

The Semio-Semantic Study of the Words "Zikr" and "Khayr" in the Qur'an and their Equivalents in Seven French Translations of the Holy Qur'an

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Received: 5 April 2017

Accepted: 4 September 2017

Extended Abstract

1. Introduction

Semio-semantics is the study of language that begins with a sign but focuses on the meaning often based on the relationship between two language plans (i.e. the forms of expression and content). Accordingly, neither sign nor meaning can be effective without each other. As the sign justifies the presence of meaning, meaning also makes the presence of the sign efficient, effective, and necessary, and the sign, by being in the process-system, produces meaning, a meaning that is not frozen or static because the process in which signs are located are dynamic and inexhaustible.

One of the concepts in linguistics and in the semantic investigations is polysemy which refers to multiple meanings of a word. It is believed that there is a relationship between multiple meanings of a word. Linguistic signs are rarely monosemous. Except for scientific terms, many terms have multiple meanings which are determined according to the context they appear in. Polysemy is a concept introduced at the end of the previous century by Bréal (1897) to describe words that kept their old meaning besides a new meaning. To understand the correct meaning of a polysemy, context should be used. Context is a network of relationships that exist between form (grammar and lexis) and the outside world, and forms the referential meaning of the language. Besides context, paying attention to the adjacent units (co-text) may also help the recipient to understand the meaning better, especially in cases in which a word has multiple meanings or its meaning is not clear.

2. Methodology

In the Holy Qur'an, the semantic topic is also of great importance because most of the Quran's words have several meanings, indicating the aesthetic richness of this

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sacred text. The presence of several meanings in the Qur'an leads to a variety of discursive dimensions, which means that this phenomenon changes the path of discourse and causes three types of discourse with functional, cognitive, and emotional-existential characteristics. Moreover, this phenomenon causes ambiguity for the reader and especially for the translator of the Quran. Each verse has been revealed due to a particular situation and a specific purpose. The Holy Qur'an is a narration devoted to a particular discourse system, based on which the sender drives the process of the discourse. The course of narration goes as well along with the goals of that system. In this study, after mentioning the dominant discourse of Qur'an, the two words "Zikr" (verse 9 of Surah Al-Jumu'a) and "Khayr" (verse 30 of Surah An-Nahl), which are two words of the Quran with multiple meanings, were analyzed semiotically according to the context and co-texts to understand the exact meanings of the words in the verses. Afterwards, the equivalents chosen by seven French translators including Masson, Savary, Chouraqui, Berque, Grosjean, Blachère, and Kasimirski were analysed, and then, a new translation was presented. In the end, the study tried to find an answer to the question how the Qur'an's translator can transfer the verbal content to the audience in the same relative allegiance to the source text.

3. Discussion

In this study, it was found that the seven French translators mentioned above did not succeed in translating the words "Zikr" and "Khayr" because they only sufficed to the form of the words and did not seek their inner meaning. To understand the Qur'an and its vocabulary as a sacred text without any distortion, one must consider two factors of context and co-text simultaneously, because the examination of the text of the Qur'an and the determination of the Quran's vocabulary items are very difficult due to the abundance of vocabulary.

4. Conclusion

Therefore, it was better for the translators to understand the text of the verse by referring to the interpretative books first and, then, they could communicate the bunch of meanings in a word, using the adjacent words. The most appropriate way of translating the Qur'an is group translation where one translates the Qur'an, and the result of his efforts is evaluated by a group specialized in various sciences, including Arabic literature, Qur'anic sciences, linguistics, etc. The possible errors that result from the translator's monograph would be eliminated, thus allowing the transmission of the implicatures to the audience since less common mistakes usually occur in group work.

Keywords: Semio-semantics, Polysemy of the Qur'an, Zekr, Khayr, French

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