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Faculty of Al-Ahsan
Department of English**

**Viewpoint in Joe Sacco's Graphic Novel *Palestine* and its
Arabic Translation: A Cognitive Multimodal Analysis**

A Thesis submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements
for the Degree of Master of Arts in Translation

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Summary

Comics scholarship has been treated as a lower form of reading as it has received low-cultural esteem until the 1990s. McCloud claims that comics compared to prose text have long been treated as “crude, poorly-drawn, semiliterate, cheap, disposable kiddie fare” (1993, p.3). It could be argued that comics has been an understudied area owing to their visual nature. They are commonly considered less ‘literary’ than traditional written prose texts or inferior to them (Eisner, 2008). They were regarded as more suitable for kids and teens because “comics as a reading form was always assumed to be a threat to literacy” (Eisner, 2008, p. xv). However, eventually this medium has become culturally legitimized with the emergence of more important work in the field of graphic narrative, and now it is well-recognized as a form of visual-verbal literature. Many studies have adopted narratological approaches to graphic narrative as they have started to explore and foreground the impact of this medium complexity (multimodality) on storytelling (Stein & Thon, 2013, pp.2-3). The emerging connections between comics studies and narrative theory has led to the emergence of the burgeoning field of comics studies today.

The medium of comics has always been associated with irrelevance and subversion, yet it has participated in cultural conversation, especially when it has an ideological agenda. Hence, this medium involves changing the way in which readers comprehend the world. Morris (2009) argues that “comics medium presents an unlikely, but nonetheless apt, documentary aesthetic suitable to capturing our politically dissonant times” (p.188). Foucault (1978) argues that there are many points of resistance within discourse of power. In other words, whenever there is a discursive formation of hegemony, there is disruption, subversion, and resistance of the dominant discourse. However, the discursive resistance fails when it comes from within mainstream media and political organizations - the typical venues and

channels for resistance. Interestingly, challenging dominant discourse is found in the notion of *play* because it is less predictable than large political parties. Lawson (2011) contends that comics provide this notion of *play* because this medium is associated with the notion of parody or irreverence that highlights less important and less obvious things in media. Lawson points out that they disavow truth or depth in any kind of foundational sense. The disavowal or denial of authority resists dominant discourses. In short, comics as subversion, irreverence, parody, or play acts as a medium to oppose hegemonic discourse. Since “All comics are political” (Moore, 1993, p. 89), the present study seeks to identify the ideological messages conveyed through this medium which involves the interplay of images and messages.

The data of this study is Joe Sacco’s graphic narrative *Palestine* and its Arabic translation فلسطين translated by Mohammad Abdel Naby. Given that cross-modal interaction is the primal feature of this medium, the main focus of this study is to investigate the multimodal viewpoint construction. Hence, a cognitive multimodal approach is adopted to investigate the multimodal viewpoint construction of both the source text (ST) and the target text (TT). Moreover, the study aims at contextualizing the role of the non-verbal element in the translation of this multi-layered narrative. Therefore, the translation analysis is informed by a multimodal semiotic approach to investigate the translator’s verbo-visual manipulation of the ST.

The present study is divided into an introduction, four chapters and a conclusion. The **Introduction** gives a general background and an overview on the scope of the study while highlighting the research problem, the objectives, and main research questions. Moreover, it discusses the significance of the study.

Chapter One, entitled “Literature Review and Theoretical Framework”, surveys the theoretical framework of this study. The **First Part** is a review of literature; it gives comprehensive background literature about

viewpoint phenomena in narrative discourse: narratological and linguistic approaches. Moreover, this part explores some of the previous scholarly work about the translation of multimodal texts. In addition, it gives an overview of linguistic and semiotic-oriented studies in comics translation. The **Second Part** discusses the theoretical framework underlying this study. It is further divided into three parts: **Part One** displays the cognitive linguistic model (van Krieken et al., 2016) adopted in this study, which builds on Mental Spaces Theory. This model serves to analyze storytelling techniques involved in the text, which in turn reflect the viewpoint of the author. **Part Two** mainly surveys the visual indicators of viewpoint in comics (Tang, 2016), which are derived from Kress and van Leeuwen's visual grammar (2006). **Part Three** explores viewpoint phenomena in translation. Hence, it discusses such concepts as the translator's voice and manipulation of the narrative. Moreover, this part tackles the theoretical framework for verbo-visual mediation in translation proposed by Damaskinidis (2013). Finally, it explains the eclectic analytical model adopted in the translation analysis which integrates Baumgarten's (2005) visual-verbal cohesion model and Dukate's (2009) manipulation strategies.

Chapter Two, entitled "Methodology", provides an overview of the study method in which both quantitative and qualitative approaches are combined to investigate the viewpoints of both the author and the translator. This chapter covers the study design, data of the study, steps of analysis, procedure, and rationale. The qualitative analysis of the ST investigates the multimodal viewpoint construction of *Palestine*. The eclectic analytical model integrates a cognitive linguistic model together with the visual indicators of viewpoint in comics. The study adopts a mixed-method approach in the translation analysis using an analytical eclectic model together with the coding scheme of Multi Semiotic Translation (MST)

proposed by Damaskanidis (2013) to determine the level of the translator's verbo-visual mediation.

Chapter Three, entitled "Cognitive Multimodal Analysis", investigates multimodal viewpoint construction in *Palestine* because the author's choices on both visual and textual levels are framing techniques which carry certain ideological aspects. Thus, this chapter operates on two levels: **First**, it investigates how storytelling techniques, i.e. negotiation of different viewpoints within this narrative are used to serve Sacco's viewpoint. **Second**, it explores the visual indicators of Sacco's viewpoint. Thus, this chapter conducts a qualitative analysis by adopting these visual indicators along with the cognitive linguistic model to examine the multimodal viewpoint of both the author and the translator.

Chapter Four, entitled "Verbo-Visual Mediation in Translation", gives a detailed analysis of the Arabic translation of *Palestine* by Muhammad Abdel Naby; it delineates the translation process in the light of the cross-modal interrelations between the verbal and the visual modes. The second part of the chapter investigates the manipulation procedures employed by the translator while considering the visual-verbal interplay to detect their effect on the viewpoint construction of the ST. Finally, a quantitative analysis is conducted to determine the level of the translator's verbo-visual mediation in order to compare the ideological viewpoint of the translator with that of the author.

The **Conclusion** clarifies that the study has successfully attained all its objectives. It provides answers for the research questions mentioned in the Introduction supported by evidence from the analysis conducted in chapters 3 and 4. Findings and results could inform the proposed strategies to translate multimodal texts. Furthermore, they provide new areas for future work that will shed more light on the under-researched areas. This is to be followed by a section discussing the limitations of the study.

Abstract

The study mainly focuses on viewpoint construction in graphic narratives and the dilemma facing the translator if (s)he attempts to translate such texts. Tracking viewpoint in this medium is complex because different modalities function given its distinct conventions. Therefore, the study analyzes the multimodal viewpoint construction in *Palestine* and its Arabic translation. First, the ST is investigated from a cognitive multimodal perspective. The author's strategic use of viewpoint techniques is examined using a cognitive linguistic model based on Mental Spaces Framework as a tool (van Krieken et al., 2016). Moreover, the visual analysis employs Tang's model (2016), which follows Multimodal Discourse Analysis (MDA) framework (Kress & van Leeuwen, 2006), to investigate how semiotic resources are employed to narrate a story and contribute to the understanding of the overall viewpoint configuration. Investigating the relationship between linguistic and visual viewpoint triggers shows the ways in which intersemiotic complementarity in page-based multimodal text constructs the ideological viewpoint of the author. Second, the study sets out to investigate the translator's verbo-visual mediation, with a special focus on the manipulation strategies induced by the visual mode. Therefore, the underlying theoretical framework to investigate the translator's viewpoint is verbo-visual mediation proposed by Damaskinidis (2013). An eclectic analytical model is adopted, which integrates Baumgarten's (2005) visual-verbal cohesion model and Dukate's (2009) manipulation strategies. The results show that the author chooses eyewitnesses to the horrible events of war as the lens through which he narrates the events. This indicates that eyewitnesses are cognitively highly accessible to the reader. The findings of the translation show the translator's tendency towards explicating visual information about Palestinian eyewitnesses.

Keywords: Multimodal Viewpoint Construction - Multimodal Discourse Analysis (MDA) – Cognitive Linguistics – Graphic Narrative Translation - Verbo-Visual Mediation

Dedication

Mum, Dad, I love you. Thanks for believing in me, thank you for being you.

You are my inspiration

To **Mahmoud Darwish**, the Poet of Palestine

O those who pass between fleeting words	أيها المارون بين الكلمات العابرة
From you the sword - from us the blood	منكم السيف - ومننا دمنا
From you the steel and fire - from us our flesh	منكم الفولاذ والنار - ومننا لحمنا
From you yet another tank - from us stones	منكم دبابة أخرى - ومننا حجر
From you tear gas - from us rain	منكم قنبلة الغاز - ومننا المطر
Above us, as above you, are sky and air	وعلينا ما عليكم من سماء وهواء
So take your share of our blood - and be gone	فخذوا حصتكم من دمنا وانصرفوا
Go to a dancing party - and be gone	وادخلوا حفل عشاء راقص... وانصرفوا
As for us, we have to water the martyrs' flowers	وعلينا، نحن، أن نحرس ورد الشهداء
As for us, we have to live as we see fit.	وعلينا، نحن، أن نحيا كما نحن نشاء

O those who pass between fleeting words	أيها المارون بين الكلمات العابرة
It is time for you to be gone	آن أن تتصرفوا
Live wherever you like, but do not live among us	وتقيموا أينما شئتم ولكن لا تقيموا بيننا
It is time for you to be gone	آن أن تتصرفوا
Die wherever you like, but do not die among us	ولتموتوا أينما شئتم ولكن لا تموتوا بيننا
For we have work to do in our land	فلنا في أرضنا ما نعمل
We have the past here	ولنا الماضي هنا
We have the first cry of life	ولنا صوت الحياة الأول
We have the present, the present and the future	ولنا الحاضر، والحاضر، والمستقبل
We have this world here, and the hereafter	ولنا الدنيا هنا... والآخر
So leave our country	فاخرجوا من أرضنا
Our land, our sea	من برنا... من بحرنا
Our wheat, our salt, our wounds	من قمحنا... من ملحنا... من جرحنا
Everything, and leave	من كل شيء، واخرجوا
The memories of memory	من مفردات الذاكرة
O those who pass between fleeting words!	أيها المارون بين الكلمات العابرة!

Excerpt from Mahmoud Darwish
(1988), "Those Who Pass
Between Fleeting Words" in *Left
Curve*, No. 13 (1988/89).

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