

Translating and Analyzing Hedging in Tikriti Dialect from Arabic into English

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ABSTRACT

Hedging is a linguistic phenomenon used in spoken engagement to communicate interpersonal messages. It is a communicative strategy that allows speakers to soften or regulate the assertiveness of their words. It stems from various characteristics such as uncertainty, doubt, tentativeness, ambiguity, neutrality, mitigation, and subjectivity. Hedging is routinely used in most talks to make statements acceptable to listeners.

The current study aims at comparing and analyzing the frequency, types, and purposes of hedges in Tikrit dialect. The study tries to solve the main problem is that there is no research that links the use of hedges with the dialect as a social characteristic. This study is an attempt to fill that gap.

The accurate study tries to hypothesize that hedging devices in Tikrit dialect are difficult to be translated into English. And the translators keep the grammatical structure of the hedging devices in the SLTS when translating them into their equivalent TLTs. And hedging devices in Tikrit dialect have the same functions in English.

The data selected for the study consists of twenty-three samples taken randomly from 200 typed Tikrit dialect conversations which contain hedging devices. These conversations are of different contexts. Some of them are family conversations, others are street conversations and some others are café conversations. They all share the common feature of being informal.

The method of translation (whether covert or overt) used by the translators is going to be figured out. At last, a table for each device is given to summarize the analysis and a proposed translation is offered. Then findings are drawn statistically.

The study also draws some key conclusions, the most important of which are that both Arabic and English use hedging devices to show the meaning of hedging devices, and interpreters struggle to render Arabic hedging devices into English. The fundamental cause of these devices' poor representation is their similarity in use. Because they have no experience with this form of translation, the translators do not look for viable counterparts for these devices. As a result, they attempt to avoid utilizing hedging devices whenever possible. and as a result, interpreters are generally weak at applying hedging devices.

Keywords- Hedging, Tikrit dialect, English, Translation.

I. INTRODUCTION

The term hedging has been used in linguistics for more than four decades, but no definition covers all the aspects of its use. It is viewed as an interactional phenomenon.

Lakoff (1973:473) introduced the concept of Hedging in linguistics Accordingly, hedges are "words which meaning implicitly imply fuzziness – words whose job is to make things fuzzier or less fuzzy" (ibid: 471). He

offered the following as examples of hedges in English: sort of, kind of, more or less, pretty (much), relatively, somewhat, essentially, in essence, basically, principally, particularly, par excellence, especially, exceptionally, quintessentially, literally, often, more of a than anything else, almost, typically/typical, as it were, in a sense, details aside, so to say, practically, an actual, a real, a regular, virtually, all but technically, practically, actually, really, all but a, anything but a, (he as much as...), like, etc.

This chapter focuses on hedges' theoretical and grammatical functions in English and Arabic. It shows how scholars deal with them, their definitions function, uses, and relations between them, and translating them.

This chapter also deals with the types of hedges, each with its function and use, and how the translator can render hedges pragmatically and grammatically because they have different functions.

1.2 Hedges in Arabic

The linguistic phenomenon of metadiscourse was not explicitly identified by the old Arab grammarians and linguists who mainly concentrate on syntactic properties and referential meanings of language in general. However, Arabic authors and scholars, writing in different periods, disciplines, and genres, used and implicitly showed a growing interest in the role of metadiscourse in their writings.

Meta discourse is frequently found in books written by ancient Arab scholars who specialized in various fields such as:

There are many hedging expressions in Arabic, with every item having its function. Conditional If is one of the hedging devices. It gave the function of uncertainty or indirectness (Wright,1995:48 and Alssamarai, 1991: 448)

When the fulfilment or non-fulfilment of the condition is possible, doubtful, rare and the like *إن* is used to express the doubt or the uncertainty.

1. *وإن كُنْتُمْ فِي رَيْبٍ مِّمَّا نَزَّلْنَا عَلَىٰ عَبْدِنَا (البقرة: 23)*
(And if you are in doubt concerning that which We have sent down to our slave) (Al- Baqarah:23) Al – Hilali (1916:19)

The condition implies doubt to lessen the certainty of the fulfillment of the proposition or out of being uncertain of the fulfillment of the condition. (Assamarai,1991:448)

2. *إن كان موجود سأخبرك*
(If he is there, I will tell you).

Alternatively, out of being uncertain of the fulfillment of the condition. This is precisely the significance of hedging in English: non – commitment and uncertainty.

3. *إن مت فاقض عني*
-If I die, pay off my debt for me

He explains it as follows: /inn/ is used here because the date of death is unknown, and here lies the sense of uncertainty.

1.3 Verbs of Probability

Nash (1990:98) studies the factors that determine a learner's effort to determine the meaning of an unknown word in a text. Prince et al. (1992:58) argue that some words with more than one contextual meaning receive a sort of average high-dimensional placement that, out of context, signifies nothing, and many words are sampled too thinly to get well placed .

Probability is a type of hedging which includes many items whose function is to make doubt. Wright (1995:48) mentions verbs of doubt or probability, such as:

1- *يظن/Think*

هو يظن ان القطار قادم

He thinks that the train near.

2- *حسب/Reckon*

حسبت انها ستمطر

I reckon it will rain.

3- *زعم Claim*

هي زعمت ان الاجتماع انتهى

She **claims** that the meeting has finished, but it does not.

Assamraai (1991:436) confirms that the utterance is particular when this sign gets stronger. Otherwise, it is very weak, and the case is doubted.

(بَلْ ظَنَنْتُمْ أَنْ لَنْ يَنْقَلِبَ الرَّسُولُ وَالْمُؤْمِنُونَ إِلَىٰ أَهْلِيهِمْ أَبَدًا وَرَبِّكَ ذَلِكَ فِي فُلُوجِكُمْ وَظَنَنْتُمْ ظَنَّ السَّوْءِ وَكُنْتُمْ قَوْمًا بُورًا)

(Nay, but you thought that the Messenger and the believers would never return to their families)AL – Hilali(1916 : 512)

(Al-Fath;12)

(وَتَحْسَبُهُمْ أَيْقَاظًا وَهُمْ رُقُودٌ)

(الكهف)

(18:

{And you would have thought them awake ,whereas they (asleep) (kahf:18)

– Hilali ,1916:387)

/Khala / (imagine or think)

Khiltu(ibid:442) / which derived from/ khayal / =

imagination, It is weaker than /hasiba /.

4- *Reckon in probability.*

I reckon the car is cheap, but it is expensive.

When the sentence has the ability to be doubted, Furthermore *حسب* ,means it is used when the belief about a particular object turns out to be incompatible with the truth, as in the previous example :

4- *كنت اظنه فقيرا لكنه غني*

I thought him poor, but he is rich.

The speaker thought someone was poor, but he discovered him to be rich. So what he believed to be turned out to be incorrect.(ibid.:444-443)

5- *زعم / Za'ama/(to allege).*

It means a speech that is not based on trusted proof. Thus, it may be true or false , e .g

(رَعِمَ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا أَنْ لَنْ يُعْتَبَرُوا)
(التغابن: 7)

(the disbelievers pretend that they will never be resurrected)

(Nay, but you thought that We had appointed no meeting for you)

(ibid :763)

زعمتني شيخا و لست بشيخ إنما الشيخ يدب دبيبا-7

You alleged that I am an old man, but I am not. An older man is the one who crawls.

1.4 The Difference between Hedging and Certainty

Lakoff (1972:195-213) introduces the term "hedges" of such words and phrases, like instead, very, and largely, stating that "some of the most interesting questions are raised by the study of words whose

meanings implicitly involve fuzziness – words whose job is to make things fuzzier or less fuzzy. Such words are referred to as hedges, and he says that hedges "interact with felicity conditions for utterances and with rules of conversation."

Hedging is a linguistic phenomenon used to convey interpersonal messages in spoken interaction. It is a communicative strategy which enables speakers to soften the force of utterances or moderate the assertive force of utterances. It has resulted from different features such as uncertainty, doubt, tentativeness, ambiguity, mitigation, and subjectivity. At the same time, Hedges plays a significant pragmatic function which is affected by social variables such as gender and culture.

Linguists use the term hedges to describe words that point to uncertainty. This kind of hedging could raise questions about the certainty of what is being expressed and could also open up for readers an awareness of the value of conjecture. A hedge enables the authors to mitigate their certainty about their propositions and establish interpersonal interactions with the readers by opening the conversation possibilities. To analyze or learn how to use hedges is not straightforward (Hinkel, 2004:187) because there is no one-to-one correspondence between the function and form of hedging (Lee, 1992:69).

Hinkel (2004:164) says that the presence or absence of modal auxiliary might be relevant to detect the phenomenon of hedging (i.e., statements in which an author distances himself from his claims. Alternatively, it signals low certainty).

Cabanes (2007:189) claims that hedging verbs and adverbs are linguistic cues of evaluative positioning. They are modal indicators of the level of certainty or authority claimed by the speaker, adding that hedging lowers the strength of the claim to truthfulness. Certainty Markers are closely connected to hedges because the items belonging to it also express the degree of commitment to the truth value of the proposition but at the opposite end of the scale, i.e., total commitment to it, such as *indeed* and *know* (Crismore et al., 1993:52).

The notion of certainty or uncertainty falls under the speculative type of subjectivity. (Dobakhti, 2011:58) subjectivity has been defined as "aspects of language used to express opinions and evaluations" (ibid:60). Modality also appears in the verb choice. The frequency of the use of different modal verbs indicates an amplified voice of certainty because the verbs that express stronger conviction (*would*, *can*, and *will*) are much more common than those that communicate weaker conviction (*could* and *should*) as shown in the following examples:

4. He **would** go tomorrow for training.
5. The headmaster **can** fire the new employee because he is negligent.
6. The goods **will** arrive tomorrow.

7. These sentences have the function of certainty, while the following sentences show the weakness and lessen the certainty:

8. The game hall **could be** smaller than the first one.
9. He **should** wear a thick sweater. It is cold outside.

The two sentences communicate a weak meaning, showing the doubt about the devices (*could*, *should*).

There seems to be an agreement that there are at least three articulated points on a presumed a continuum from certainty to doubt. Holmes (1990:143) suggests an epistemic trichotomy of certainty, probability, and possibility, being consistent with Holmes (1990:213) scale of certainty of assertions and negations where the writer asserts with the certainty that a proposition is true or not true; or that the proposition is probably or possibly true or not true. Rubin et al. (2005:68) study the identification of explicit certainty divisions and extended Holmes' models by adding two extremes on the epistemic continuum scales: Absolute certainty (defined as a stated unambiguously indisputable conviction or reassurance) and uncertainty (defined as hesitancy or stated lack of clarity or knowledge). He further, re-defined the middle categories as high certainty (i.e., high probability or firm knowledge), moderate certainty) i.e., estimation of an average likelihood or reasonable chances), and low certainty (i.e., distant possibility) (Rubin et al. 2005:70).

1.5 The Distinguished Dialect in Tikrit

Alhite (1978: 28) says that Tikrit is regarded as an old city and different from other cities in Iraq. Tikrit witnessed various events and crises as a result of its position. The region connected East and West, especially in trade, commerce land, and river convoys. Therefore, Tikrit became a city that attracted people from different sects to settle there. Before that, Tikrit was also a center of a struggle for the Room and Iranians.

Different invasions happened between Othmans and Iranians, Abbasid and Khawarij. Hamid (1998:78) remarks that the last struggle was the British occupation and occupiers. These issues cause different sects to live in Tikrit, and they form different dialects that these dialects make it a different city in the appearance that these dialects give it the appearance of a distinctive dialect, which makes it a different city of a special dialect. Moreover, these reasons made Tikrit a mixture of cultures, which made Tikrit Dialect specific for strangers because it has a vocabulary that is difficult to understand. The pronunciation of some words is only distinguished by Tikrit Dialect (ibid:79).

The pronunciation of some sounds are different from another dialects because Tikrit Dialect has distinguishes features, considering in the following example : "الباغحا غحتو للسبيق" as shown in the sentence

the litter "ر" is pronoun "غ". This feature is one of the most clear feature which distinguished this dialect .

1.6 Data Analysis

Text Analysis (1)

SL Text :

وانا غايحا للسيفقا شفتوا ال علياء و سألتوا عن امها المريضا قالتا ؛ الحمد لله احسن ، علساس غدا تغيح للمستشفا

TL Text (1): While I was going to the market, I saw Alia and asked her about her mother. She said, “Thank God, it is better. She is going to go to the hospital tomorrow .

TL Text(2): When I went shopping ,I saw Alyaa and I ask her about her mother ,she said that she was better perhaps she is going to hospital tomorrow.

TL Text(3): When I was going to the market I met Alia, I asked her about her sick mother, she said praise to Allah, she is going to hospital tomorrow.

TL Text(4): When I went to market I saw Alyaa and I ask her about her sick mother, she said thanks for good she is good ,almost tomorrow she will go the hospital.

TL Text(5): As I was going to the market, I saw Alia and asked her about her sick mother. She said thanks to God she is getting better, she is basically go to the hospital tomorrow.

Discussion

The term "علساس" is considered a "hedging device" because it indicates doubt in the speaker's utterance, conveying the function of uncertainty. In this context, someone asks Aleaa about her sick mother, and she responds that she is improving and is on her way to the hospital.

Translators 1, 3, omitted the translation of the word "علساس" because they did not recognize the significance of this technique, which is employed to emphasize the presence of hedging in the context.

In addition, translator 2 renders the expression "علساس" into the modal "perhaps", therefore this translation is inappropriate, this translation is covert.

Translator 4 used the "almost" to render the expression "علساس", so, it is inappropriate translation. the translation is covert. Because he has lost the value culture of hedging in the translation.

Translator 5 renders the translation into "basically" and it is a modal adverb which consider appropriate translation, this translation is covert. Because he has kept the cultural value.

The proposed translation: While I was on my way to the market I met Aliaa and I asked her about her sick mother, replied she is better and as basically tomorrow we will go to the doctor.

Table (1): The Analysis of Hedging Device "علساس"

Hedging Devices	Function	Trans.NO	Type of hedging	Strategies of Translation		appropriate
				Overt	Covert	
علساس Modal adverb	Uncertainty	1	-	-	-	-
		2	Modal adverb	-	+	-
		3	-	-	-	-
		4	Model Adverb	-	+	-
		5	Modal adverb	+	-	+

Text Analysis (2) :

اولت الباغخا غاد يغيح علي للجامعة لان عندو دوام . بس قبل لا يطلع خبيرو صديقو وقلو التوقع غدا الاستاذ ميجي

TL Text(1):Before yesterday Ali want to go to the collage but he received a call that the teacher not in scene

TL Text(2):Before yesterday Ali wanted to go to university but before he went up ,his friend phoned him and said to him I expect the doctor didn't come

TL Text(3):The day before last night, Ali wanted to go to university to his job. But before he left, a friend called him and told him, "I think the professor will not come tomorrow".

TL Text(4):The day before yesterday Ali went to university because he has study, but before he went his friend call him and he said I expect the lecturer will not come.

TL Text(5):He wanted to go to the university the day before yesterday, but his friend called him and told him that probably the professor isn't coming tomorrow.

Discussion

The context is a debate between two persons over whether or not the professor will attend. The lexical verb "التوقع" expresses the meaning of the lexical verb "expect" in the dictionary. The verb "التوقع" is a hedge which that performs the function of uncertainty.

The translation of the device "التوقع" has been missed by translator 1. Despite its relevance, the translator chose not to translate it.

To examine the translations of this hedging device "التوقع", translators 2, 4 transform "التوقع" into "expect". They are successful in conveying the same effect as the term "التوقع". Translations are appropriate.

Because they have taken into their account the cultural value The translator confirms overt translation.

The translator 3 renders the device "التوقع" into "think," which is a lexical verb. The verbs "expect" and "think" communicate (uncertainty function) and belong to the same category (lexical verbs), although they have different meanings; therefore, some translators translate them interchangeably. Translator 5 transforms "التوقع" into

the modal adverb "probably", hence this translation is considered covert and inappropriate. Because he lost the value of hedging in this translation.

The proposed translation: The day before yesterday, Ali wanted to go to the university, so, before he left, his friend phoned him and told him that he expects the lecturer would not come tomorrow.

Table 2: The Analysis of the Hedging Device (التوقع)

Hedging Devices	Function	Trans.NO	Type of hedging	Strategies of Translation		appropriate
				Overt	Covert	
التوقع Lexical verb	Uncertainty	1	-	-	-	-
		2	lexical	+	-	+
		3	Lexical	-	+	-
		4	Lexical	+	-	+
		5	Modal adverb	-	+	-

Text Analysis (3):

- اليوم اخمن غاح تمطع

TL Text (1): I guess it will rain today.

TL Text (2): I guess it going to rain today.

TL Text (3): I think it will rain today.

TL Text (4): I may it will rain.

TL Text (5): I guess the weather will rain today.

Discussion:

In this context, the speaker expresses his excitement about the weather and whether or not it will rain. This phrase conveys a sense of ambiguity. Furthermore, because it is hard to predict the weather, the speaker in this case employed the hedging device.

The verb "اخمن" is a lexical verb. The device "اخمن" is rendered into "guess" by translators 1, 2 and 5

and this is the correct meaning of the verb. The translations are overt. They are regarded as the most appropriate translations because they able to keep the cultural value of the translation. So, they produce the same impact on the listeners.

Translator 3 renders the translation of the device "اخمن" into "think", it is also lexical verb. The translation is covert, the translation is inappropriate, because he has lost the cultural value of the translation. In addition, translator 4 renders the device "اخمن" into the modal verb "may". This device "may" belongs to the category modal verb, therefore, this translation is consider inappropriate. The translation is covert because he lost the cultural value of the translation.

The proposed translation: As I guess, it will rain.

Table 3: The Analysis of Hedging Device " اخمن "

Hedging Devices	Function	Trans.NO	Type of hedging	Strategies of Translation		appropriate
				Overt	Covert	
اخمن Lexical verb	Uncertainty	1	lexical	+	-	+
		2	lexical	+	-	+
		3	lexical	-	+	-
		4	Modal verb	-	+	-
		5	lexical	-	+	-

Text Analysis (4):

سألت جارتني ام محمد, تعحون لبغداد غدا؟ وقالت يقولون الطرق مغلقا

TL Text (1) : I asked my neighbor Um Muhammed ,will you go to Baghdad tomorrow? she said that **someone said** the way is blocked.

TL Text (2) : I asked my neighbor Am Mohamad ,are you going to go to Baghdad? tomorrow and she said that the roads are blocked .

TL Text (3) : I asked my next door lady Om Mohammed , will you travel to the capital tomorrow? Replied I **think** road is blocked .

TL Text (4) : I asked my neighbor Um Muhammed ,will you go to Baghdad tomorrow? she said **the people said** the way is blocked.

TL Text (5) : I asked my neighbor, Umm Muhammad, will you go to Baghdad tomorrow ? and she said that **there were news** that the roads were blocked .

Discussion:

The verb "يقولون" is regarded as "hedging" because it is used as a mean to manage uncertainty, The first speaker in this case inquires about the other's plans to travel to Baghdad for a specific reason. As a result, the other person did not emphasize their entry into Baghdad,

which is why he employed the verb "يقولون" as a sign of uncertainty.

As seen above, translators 1 and 4 translated the verb "يقولون" as a lexical verb, and the translators have translated the device "يقولون" as "said" this verb is a lexical verb.

The translation of the hedge has been omitted by translator 2. He failed to identify the essential value as a hedges device since the translation focused on the content words rather than the hedging device , therefore , this translation is inappropriate because he lost the cultural value of the translation .The translator 5 renders the verb "يقولون" into "there were news" which is considered as evidential phrase , in this case the translator followed the covert strategy in the translation The translation is inappropriate .Because he lost to take into his account the cultural value.

The proposed translation: - I asked my neighbor Um Muhammad, are you going to Baghdad tomorrow? she replies that they **say** the roads are blocked.

Table 4: The Analysis of Hedging Device (يقولون)

Hedging Devices	Function	Trans.NO	Type of hedging	Strategies of Translation		appropriate
				Overt	Covert	
يقولون Lexical verb	Uncertainty	1	Lexical	+	-	+
		2	-	-	-	-
		3	Lexical	-	+	-
		4	Lexical	+	-	+
		5	Evidential Phrase	-	+	-

Text Analysis (5)

يحتمل انه احمد عجلو توجعو لان يعنح

SL Text (1): **Potentially** Ahmed 's leg have problem because he crippled.

ST Text (2) : I **think** Ahmed leg have problem because he crippled .

ST Text (3) : I **believe** that Ahmed's leg hurts because he can barely walk on it .

ST Text (4) : **Probably** Ahmad has a pain in the leg because he is limping .

ST Text (5) : Ahmad's leg hurts him because he is limping .

Discussion:

This statement is derived from a context. The discussion was between two participants regarding a man named Ahmad. Because he limps, his leg hurts him.

The verb "يحتمل" is a lexical verb that function as a hedging device which expresses a sense of uncertainty. The speaker is not sure about the topic.

Translator 1 renders the device "يحتمل" into "potentially" as a modal adverb; therefore, this translation

is overt and appropriate. Because the translator has kept the cultural value of the translation The translator is capable of conveying the actual meaning of the term.

Translator 4 transforms the device "يحتمل" into "probably," taking the hedge into account because it is a modal adverb, but the translation is inappropriate since it does not convey the same meaning. As a result, translators 1, 4 employed modal adverbs to express the hedging device (potentially, probably). Both are modal adverbs, yet each has a distinct purpose.

Translator 2 renders the device "يحتمل" into "I think" it is a lexical verb; the translation is covert because the translator tale into his account the cultural value of the translation and it is inappropriate translation.

The hedges device "يحتمل" is translated into "believe " by translator 3, it is a lexical verb, the translator uses covert translation to translate the device. The translation is inappropriate.

Translator 5 has removed the translation of the device "يحتمل". The translator overlooked the significance of the device "يحتمل". As a result, he failed to convey the

point and his translation is inappropriate because the translator does not take into his account the cultural value of the translation.

The proposed translation: It is possible that Ahmad's leg hurts him because he is limping .

Table 5: The Analysis of the hedging device (يحتمل)

Hedging Devices	Function	Trans.NO	Type of hedging	Strategies of Translation		appropriate
				Overt	Covert	
يحتمل Lexical verb	Assumption	1	Modal adverb	+	-	-
		2	Lexical	-	+	-
		3	Lexical	-	+	-
		4	Modal adverb	-	+	-
		5	-	-	-	-

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