses from the given extract. It was also observed that most of the students had no problem in inserting “the” as an Exophoric reference as they had studied English at different levels. But still some faced problems because no reference is available in Urdu as a counterpart of ‘the’ as Exophoric reference. Students who successfully maintained cohesive devices of the target language, scored better in translation. The analysis of students’ translation indicates the importance of teaching of Cohesive Devices for better translation. Following is the graphical summary of students' performance in translation.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sentence in Urdu</th>
<th>Sentence in English</th>
<th>Score</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>taájub ho raha tha wo haisi b busi say kieo rai ashaien.</td>
<td>&quot;watching -spying -might be following.&quot; muttered uncle Vernon wildly.</td>
<td>10.00%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>magar (wo) roi piti bhi nahi</td>
<td>They are saying he tried to kill the Potter's son, Harry, But he couldn’t.</td>
<td>15.00%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>koi masibat toot paray (un) par o (wo)gusay mai bhona kar choo makyee salawatee suane lagthee hean</td>
<td>could not kill Harry Porter (verbal)</td>
<td>30.00%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>They are saying he tried to kill the Potter's son, Harry, But he couldn’t.</td>
<td>45.00%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>un par (NG)</td>
<td>15.00%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Results of students' ability to retain the Reference and Ellipsis in Translation

- **Excellent**: 10.00%
- **Good**: 45.00%
- **Average**: 30.00%
- **Below average**: 15.00%
6.1 Discussion

Students were given a paragraph in Urdu to translate in English. (see Appendix 3) Most of the students have faced problem in translating the following sentence of the given text either because of ellipsis. It has been noted that ellipsis in Urdu creates problem for the translator as it appears in writer's narration which occurs seldom in English. As it can be seen from the table above that many students did not do well in translating English into Urdu or the other way round. A few were excellent in their attempt to translate excellently both ways. A few examples of wrong translation done by the students of Urdu into English are given in the table below. Some errors in lexical translation also occurred but they were not taken into account being out of the scope of this study. The results suggest that students should be taught cohesive devices of both languages to tie the text as an effective writer. Even if they are involved in translation for any reason, their grasp over the cohesive devices of both languages (urdu and English) would of great help.

Akhbaroo say (unay) kuch pata nahi chalta tha aur pharaydar aur sipahi unparh aur jahil thay.

<p>| | |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>There was no news in the newspaper and constables were illiterate.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Newspaper were not even a good source of information.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>We could not get anything from the newspaper and the prison guard were also uneducated and illiterate.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>We cannot get the correct news from the newspaper and the guards were illiterate and unmannered.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

7. Role of Reference and Ellipsis in Translation from English to Urdu.

Most of the students faced difficulty in translating the sentences where article “the” appeared to be an anaphoric reference. This is due to the reason that students were perhaps not aware of the Urdu substitute of the article “the” as anaphoric reference. Another problematic area for the students has been translating sentences where writer has made use of Ellipsis. Following are the texts with the portions in bold which translated incorrectly by most of the students.

1. He was smiling at a rather severe looking woman who was wearing glasses exactly the shape of the markings the cat had around its eyes. (Rowling, 1997: 13)

2. people are being downright careless, out on the street in broad day light, not even dressed in Muggle clothes, swapping rumours. (Rowling, 1997: 13)

7.1 Discussion

The analysis of students' translation shows that where “ellipsis” and “the” as anaphoric reference appear most of the students tend to make error in translation. (See above texts 1 and 2). If the affinities and similarities of reference and ellipsis of the two languages are shared with the students, it would strengthen their understanding of how text is tied together in both languages. Moreover, their knowledge of cohesive devices such as reference and ellipsis of the each language may aid them to locate the key information even in the challenging texts. No doubt, Urdu and English are different languages and contrastive study of Urdu and English is much required today in Pakistan where bilingualism (Urdu and English) at least in the academia is a general tendency.

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