

The Translation of English Comment Clauses in Shakespeare's Othello into Arabic

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Abstract

Comment clauses (or parentheticals) are a type of clauses which are syntactically disconnected from the clause to which they are attached and which are syntactically incomplete (lack complementation). They show a reflection of the main clause, commentary or assessment on the main clause and hence show more spatial flexibility, lower tone, and semantic independence.

The present study focuses on comment clauses as pragmatic markers and the implicit meaning carried by these clauses. The problem is that most translators overlook this type of clauses because of their unawareness of the implied meaning carried by such clauses, especially when they translate them. It is hypothesized that the interpretation of comment clauses is situational. To prove this hypothesis, ten texts have been arbitrarily selected from Shakespeare's Othello translated into Arabic by four well-known translators, namely: Jabra Ibrahim Jabra, Muhammed Mustafa Badawi, Ghazi Gamal and Khalil Mutran.

The study concludes that the interpretation of comment clauses depends largely on the situation in which they are used. The study also discloses that the failure in translating such clauses is due to the unawareness of the implicit meaning that the comment clauses carry (whether in spoken or written).

Finally, the study recommends that translators should carefully deal with comment clauses wherever they come across them, for such a type of clauses could form a slippery area.

Key words: parenthetical clauses, pragmatic markers, discursal functions, commentary markers, Shakespeare's Othello, interpretation, semantic functions, performative expressions.

ترجمة جمل التعليق الانكليزية في مسرحية عطيل لوليم شكسبير الى العربية

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المستخلص

جمل التعليق (او الجمل الاعتراضية) هي واحدة من انواع الجمل التي تتميز بانها منفصلة نحويًا عن الجملة التي تتصل بها وتكون نحويًا غير مكتملة . يظهر هذا النوع من الجمل انعكاساً للجملة الرئيسة كما انها تعمل جمل تعليق ومُقيّمة لفحوى الجملة الرئيسة . وبذلك يكون لهذه الجمل حرية التنقل في النص و خفض الصوت عند استعمالها فضلاً عن انها مستقلة دلاليًا.

تركز هذه الدراسة على جمل التعليق كأدوات تداولية وعلى المعنى الضمني الذي تحمله في طياتها . ان المشكلة التي قد يواجهها معظم المترجمين هي اغفالهم لهذا النوع من الجمل عند ترجمتها . وذلك لعدم معرفتهم بالمعنى الضمني الذي تحمله . افترضت الدراسة ان تأويل هذه النوع من الجمل يعتمد على السياق الذي تستخدم فيه . ولأثبات هذه الفرضية , تم اختيار عشرة عينات وبطريقة عشوائية من مسرحية عطيل للكاتب الانكليزي وليام شكسبير. ترجمها الى العربية اربعة من المترجمين المعروفين : جيرا ابراهيم جيرا , محمد مصطفى بدوي , غازي جمال , و خليل مطران . واطهرت نتائج التحليل في هذه الدراسة ان هذه الجمل تعتمد بشكل كبير في تأويلها على السياق الذي تستعمل فيه , وان الاخفاق كان نتيجة عدم دراية المترجمين بالمعنى الضمني لهذه الجمل(في حالة اللغة المكتوبة والمحكية على حد سواء) وتختتم الدراسة بتوجيهات اهمها ان يكون للمترجمين اهتماماً أكبر بهذا النوع من الجمل حيثما صادفتهم لانها قد تشكل ارضاً زلقة لهم .

الكلمات المفتاحية : الجمل الاعتراضية , الاشارات التداولية , الوظائف الخطابية , الاشارات التعليقية , مسرحية عطيل لوليم شكسبير , الترجمة التفسيرية , الوظائف الدلالية , التعابير الدالة على الافعال .

1.1 Introduction :

Brinton (2008 :2) defines comment clauses as pragmatic markers : phonologically short items that are not syntactically connected to the rest of the clause (i.e. parentheticals) and have little or no referential meaning but serve pragmatic or procedural purposes. As pragmatic markers, they include one word, such as right, well, okay, now, and phrases such as sort of, or clausal forms such as I mean, I see, I think, you know. The widest class to which such clauses belong to is that of sentence adverbial.

Terminologically, the expression comment clauses is used differently by different scholars, verbal fillers, void pragmatic connectives , softeners, pause fillers , hesitation markers, discourse markers, pragmatic particles (Erman 1986 :131). However, Erman prefers the expression pragmatic markers. According to him, most of the terms used are either too specific, such as hesitation markers, or too general like verbal fillers.

As a linguistic category, Aijmer (1997: 1-47) states that comment clauses are characterized by instability in their character, which stems from incongruity between usage and structure "structurally they represent clauses, but functionally they are like disjunct adverbials conveying secondary information." This may be due to the continuing process of "grammaticalization" they undergo . That is, the change that lexical items and constructions are subject to in certain contexts to perform grammatical functions and, if grammaticalized ,they continue to develop new grammatical functions."As grammaticalizing elements, they are in a state of likely instability and particularly apt to change." Moreover , comment clauses are subject to a process of development from their classic ' first person form ' (e.g., I think) to modified forms *I would think* , *I'm thinking* (Kaltenbock , 2010 :2). That is, *I think* which is deemed a central comment clause has developed from a marker of epistemic modality , expressing lack of speaker's commitment , to a pragmatic marker serves meta discourse functions .

1.2 The semantic functions of comment clauses

Semantically, the functions of comment clauses have also been viewed differently. For instance, Biber et al. (1999 :197,864-86) comment clauses express personal feelings, attitudes, value judgments, or evaluation. That is, comment clauses are markers of 'stance' (e.g., I think , I guess) or style (e.g., if I may say so). Likewise, Quirk et al. (1985: 1114-1115) state that "comment clauses can be both style and content disjuncts; they serve as hedging devices (e.g., I think) expressing hesitation over truth value, as expressions of the speaker's certainty (e.g., I am sure), as expressions of the speaker's emotive attitude towards the content of the main clause (e.g. I hope), and as assertions to the hearer's attention (e.g., you know)". Peltola (1982,1983:103) comment clauses are "meta communicative": "they comment on the truth value of a sentence or a group of sentences, on the organization of the text or on the attitude of the speaker". Urmson (1952: 484) sees that comment clauses lead the hearer to see the emotive meaning, the commonsensical reference, and the dependability of our statements.

Dehe (2014 :65) argues that comment clauses in addition to questioning parenthetical functions question tags, and commentary verbs, are often being attached" to an illocutionary commitment to an utterance or to serve metalinguistic functions rather than serving any descriptive function or contributing to the truth conditionality of the host utterance". Further , Dehe adds that comment clauses can also serve as "mitigators" i.e modifying, correcting, reinforcing or softening a speech act done by the host sentence. Their function can often be realized and they can be substituted by adverbs such as probably , possibly , certainly , or attitudinal adverbs such as luckily , happily , unfortunately , surprisingly , without changing the meaning of the utterance. That is to say that comment clauses have been treated as 'epistemic adverbials' ' pragmatic markers', and ' meta discourse markers.

1.3 Categories of Comment clauses

Fraser (1990) classifies the information encoded by linguistic expressions into two types: "propositional and non- propositional information". According to him, propositional information expresses a 'state of the world' in which the speaker desires to attract the listener's attention, whereas non- propositional information can have different types of signals, or as he calls ' pragmatic markers' which are separated from the propositional content of the sentence and are linguistically encoded expressions which signal the speaker's potential communicative intentions . Fraser categorizes these pragmatic markers into four types: Elementary markers, commentary markers, corresponding markers and discursal markers.

a) Elementary markers: according to Fraser, these marker include sentence mood and lexical expressions and which almost signaling the force of the basic message . The following examples are illustrative :

- 1) I regret that I am unable to accept your kind invitation .
- 2) Undeniably, they were deceived .
- 3) "The man is very happy ."

In example (1), the speaker uses the expression *regret* to convey a message that he is remorseful because he can't meet his friend's invitation. In example (2), the speaker admits that they were deceived , whereas in example (3) in which there is no lexical indicator," the statement signals that the state of the world expressed by the propositional content is true ."

b) Commentary markers: are optionally used to provide a comment on the basic message. But when they occur as a single word they point to both the message force and content. The examples below are illustrative :

- 4) " Foolishly, Mary didn't send the right form on time."
- 5) " Honestly , we ought be there tomorrow."

In (4), the speaker uses the comment marker *foolishly* to convey a message that the failure of Mary in sending the right form has been foolish. In (5), the speaker uses the comment marker *honestly* expecting that the essential message that follows will not be well received by the audience.

c) Corresponding markers : are also optionally used to signaling the whole message which is separate from any other comment marker . This is shown in the following examples :

- 6) Boys , you are very naughty .
- 7) For God's sake , where are they going now ?

In (6), the message conveyed by the word *boys*, which is the basic message, signals that it is the boys who are being addressed (vocative) beside the claim that the boys are being very naughty, while in (7) *for God's sake* , expresses the vexation of the speaker.

d) Discursal markers : one of the functions that discourse markers can express is cause and effect which can also be used as comment markers, as in the following examples :

- 8) John was very sick .**Therefore** , he left early .
- 9) " Incidentally, have you heard the news about Sue ? "

In example (8), the discursal marker *therefore* is used to express a result based on the preceding sentence *Jacob was very sick*, whereas in (9) the commentary marker *incidentally* is used to show that there will be a change in the content of the following basic message. (Fraser1990:167-168).

1.4 Text Analysis

This section is limited to analyzing ten texts which have been arbitrarily selected from Shakespeare's Othello translated into Arabic by four well known translators, namely : Jabra Ibrahim Jabra, Muhammed Mustafa Badawi ,Ghazi Gamal and Khalil Mutran .The model used in this analysis is Newmark's semantic/ communicative translation .The evaluation of the translation in our analysis will mainly depend on the realization of the function of the comment clause according to the situation. If it is realized successfully, the translation will be appropriate, if not the translation will be inappropriate .

SLText (1)

Iago to Cassio:

"**Faith**, he to-night hath a land carack: If it prove lawful prize, he's made forever ." Act:1, Sc.2 , page17, Line No. 32.

Interpretation:

Iago is telling Cassio that Othello married Desdemona last night and that if his marriage got lawful, he would be rich forever .

TTs:

Trans 1: Jabra	والله لقد اقتحم هذه الليلة سفينة بريية. فاذا تبين انها غنيمة مشروعة, فقد اثرى للابد.
Trans 2:Badawi	في الواقع انه الليلة ركب سفينة تحمل الكنوز ان حازها طبقا للقانون ضمن مستقبله الى الابد.
Trans 3: Jamal	في الحقيقة لقد نزل في ارض ملأى بالخيرات واذا ما ثبت شرعية هذه الغنيمة فقد حاز ثروة سرمدية
Trans 4: Mutran	خالدة. اصاب ثروة كانه غنم في هذه الليلة سفينة من السفن الكبرى مشحونة بالخيرات, فاذا ما اقرت

Discussion :

In ST (1) , the speaker uses the commentary word *faith* which expresses oath in this context. That is , the speaker is giving oath in this context .However, translators : 2 and 3 were improper in their renderings , for they rendered the text into *في الواقع وفي الحقيقة* .In other words , they were away from the meaning of the text .Translator: 4 overlooked the comment word and provided a translation lacked the effect of the commentary word .That is, he provided improper rendering .Translator : 1 was the nearest one in his rendering since he used the word *والله* which also expresses oath in Arabic .That is ,he provided the appropriate translation .

The proposed translation is:

والله سيكون قد فاز بثروة ابدية اذا ما اقر .

زواجه من دزدومونه **SLText (2)**

Roderigo to Barbantio

" I think I can discover him, **if you please**, to get good guard and go along with me." Act:1,Sc.1 p.15, Line No.6

Interpretation

Roderigo is speaking to Barbantio and telling him that he can find Desdemona and Othello if he sends with him strong guards

TTs:

Trans1: Jabra	اظن ان بوسعي ان اكتشفه , اذا تفضلت باستصحاب حرس قوي ورافقتني
Trans2:Badawi	اعتقد اني استطيع ان اجده. ان سمحتم جيئوا بحرس اكفاء واتبعوني.
Trans3: Jamal	اعتقد ان بإمكاناتي اكتشافها اذا تكرمت وارسلت معي حرسا اقويا .
Trans4: Mutran	اظن اني اكشفهما اذا صحبتني ومعك حرس امناء

Discussion:

In ST (2) , the speaker uses the comment clause *if you please* which expresses a polite request in this context ,for Roderigo is in a status lower than Barbantio's .That is , Roderigo should be polite when he speaks to Barbantio .Translators 1, 2 and 3 followed the communicative translation , اذا تفضلت , اذا سمحتم , اذا تكرمت , and provided appropriate rendering of the text.Translator:4, however ,ignored the commentary phrase and changed the content of the text from a request into a conditional: اذا صحبتني . That is, he provided inappropriate translation of the text.

The proposed translation is: ان بإمكانني ان اجدكما اذا تفضلتم بمرافقتي مع حراس اشداء .

S L Text (3)

First Officer:

"'Tis true, most worthy signior; The duke's in council and your noble self, **I am sure**, is sent for." Act: 1, Sc.3, p.21, Line No. 12.

Interpretation:

The First Officer is telling the senator that the duke has a meeting and has sent for him.

TTs :

Trans 1: Jabra	هذا صحيح , سيدي المبجل . ان الدوق في اجتماع , وانا واثق من انه ارسل في استدعائك .
Trans 2: Badawi	هذا حقيقي يا مولاي المبجل , فان الدوق يعقد جلسته الان وانا متأكد من انه طلب حضوركم.
Trans 3: Jamal	هذا صحيح ايها السنيور الجليل , ان الدوق قد دعا الى اجتماع وانا متأكد من انه ارسل في طلب ذاتك النبيلة .
Trans 4 : Mutran	هذا ايها السيد الجليل . ان الدوق في مفاوضة, وانا واثق بانه بعث في استدعاء ذاتك الشريفة.

Discussion :

In ST(3) ,the speaker uses the comment clause *I am sure* which expresses certainty in this context to convey a message that he is sure of what he says. Concerning the renderings of the four translators, subjects 2 and 3 rendered the text semantically **انا متأكد** and provided appropriate translations.Translators1 and 4 , however, rendered the text communicatively and provided appropriate translations also .

The proposed translation is:

اننا واثق ايها السنياتور ان الدوق قد ارسل في طلبك .

SL Text(4)

First Senator :

" Indeed, they are disproportion'd; My letters say a hundred and seven galleys. Act :1, Sc.3 p.21, Line No.4

The first senator is speaking in a meeting about the conflicting numbers of the warships that were coming to Cyprus.

TTs:

Trans 1: Jabra	حقاً تتباين بارقامها , رسالتي تقول مئة وسبعة مراكب.
Trans 2: Badawi	نعم , الاخبار يناقض بعضها البعض. فرسالتي تقول مائة وسبع سفينة.
Trans 3: Jamal	حقاً ان الانباء مختلفة. وقد ذكرت في رسالتي ان عدد السفن مائة وسبع سفينة.
Trans 4: Mutran	الانباء مختلفة جدا في الحق ,وقد ورد في الكتب المرسله الي ان سفنهم المحاربة سبعمائة.

Discussion:

In ST (4), the speaker uses the commentary *indeed* to emphasize his claim that there is inconsistency in the numbers of the warships. Unfortunately, none of our translators could provide a proper Arabic equivalent to this commentary word which expresses emphasis in this context. Translators 1 and 3 used the word *حقا* which does not serve the same function in this situation. Translators 2 and 4 who translated the text communicatively were also improper in their renderings when they used the words *في الحق* and *نعم*.

The proposed translation is :

ان هناك اختلاف في اعداد اوكد لكم.

السفن القادمة .

S L Text(5)

Montano to Cassio

"But, good lieutenant, is your general wived? "Act: 2, Sc.1, P.51, Line No. 1.

Interpretation :

Montano is asking Cassio whether Othello was married or not .

TTs:

Trans 1: Jabra

ولكن, ايها الملازم الكريم , هل لقائدك زوجة؟

Trans 2 : Badawi

قل لي ايها الملازم الكريم , هل قائدك متزوج ؟

Trans 3: Jamal

ايها الملازم الكريم , هل قائدك متزوج ؟

Trans 4: Mutran

اقائدك متزوج, ايها الملازم الكريم ؟

Discussion :

In ST (5), the speaker uses the commentary clause *good lieutenant* which signaling a message that the lieutenant is being addressed (corresponding marker) beside the claim that the lieutenant is being good .In other words ,when Montano calls Cassio *good lieutenant*, he is praising him. Although the four translators used the commentary expression *ايها الملازم الكريم* in different positions in the texts , they provided appropriate translations of the comment clause which functions as vocative in this context.

SL Text (6)

Iago to Cassio

" **I protest**, in the sincerity of love and honest kindness."Act:2, Sc.3, P.83, Line No.18.

Interpretation :

Iago is asserting to Cassio that his behavior springs from his love and sincerity .

TTs:

Trans 1: Jabra

وك , ما ذلك الا لانني امحضك الحب والامانة والاخلاص.

Trans 2: Badawi

اوكد لك انها نصيحة صديق مخلص يود لك الخير.

Trans 3 : Jamal

انا افعل ذلك في سبيل الحب والنية الصافية.

Trans 4: Mutran

كن واثقا بانها نصيحة خالصة وحسن نية .

Discussion:

In ST(6), the speaker uses the performative expression *I protest* as a pragmatic marker conveying assertive message to the addressee that the love and the honesty that he shows spring from sincerity . Translators 1 and 3 ignored the performative expression and used instead words lack the assertion, such as *انا افعل وارجوك* . That is they emptied the text from its assertive content .In other words , they provided inappropriate translation .However, translator 4 who rendered the text communicatively by using the word *كن واثقا* and translator 2 who followed the semantic translation *اؤكد لك* , provided appropriate rendering of the text which expresses assertion in this situation .

The : *اؤكد لك ان كل ما افعله ينبع من قلب يريد بك خيرا.*
proposed translation is

SL Text (7)

Iago to Othello

" It is Brabantio , **be advised** , he comes to bad intent. " Act:1, Sc.2 P.19 , Line No. 4

Interpretation

Iago is warning Othello of Brabantio who is coming with bad intention.

TTs :

Trans1: Jabra	انه برابانتيو حاذر ايها القائد لقد جاء بقصد سوء.
Trans2: Badawi	انه برابانتيو ايها القائد . خذ حذرك فهو قادم هنا بنية سيئة.
Trans:3: Jamal	ذا برابانتيو حذاري ايها القائد . انه لينوي شرا .
Trans:4: Mutran	هذا برابانتيو , حذاري ايها القائد , انه لينوي شرا.

Discussion

In SL text (7), Iago uses the comment clause *be advised* which expresses warning in this context rather than advice .Although the speaker used the expression *be advised* and not else , the four translators followed the communicative translation of the text and provided the appropriate situational renderings . That is ,they realized the function of the comment clause in this context and succeeded in their renderings.

SLText (8)

Cassio to Iago

" **Indeed**, she's a most fresh and delicate creature. " Act:2, Sc.3 , P.67, Line No.

Interpretation :

Cassio describes Desdemona to Iago as she is the most delicate woman .

TTs:

Trans 1: Jabra	انها سيده بدعيه جدا.
Trans2: Badawi	هي بلا شك من اكثر المخلوقات نضارة ورقه.
Trans:3: Jamal	حقا انها انضرو وارق المخلوقات.
Trans4: Mutran	وعندي انها انضرو المخلوقات وارقتها.

Discussion :

Although the speaker in this text initiates his speech by using the commentary word *indeed*, he does not emphasize anything. Rather, he used this commentary word just to show his actual admiration. This was manifested in the renderings of translators 2 who render the word into بلا شك (doubtless) and translator 3 who translated the word into حقا (really). As for translators 1 and 4, they overlooked the commentary word and provided renderings lack the effect of the comment word in the receptor language. That is, they were improper in their renderings. The appropriate translation is that of translator 3.

SL Text (9)

Lodovico to Desdemona:

"May be the letter moved him; For, **I think**, they do command him home, deputing Cassio in his government." Act : 4, Sc.1 ,P.151, Line No. 9.

Interpretation :

Lodovico justifies the anger of Othello as a result of the letter which contained commanding Othello to be back to Venice and appointing Cassio as governor instead of him .`

TTs:

Trans 1: Jabra	ربما اهاجته الرسالة اذ اعتقد انهم يأمرونه بالعودة الى الوطن جاعلين كاسيو وكيلا عنه في الحكم.
Trans 2: Badawi	لعل هذه الرسالة اغضبتة لان فيها كما اظن امرا بعودته الى البندقية وتعيين كاسيو مكانه.
Trans 3 : Jamal	ربما هذه الرسالة اثارة غضبه لاني كما اظن طلبوه الى البندقية وقلدوا كاسيو منصبه.
Trans 4: Mutran	لعل الكتاب اثر فيه فان به على ما اظن استدعاءه الى البندقية وتقليد منصبه لكاسيو.

Discussion :

In SL text (9), the speaker uses the comment clause *I think* which expresses tentativeness or hesitation of the speaker towards what he is talking about. Translators 2,3 and 4 followed the semantic translation of the text and provided the appropriate renderings by using the verb اظن which is also a hedging device used in Arabic. As for translator 1, he translated the comment clause into اعتقد which expresses certainty though the speaker was uncertain of what he was saying. That is, translator 1 was unsuccessful in his rendering.

The proposed translation is:

ربما يكون مستاءً من الرسالة التي وصلتة سيما على ما اظن ان فيها استدعاءً له وتعيين كاسيو بديلا عنه .

SLext (10)

Iago to Barbantio

"Awak the snorting citizens with the bell, Or else the devil will make a grandsire of you . Arise, **I say**." Act.1 ,Sc:1, P.9 , Line No. 23.

Interpretion :

Iago is talking to Barbantio and asking him to wake up the sleeping people in the town by the bell otherwise the devil would make Barbantio a grandfather .

TTs:

Trans 1 : Jabra	ايقظ بالناقوس المواطنين الغاطين في نومهم, والا جعل الشيطان جَدا منك. اقول لك, انهض.
Trans 2: Badawi	انهظ وقم وايقظ اهل المدينة الذين يغطون في نومهم بقرع الجرس والا جعلك الشيطان جَداً قم اقول لك قم.
Trans 3: Jamal	ايقظ الاهالي بقرع الناقوس والا جعل الشيطان منك جَدا. اقول لك انهض.
Trans 4 : Mutran	انهض انهض. ايقظ على قرع الجرس اهل المدينة النائمين والا ستولدك الشياطين حفيدا. انهض انهض لقد حذرتك.

Discussion :

In SL text (10) , the speaker uses the comment clause *I say* which implicitly expresses advice in this situation .However, translators 1,2,and 3 followed the literal meaning of the text when they rendered the comment clause into اقول لك .In other words , they provided inappropriate translations.Translator 4 , on the other hand , who communicatively rendered the text , provided the appropriate translation when he used the word لقد حذرتك which could be the nearest equivalent to the English comment clause in this context .

The proposed translation is:

انصحك ان تنهض وتوقظ الغاطين في نومهم بقرع النواقيس والا جعل الشيطان منك جَدا.

1.5 Conclusions :

From the discussions above, we have come up to the conclusions that the interpretation of comment clauses as pragmatic markers is situational . That is, their interpretation is governed by the context in which they are used .This was proved by adopting both the semantic and communicative translations by our translators who were in both cases inaccurate in some of their translations .The semantic indeterminacy of such clauses may be due to different reasons: 1) as mentioned earlier, comment clauses lack complementation in which case they entail the hearer (or the reader)to infer and then creating the meaning . 2) Some comment clauses are difficult to determine . That is ,their structure is largely resembles declarative sentences (see example 3 p.3).This may confuse the hearer (or the reader) ,especially when they encounter clauses without any lexical marker or any sign of comment . These factors may explain the failure in translating some of the texts by the four translators who were unaware of the covert meaning carried by such clauses and hence rendered some of the texts literally , as is the case in text (4) ,in which the commentary *indeed* ,which implies assertion ,was rendered into *في الحق و نعم* , and in text (8) the same word was overlooked , and in text (6)in which the performative expression *I protest* , was rendered into *انا افعل وارجوك* and so on .In short , comment clauses as pragmatic markers, are varying according to the context in which they occur . Translators wherever and whenever come across such clauses , have to be careful in dealing with them , for clauses of such a type could be a slippery area .

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