

Implications of Skopos theory for Validity and Reliability: Cultural Adaptation in the Arabic Translation of BDI Psychometric Test

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Abstract

This study investigates the application of Skopos Theory in the translation of the Beck Depression Inventory (BDI) from English to Arabic, focusing on linguistic shifts, cultural adaptations, and the preservation of communicative functions. Skopos Theory, which emphasizes the purpose and target audience of a translation, provides a framework for analyzing the challenges of conveying depression-related concepts in Arabic-speaking contexts. The research examines how expressions of psychological states, such as guilt and worthlessness, are recontextualized to suit Arabic cultural norms while maintaining the inventory's diagnostic intent. The analysis of 21 randomly selected BDI items reveals that translators employ various strategies, including omission, addition, and cultural substitution, to ensure clarity, emotional resonance, and cultural relevance. The findings demonstrate that adapting the BDI through Skopos Theory ensures that the translation remains faithful to its intended psychological function while being linguistically and culturally appropriate for Arabic-speaking populations. This study highlights the critical role of purpose-driven translation in maintaining the reliability and validity of psychometric tools across different languages and cultures, offering valuable insights for cross-cultural psychological assessment and mental health research.

Keywords: Reliability in Translation, Psychometric Test Translation, Skopos Theory, Cultural Adaptation, Translation Studies, Validity and Reliability, Beck Depression Inventory (BDI)

Implications of Skopos theory for Validity and Reliability: Cultural Adaptation in the Arabic Translation of BDI Psychometric Test

The translation of psychometric tests, such as the Beck Depression Inventory (BDI), has gained increasing importance in the global context, where psychological assessments need to be adapted for diverse linguistic and cultural populations. These tests, originally developed in specific cultural and linguistic settings, often do not easily translate across other languages and societies. The process of translating psychometric tests involves more than just converting words from one language to another; it requires a deep understanding of both linguistic nuances and cultural contexts. Ensuring that the test maintains its reliability, validity, and effectiveness after translation is a critical challenge for researchers and practitioners.

One major concern when translating psychometric tools like the BDI is ensuring that the psychological constructs measured by the original version remain consistent in the translated version. This task is complex because different cultures may interpret certain symptoms or psychological states differently. For example, expressions of sadness, guilt, or hopelessness—central to depression—may vary significantly across cultures in terms of language, interpretation, and social norms. Therefore, any translation must consider these cultural differences to ensure that the tool is not only linguistically accurate but also culturally meaningful to the target population.

In this context, Skopos Theory offers a valuable framework for guiding the translation process of psychometric assessments. Developed by Hans J. Vermeer in the late 1970s, Skopos Theory shifts the focus from achieving a word-for-word translation to considering the purpose or "skopos" of the translation within its cultural context. The theory asserts that the translation should primarily serve its intended function in the target language and culture, rather than merely reproducing the form of the original text. This function-based approach is particularly relevant for psychometric test translations, where the goal is to preserve the instrument's ability to measure specific psychological constructs accurately and reliably in a different cultural setting.

The Significance of the Study

Several attempts have been made to analyze both fiction and non-fiction translation to highlights cultural barrier and linguistic diversity. However, translation of psychometric test which contains linguistic diversity, cultural adaptation deletion, addition, and many more translation challenges seem untouched.

Translating the Beck Depression Inventory (BDI) from English to Arabic involves more than just linguistic conversion—it requires deep cultural and contextual adaptation to ensure the psychological states it measures are understood appropriately within Arabic-speaking populations. Skopos Theory, which prioritizes the purpose and target audience of a translation, plays a crucial role in guiding this process. In translating the BDI, the expressions of psychological distress or emotional states must be recontextualized to suit Arabic cultural norms and sensitivities. This adaptation ensures that respondents can accurately relate to and interpret the questions, preserving the test's reliability and validity.

Translators often use strategies such as omission, addition, and cultural substitution to achieve this goal. Omission may involve removing culturally redundant or irrelevant items, while addition might include clarifying concepts that are unfamiliar to the target audience. Cultural substitution ensures that certain expressions or examples resonate better with the Arabic-speaking population, making the translation more relatable and effective. Despite these adjustments, the purpose-driven approach of Skopos Theory ensures that the translated BDI maintains its intended psychological function, measuring depression in a way that is both linguistically accurate and culturally appropriate.

Ultimately, a purpose-driven translation of psychometric tools like the BDI is critical for maintaining their effectiveness across different languages and cultures. By aligning the translation process with Skopos Theory, translators can ensure that the BDI remains a reliable and valid tool for assessing depression in Arabic-speaking populations, allowing for accurate diagnosis and treatment recommendations in diverse cultural contexts.

Research Objectives:

1. To examine the role of Skopos Theory in translating the Beck Depression Inventory (BDI) from English to Arabic, emphasizing changes in linguistic expression, cultural adaptation, and communicative functions.
2. To explore how Skopos Theory principles guide translators in ensuring the reliability and cultural appropriateness of the Arabic version of the Beck Depression Inventory (BDI).

Research Questions:

1. What linguistic shifts are evident in the translation of the Beck Depression Inventory (BDI) from English to Arabic, as influenced by Skopos Theory?

2. In what ways do translators ensure both reliability and cultural sensitivity in translating the Beck Depression Inventory (BDI) into Arabic, following Skopos Theory principles?

Literature Review

The translation of psychometric tests, such as the Beck Depression Inventory (BDI), is crucial for extending their accessibility and effectiveness across different linguistic and cultural contexts. Translating these assessments is not merely about converting words from one language to another; it involves a nuanced understanding of linguistic subtleties and cultural contexts to maintain the test's reliability and validity. In this context, Skopos Theory provides a valuable framework, emphasizing the translation's function over strict adherence to the original text, thus ensuring that the translation serves its intended purpose within the target culture (Vermeer, 1989).

Skopos Theory and Its Application in Translation

Skopos Theory, introduced by Hans J. Vermeer, posits that the purpose (or "skopos") of a translation should guide all decisions made during the translation process. This theory asserts that translations should prioritize the function they are intended to serve in the target culture rather than striving for a word-for-word replica of the source text (Reiß & Vermeer, 2014). This perspective allows for greater flexibility and adaptation, which is particularly important in translating psychometric tests like the BDI, where cultural differences can significantly impact how test items are interpreted and understood.

When applying Skopos Theory to psychometric test translation, translators must consider both the linguistic accuracy and cultural relevance of the translated items. The goal is to produce a version of the test that remains faithful to the original while being culturally appropriate and meaningful for the target population. This approach ensures that the test's psychometric properties, such as reliability and validity, are preserved across different languages and cultural contexts (Munday, 2016).

Linguistic Shifts and Cultural Adaptation

Linguistic shifts refer to the changes that occur when translating text from one language to another. These shifts may involve alterations in syntax, word choice, and the overall structure of a sentence or phrase to better align with the norms and expectations of the target language (Jakobson, 1959). In the context of psychometric test translation, these shifts are not solely linguistic but also cultural, as they often require adapting content to be more culturally relevant to the target population.

Cultural adaptation in translation is particularly vital when dealing with sensitive topics like mental health. For instance, when translating the BDI from English to Arabic, specific terms or phrases might need modification to resonate more effectively with Arabic-speaking populations. The objective is to ensure that the translated test accurately reflects the psychological constructs it is designed to measure while being culturally sensitive and comprehensible to the target audience (Reiß & Vermeer, 2014).

Supporting Sense-for-Sense Translation

The concept of Sense-for-Sense translation closely aligns with Skopos Theory, focusing on conveying the intended meaning and purpose of the original text rather than adhering to a literal translation of individual words. This approach has been widely endorsed in translation studies, recognizing that effective translation often requires transcending the literal to capture the source text's essence in a way that is meaningful to the target audience (Lefevere, 1992).

Historical practices, such as Martin Luther's translation of the Bible, along with the theoretical contributions of scholars like John Dryden, Roman Jakobson, and Jeremy Munday, underscore the significance of this approach. They argue that successful translation must prioritize the conveyed meaning, particularly in culturally sensitive areas such as mental health assessments (Dryden, 1997; Munday, 2016). In the case of the BDI, a Sense-for-Sense translation would ensure that the test items are both accurate and culturally relevant, thereby enhancing their reliability and validity in the Arabic-speaking context.

The field of translation studies, particularly in the context of subtitle translation, domestication, and dynamic equivalence, has seen significant advancements, especially with the application of theoretical frameworks such as Skopos theory and functional equivalence. Various scholars have examined the intricacies involved in translation, focusing on how meaning, cultural nuances, and audience perceptions are preserved or altered during the translation process.

Skopos Theory and Subtitle Translation

Skopos theory, developed by Vermeer (1989), is a target-oriented approach that prioritizes the purpose of the translation within its cultural context. It emphasizes three key rules: skopos (purpose), coherence, and fidelity (Vermeer, 1989). This theory shifts the focus from the source text to how the translation serves the target audience's needs. Alsager and Almohizea (2023) applied Skopos theory to analyze the Arabic subtitle translation of the 2020 film *Mulan*, identifying translation violations at multiple linguistic levels and exploring the strategies used by translators. Their study revealed that while literal translation was frequently employed, it often failed to meet the skopos and coherence rules, thus affecting the quality of the subtitles. The study emphasized that Skopos theory could serve as a valuable framework for improving subtitle translation quality by balancing fidelity to the source text with the necessity of making the translation accessible to the target audience (Alsager & Almohizea, 2023).

In the realm of subtitle translation, scholars like Diaz Cintas and Anderman (2009) have long noted the inherent challenges posed by space constraints and the need for conciseness, particularly when dealing with culture-specific references. Alsager and Almohizea (2023) further extended this discussion by highlighting the difficulties in translating cultural elements while ensuring the subtitles remained relevant and engaging for Arabic-speaking audiences.

Domestication in Translation

Domestication, a concept introduced by Venuti (1995), refers to the adaptation of a foreign text to align with the cultural values and norms of the target audience, minimizing the foreignness of the source text. This strategy has been widely debated among translation scholars. While domestication enhances readability and relatability for the target audience, it raises concerns about preserving the authenticity and cultural uniqueness of the original text (Venuti, 1995).

In the same year, many translations got analysed by researchers to highlight the challenges for the translator when it comes to bring the work to new audience who has different language, culture, and belief system.

Sabir and Sadiq (2024) explored domestication in the Urdu translation of Elif Shafak's *The Forty Rules of Love* by utilizing Nida's model of functional equivalence, which focuses on conveying the same effect in the target language as the original text (Nida, 1964). Their study demonstrated that domestication successfully bridges cultural gaps and enhances reader comprehension, while also pointing out the ethical challenges involved in maintaining a balance

between fidelity to the original text and cultural adaptation for the target audience (Sabir & Sadiq, 2024).

Scholars such as Berman (1984) and Even-Zohar (1990) have critiqued domestication for diluting the cultural uniqueness of the source text. However, Sabir and Sadiq (2024) argue that domestication, when applied thoughtfully, can make foreign texts more accessible to a wider audience while retaining their core messages. Their analysis of specific cultural terms in the Urdu translation, such as the use of "خدا" (Khuda) for "God" and "کفر" (Kufr) for "blasphemy," highlights how domestication can align a translation with the cultural and religious sensibilities of the target audience without significantly compromising the source text's integrity.

Dynamic Equivalence and Cultural Nuances

Nida's (1964) theory of dynamic equivalence emphasizes the importance of conveying meaning, intent, and effect in the target language rather than strictly adhering to the original linguistic structure. This approach prioritizes natural and fluid expression while maintaining the spirit and style of the original. Hassan, Khan, Zahra, and Mansoor (2024) examined how dynamic equivalence affects the preservation of cultural nuances in the English-to-Urdu translation of *The Forty Rules of Love*. Their research revealed that dynamic equivalence is instrumental in retaining the original meanings of culturally specific elements, such as the translation of "amethyst" to "بنفشی" and "turquoise" to "سبزی مائل فیروزی," thereby making them understandable to an Urdu-speaking audience (Hassan et al., 2024).

Other scholars, such as Ahmad and Iqbal (2022), have applied Nida's concept of dynamic and formal equivalence to religious texts, demonstrating how dynamic equivalence can help preserve both the meaning and emotional impact of sacred scriptures when translated into other languages. Hassan et al. (2024) further argue that dynamic equivalence ensures that translations resonate with the target audience while maintaining the original text's cultural context. Their research supports Nida's (1964) claim that a successful translation must prioritize naturalness and intelligibility over rigid linguistic fidelity.

Skopos Theory in Literary Translation

Skopos theory has also been applied in the translation of literary works, particularly those rich in cultural and emotional nuances. Sultani and Akram (2023) examined the translation of Jokha Alharthi's *Sayyidat al-Qamar* (translated as *Celestial Bodies*) through the lens of Skopos theory. They found that the theory was effective in guiding the translation process, allowing translators to balance fidelity to the source text with accessibility for English-speaking readers. Their study revealed that maintaining cultural and emotional nuances in translation requires a careful balance between the original text's authenticity and the needs of the target audience (Sultani & Akram, 2023).

This balance is echoed by other scholars, such as Bassnett (2014) and Lefevere (1992), who argue that literary translation is an act of cultural mediation, where the translator must navigate between preserving the source text's integrity and adapting it to the target culture. The application of Skopos theory, as demonstrated in Sultani and Akram's (2023) study, provides a structured framework for achieving this balance.

Translation of Classical Texts

The translation of classical texts poses unique challenges, particularly in terms of preserving poetic elements, wordplay, and cultural references. Ishaq and Akram (2023) conducted a textual analysis of Firaq Gorakhpuri's Urdu translation of Shakespeare's *Hamlet*, applying Vinay

and Darbelnet's (1995) model of translational shift alongside Skopos theory. Their study revealed that the translation utilized various strategies such as borrowing, calque, and literal translation to maintain faithfulness to the original text while also employing adaptation to ensure cultural and linguistic relevance for Urdu-speaking audiences (Ishaq & Akram, 2023).

Vinay and Darbelnet's (1995) model, which includes techniques like transposition, modulation, and adaptation, provides a useful framework for analyzing the complexities involved in translating classical works. Ishaq and Akram (2023) argue that while faithfulness to the source text is important, translators must also consider the cultural and linguistic expectations of the target audience. Their study contributes to the broader understanding of how translation strategies can be effectively applied to make classical texts more accessible to modern readers.

End-to-End Speech Translation

In the field of speech translation, recent developments have focused on the shift from traditional pipeline approaches to end-to-end models that use deep neural networks. According to a study conducted by Bougares & Jouili (2022), these models directly map speech from the source language to text in the target language without intermediate transcription steps. Their research on Arabic-to-English speech translation systems demonstrated the effectiveness of end-to-end models in handling large datasets, such as the GALE project's Arabic audio recordings and their English translations (Bougares et al., 2022).

This shift towards end-to-end models has been discussed by other scholars, such as Sperber et al. (2020), who note that these models offer improved efficiency and accuracy by eliminating the need for multiple processing stages. Bougares et al.'s (2022) study highlighted the importance of advanced neural network architectures, such as BLSTM and attention mechanisms, in improving the performance of end-to-end speech translation systems.

Akan, Karim, and Chowdhury (2019) identify several challenges that translators encounter when translating from Arabic to English, including vocabulary, grammar, and stylistic differences. They emphasize that literal translation often fails due to these complexities, particularly in areas such as word order and tense, where Arabic and English structures diverge significantly. The authors highlight the importance of free translation, where meaning is prioritized over form to ensure accurate communication (Akan et al., 2019). Their work underscores the complexity of translation, which requires not just linguistic knowledge but also a nuanced understanding of cultural context.

In another study, Alrumayh (2021) examines translation strategies used in consumer-oriented texts, particularly focusing on omission and addition. Her research analyzes bilingual in-flight magazine articles, demonstrating how translators use omission to remove culturally redundant information and addition to clarify concepts unfamiliar to the target audience. Alrumayh (2021) concludes that both strategies are essential in ensuring that translations are accessible and culturally appropriate, highlighting the role of the translator as a mediator between cultures.

The complexity of translating stylistic elements, particularly semantic repetition, is further explored by Faqih (2019), who investigates strategies used to handle repetition in Arabic short stories. He identifies four strategies: retention, compression, grammatical shift, and deletion. These strategies are applied to ensure that the stylistic elements of the source text are either maintained or adapted in a way that resonates with English readers. Faqih (2019) also notes the difficulty of preserving rhetorical effects, as English tends to avoid repetition, whereas it is often a stylistic device in Arabic.

Hassan (2020) delves into the issue of textual cohesion in English-Arabic translations. His study identifies several factors contributing to incohesiveness, such as mismanagement of text structure, connectivity, and word choice. Hassan (2020) highlights the need for translators to be aware of both linguistic structures and textual coherence, emphasizing that improper use of connectors can significantly disrupt the flow of the translated text.

Finally, Khalifa and Elgindy (2014) adopt a sociological perspective on Arabic fiction translation. Their work draws on Bourdieu's framework to explore how external factors, such as political and cultural influences, affect the translation process. They argue that Arabic fiction translation has evolved in distinct phases, each shaped by socio-political contexts, and that translators must navigate these external pressures while maintaining the integrity of the original text (Khalifa & Elgindy, 2014).

Together, these studies provide a comprehensive view of the complexities involved in Arabic-English translation. They underscore the importance of balancing linguistic accuracy with cultural sensitivity, as well as the need for flexibility in translation strategies to accommodate the differences between the two languages.

Implications of Skopos Theory for BDI Translation

Skopos Theory's principles of functional equivalence and cultural relevance are particularly valuable when applied to the translation of psychometric tests like the BDI. By focusing on the function and purpose of the test within the target culture, translators can ensure that the test remains meaningful and accurate for the new population. For example, the application of Skopos Theory would guide translators to modify items that may not resonate culturally, while still preserving the test's core purpose—measuring depression. This ensures that the translated version not only functions effectively but also respects the cultural values and linguistic norms of the target audience (Reiß & Vermeer, 2014).

In summary, translating psychometric tests like the BDI requires careful consideration of both linguistic accuracy and cultural relevance. Skopos Theory offers a useful framework for guiding this process, as it emphasizes the importance of the translation's function within the target culture. By prioritizing the purpose of the translated test, translators can ensure that it remains reliable, valid, and culturally appropriate. Future research should continue to explore the application of Skopos Theory in the translation of other psychometric tools, as well as investigate additional strategies for enhancing the cultural sensitivity and reliability of these assessments.

Methodology

The methodology of this research paper is designed to investigate the application of Skopos Theory in the translation process of the Beck Depression Inventory (BDI) psychometric test from English to Arabic. The focus of the analysis is on understanding the linguistic and cultural shifts that occur during the translation process, how these shifts affect the reliability and cultural sensitivity of the test, and the insights gained from qualitative research.

A qualitative study is essential for exploring complex, context-specific phenomena, providing deep insights into linguistic and cultural adaptations in translation. This study uses qualitative research methodology to understand how Skopos Theory guides translators in

recontextualizing the Beck Depression Inventory, ensuring both cultural sensitivity and psychological accuracy in the Arabic version.

Skopos Theory, which emphasizes the purpose of translation as a guiding principle, is selected as the analytical framework for this study. This theory is particularly suitable for assessing translations where the functional aspects, such as the intended use and the target audience's cultural and linguistic context, are critical. By applying Skopos Theory, the research aims to evaluate whether the Arabic translation of the BDI retains its intended purpose of accurately assessing depressive symptoms while being culturally sensitive and linguistically appropriate for Arabic-speaking populations.

For this analysis, 21 lines from the BDI psychometric test were randomly selected. These lines represent a range of questions designed to measure various symptoms of depression, such as sadness, hopelessness, guilt, and physical symptoms. The randomness of the selection ensures a representative sample of the entire test, allowing for a comprehensive analysis of the translation quality and its adherence to the principles of Skopos Theory.

The analysis focuses on both linguistic and cultural changes in the translation. Linguistic changes refer to shifts in expression, word choice, and sentence structure that occur during the translation process. These changes are analyzed to determine if they preserve the original meaning and emotional tone of the BDI items. Cultural changes, on the other hand, refer to adaptations made to ensure that the translation is relevant and understandable to the target audience. These changes are crucial for maintaining the test's effectiveness and reliability across different cultural contexts.

Each of the 21 selected lines is analyzed individually to identify specific linguistic and cultural shifts. The analysis involves comparing the original English text with the Arabic translation, noting deviations and adaptations. Comments are provided for each line, explaining the rationale behind the changes and their implications for the reliability and cultural sensitivity of the test. The analysis also examines how well the translation adheres to the principles of Skopos Theory, particularly in terms of achieving the intended purpose of the BDI.

By following this methodology, the research aims to provide a detailed and nuanced understanding of the translation process of the BDI into Arabic, highlighting the importance of maintaining both linguistic accuracy and cultural relevance to ensure the effectiveness of psychological assessments across different languages and cultures.

Arabic Translation and Skopos Theory

The translation of the Beck Depression Inventory (BDI) from English to Arabic, guided by Skopos Theory, involves several key considerations. Skopos Theory emphasizes that the purpose (or "skopos") of a translation is the primary determinant of the translation methods and strategies

employed. This section analyzes how the translations align with the principles of Skopos Theory, particularly focusing on maintaining reliability, cultural sensitivity, and communicative functions.

Cultural Sensitivity and Linguistic Adaptation

1. I am so sad and unhappy that I can't stand it.

أننى حزين بدرجة لا أستطيع تحس-

The Arabic word "حزين" (sad) encompasses both "sad" and "unhappy," reflecting the linguistic economy and precision in Arabic. The translation avoids redundancy, aligning with the cultural context where one word can effectively convey multiple emotions.

The translation of phrases like "I am so sad and unhappy that I can't stand it" to "أننى حزين بدرجة لا أستطيع تحس" showcases a direct approach while maintaining the emotional intensity of the original statement.

2. I feel the future is hopeless and that things cannot improve.

اشعر بان المستقبل لا امل وان الأمور لن تحسن-

The use of "لن&بان ، ان" in a row emphasizes the depth of hopelessness. This structure reinforces the severity of the sentiment, which is a common rhetorical device in Arabic to enhance the emotional impact.

Similarly, "I feel the future is hopeless and that things cannot improve" is translated as "اشعر بان ان المستقبل لا امل وان الأمور لن تحسن," preserving the sense of hopelessness.

Maintaining Reliability

3. As I look back on my life, all I can see is a lot of failures.

عندما انظر الى ما مضى من سنوات عمرى فانا لا ارى سوى الفشل الذريع-

The expanded phrasing "عندما انظر الى ما مضى من سنوات عمرى" provides clarity and ensures the reader fully grasps the reflection on life. The additional words enhance comprehension, making the translation more explicit.

Statements like "As I look back on my life, all I can see is a lot of failures" are translated to "عندما انظر الى ما مضى من سنوات عمرى فانا لا ارى سوى الفشل الذريع," reflecting the speaker's retrospection and maintaining the original's reliability.

4. I am dissatisfied or bored with everything.

لا استمتع اطلاقا باى شى فى الحياة.

The phrase "باى شى فى الحياة" (with everything in life) adapts to the Arabic cultural context, emphasizing the speaker's dissatisfaction more broadly. This adaptation aligns with Arabic expressions that convey holistic discontent.

The translation "لا استمتع اطلاقا باى شى فى الحياة" for "I am dissatisfied or bored with everything" effectively communicates the speaker's dissatisfaction, ensuring that the reliability of the psychological state assessment is preserved.

Linguistic Shifts

5. I don't feel particularly guilty.

لا اشعر بالذنب

The word "particularly" is omitted because Arabic's linguistic richness allows "لا اشعر بالذنب" to sufficiently convey the intended meaning without redundancy.

The phrase "I don't feel particularly guilty" is rendered as "لا اشعر بالذنب," a concise and culturally appropriate adaptation.

6. I feel guilty all the time.

اشعر بالذنب بصفة عامة.

The translation "بصفة العامة" (usually) deviates slightly but conveys the ongoing nature of guilt in a culturally appropriate manner, as "usually" implies a persistent state in Arabic.

In translating "I feel guilty all the time" to "اشعر بالذنب بصفة عامة," the emphasis on constant guilt is maintained, which is crucial for accurate psychological assessment.

Emotional and Psychological States

7. I don't feel disappointed in myself.

لا اشعر بعد الرضا عن نفسي

"بعد الرضا" (distance from satisfaction) is used instead of a direct translation, reflecting common Arabic expressions for self-disappointment, ensuring the translation resonates with the target audience.

The statement "I don't feel disappointed in myself" is translated to "لا اشعر بعد الرضا عن نفسي," keeping the sentiment intact while ensuring cultural relevance.

8. I am disgusted with myself.

انا ممتعض من نفسي

The phrase "من نفسي" (from myself) is idiomatic in Arabic, effectively conveying the emotion without requiring a word-for-word translation.

"I am disgusted with myself" becomes "انا ممتعض من نفسي," capturing the self-directed disgust accurately.

Expressions of Self-Harm and Suicidal Thoughts

9. I would like to kill myself.

اصبحت اكره الحياة.

The translation "اصبت اكره الحياة" (I started hating life) softens the extremity of the original while still conveying severe distress, adhering to cultural sensitivities regarding expressions of self-harm.

The serious statement "I would like to kill myself" is translated to "اصبحت اكره الحياة," which, while culturally sensitive, slightly alters the directness of the original. This is a critical area where translation must be handled with utmost care to avoid underplaying the severity.

Behavioral Changes and Symptoms

10. I used to be able to cry, but now I can't cry even though I want to.

لقد كنت قادرا على البكا فيما مضى ولكنني الآن لا استطيع البكا حتى لو كانت لي رغبة في ذلك.

The addition of "لقد" and "فيما مضى" enhances the emotional depth and clarity of the temporal comparison, making the expression more relatable to Arabic speakers.

The translation "لقد كنت قادرا على البكا فيما مضى ولكنني الآن لا استطيع البكا حتى لو كانت لي رغبة في ذلك" for "I used to be able to cry, but now I can't cry even though I want to" accurately reflects the change in the ability to express emotions.

11. I am slightly more irritated now than usual.

اتضايق او اتواتر بسرعة الكثر من ذى قبل.

Using both "اتضايق" and "اتواتر" provides lexical variation and emphasizes irritation, offering the reader a clearer understanding through familiar terms.

"اتضايق او اتواتر بسرعة الكثر من ذى قبل" for "I am slightly more irritated now than usual" captures the increase in irritability, a key symptom.

Interest in Social Interactions

12. I am less interested in other people than I used to be.

انى اقل اهتماما بالآخرين مما اعتدت ان اكون.

The addition of "انى" (indeed) intensifies the statement, ensuring the reader recognizes the significance of the change in interest.

"I am less interested in other people than I used to be" translated to "انى اقل اهتماما بالآخرين مما اعتدت ان اكون" shows a decline in social interest, maintaining the original meaning.

13. I can't make decisions at all anymore.

لم اعد استطيع اتخاذ القرارات على الاطلاق

"على الاطلاق" (at all) comprehensively covers the concepts of "at all" and "anymore," demonstrating the efficiency of Arabic expressions.

Concerns about Appearance and Work Capability

14. I am worried that I am looking old or unattractive.

يقلقنى ان ابدو اكبر سنا اول و اقل حيوية.

The translation adapts to a natural Arabic communication style, using familiar phrases like "يقلقنى" (that makes me worry) to convey concern.

"يقلقنى ان ابدو اكبر سنا اول و اقل حيوية" for "I am worried that I am looking old or unattractive" effectively communicates self-image concerns.

15. I can work about as well as before.

استطيع ان اقوم بعملى كما تعودت.

The phrase "ان اقوم بعملى" (I can easily manage to work) provides functional equivalence to the original, reflecting a natural way of expressing capability in Arabic

"استطيع ان اقوم بعملى كما تعودت" accurately translates "I can work about as well as before," indicating unchanged work performance.

Sleep Patterns and Fatigue

16. I wake up several hours earlier than I used to and cannot get back to sleep.

استيقظ قبل بضعة ساعات من موعدى المعتاد ولا استطيع الودة للنوم مرة اخرى.

Adding "مرة اخرى" (second time) emphasizes the repeated difficulty, aligning with the temporal emphasis typical in Arabic expressions.

Changes in sleep patterns are well-captured in "استيقظ قبل بضعة ساعات من موعدى"

17. I get tired from doing almost anything.

اتعب من القيام باى جهد فى عمل اى شى.

This translation, while deviating from the source, comprehensively conveys the extent of exhaustion, ensuring the reader fully grasps the sentiment.

"اتعب من القيام باى جهد فى عمل اى شى" for "I get tired from doing almost anything" conveys the increased fatigue accurately.

Appetite and Physical Concerns

18. I have no appetite at all anymore.

ليس لدى شهية على الاطلاق فى الوقت الحاضر.

Adding "في الوقت الحاضر" (at the present time) provides temporal contextualization, emphasizing the current state of appetite loss.

The phrase "I have no appetite at all anymore" is translated to "ليس لدى شهية على الإطلاق في الوقت الحاضر," effectively reflecting the loss of appetite.

19. I am very worried about physical problems and it's hard to think of much else.

اننى مشغول جدا ببعض المشكلات اليومية و من العصب ان افكر فى اى شى آخر.

The translation balances generalization and specificity, using "بعض المشكلات" (some problems) to convey the extent of concern without overwhelming specificity.

Physical worries are translated well in "اننى مشغول جدا ببعض المشكلات اليومية و من"

Interest in Sexual Activity

20. I have almost no interest in sex.

لقد قل الآن اهتمامى بالجنس كثيرا.

Adding "لقد" (indeed) and using "قل" (shortened) intensifies the statement, making it culturally relevant and impactful for the Arabic-speaking audience.

The translation "لقد قل الآن اهتمامى بالجنس كثيرا" for "I have almost no interest in sex" accurately reflects a decrease in sexual interest, a critical aspect of the psychological assessment.

21. I don't feel I am any worse than anybody else.

لا اشعر بانى اسوا من الآخرين.

The use of "الآخرين" (others) instead of a singular form is more natural in Arabic, aligning with how comparisons are typically expressed in the language.

The Arabic translation of the Beck Depression Inventory (BDI) demonstrates a meticulous adherence to Skopos Theory, ensuring that the primary purpose of the original test—to accurately assess depressive symptoms—is maintained. By focusing on reliability and cultural sensitivity, the translation process ensures that the test remains effective across different languages and cultures.

Clarity and Emotional Impact

The translation prioritizes clarity, ensuring that each item on the BDI is comprehensible to Arabic-speaking individuals. This is achieved through the careful selection of words and phrases that resonate with the emotional tone of the original text. For instance, the omission of redundant words and the use of expanded phrases enhance the readability and emotional impact of the translated items. This clarity is essential for respondents to accurately reflect their feelings and symptoms, thereby preserving the reliability of the assessment.

Cultural Relevance

Cultural relevance is another critical aspect addressed by the translation. The linguistic shifts, including the adaptation of culturally appropriate expressions, ensure that the translated BDI is sensitive to the norms and values of Arabic-speaking populations. This cultural sensitivity is evident in examples where the translations diverge slightly from the source text to better align with common Arabic expressions and idioms. By doing so, the translation avoids potential misunderstandings and ensures that respondents can relate to and understand the questions fully.

Emotional Tone and Meaning Preservation

The preservation of the original meaning and emotional tone is meticulously handled. The translation reflects the same depth of emotion and psychological states described in the original BDI. For instance, expressions of guilt, hopelessness, and dissatisfaction are translated in a manner that retains their intensity and significance. This careful handling of emotional content ensures that the translated BDI remains a valid and reliable tool for psychological assessment.

Linguistic Richness and Efficiency

The translation also leverages the linguistic richness and efficiency of the Arabic language. By using words that encompass multiple meanings and omitting unnecessary redundancies, the translation remains concise without losing the essence of the original text. This efficiency is crucial in maintaining the respondent's engagement and ensuring accurate responses.

In conclusion, the Arabic translation of the BDI, guided by Skopos Theory, exemplifies how careful linguistic and cultural adaptations can maintain the reliability and validity of psychological assessments. By prioritizing clarity, cultural relevance, and emotional impact, the translation ensures that the BDI remains a robust tool for diagnosing depression, thus contributing to effective mental health care in Arabic-speaking regions.

Discussion on the Analysis

Translation of "I do not feel sad" to "لا أشعر بالحزن":

This translation effectively preserves the original's straightforwardness, making it clear and culturally appropriate in Arabic. The phrase is simple and direct, matching the tone and intention of the original.

The analysis correctly emphasizes the clarity of this translation. However, a deeper exploration of the phrase's connotations in different Arabic-speaking regions might be beneficial. Understanding the cultural contexts where this phrase might carry different emotional weights could provide more insights.

Translation of "I am sad" to "أنا حزين":

The translation retains the original's emotional tone and simplicity. "أنا حزين" is a common way to express sadness in Arabic, making it an appropriate and effective translation.

The analysis is accurate in its assessment, but it could benefit from a discussion on the emotional intensity of "أنا حزين" across different dialects. The analysis could explore whether this phrase fully captures the intended severity or if there might be more context-specific alternatives.

Translation of "I am sad all the time and I can't snap out of it" to "أشعر بالحزن طوال الوقت ولا أستطيع التخلص منه":

The translation effectively conveys the persistent and overwhelming nature of sadness, which is crucial in assessing the depth of depression.

The analysis is correct in highlighting the importance of capturing the continuous nature of sadness. However, the phrase "لا أستطيع التخلص منه" might not fully capture the original's sense of helplessness. Exploring alternative expressions that might better convey a sense of being trapped in this emotion would be beneficial.

Translation of "I am so sad or unhappy that I can't stand it" to "أنا حزين جداً لدرجة أنني لا أستطيع تحمله":

This translation preserves the intensity and extremity of the original phrase, which is essential for understanding severe depressive symptoms.

The analysis correctly identifies the translation's effectiveness. However, discussing whether the phrase "لا أستطيع تحمله" fully captures the original's intensity could provide additional insights. The use of more emotionally charged language might better convey the overwhelming nature of the feeling described.

Translation of "I am not disappointed in myself" to "الست محبطاً من نفسي":

The translation accurately reflects the original meaning while maintaining its straightforwardness. "الست محبطاً من نفسي" is a culturally appropriate and clear translation.

The analysis rightly points out the adequacy of this translation. However, exploring whether "محبطاً" carries the same connotations of self-criticism across different Arabic dialects would be valuable. A more in-depth discussion on the term's emotional implications could enhance the analysis.

Translation of "I am disappointed in myself" to "أشعر بخيبة أمل من نفسي":

The translation captures the essence of self-disappointment, with "خيبة أمل" being a strong and culturally resonant expression in Arabic.

The analysis accurately identifies the effectiveness of this translation. However, a deeper discussion on whether "خيبة أمل" fully conveys the self-reproach implied in the original would be useful. Exploring the phrase's emotional weight across different regions could add nuance to the analysis.

Translation of "I feel I am a complete failure as a person" to "أشعر أنني فاشل تماماً كشخص":

This translation retains the original's strong self-critical tone, crucial for assessing severe depression. "فاشل تماماً" effectively conveys the intensity of the feeling.

The analysis correctly emphasizes the translation's fidelity to the original. However, discussing whether "فاشل تماماً" might be too harsh or not sufficiently nuanced in certain cultural contexts could enhance the analysis. Exploring softer alternatives or culturally specific expressions might provide additional insights.

Translation of "I hate myself" to "أكره نفسي":

The translation is direct and captures the strong negative emotion of the original phrase. "أكره نفسي" is a commonly understood and effective expression in Arabic.

Translation of "I have lost all interest in other people" to "فقدت كل اهتمامي بالآخرين":

The translation effectively communicates the sense of detachment and disinterest expressed in the original phrase. "فقدت كل اهتمامي بالآخرين" is clear and accurately reflects the original sentiment.

Translation of "I would like to kill myself" to "أصبحت أكره الحياة" (I started hating life):

The translation is culturally sensitive, avoiding the direct mention of suicide while still conveying severe distress. The phrase "أصبحت أكره الحياة" is more culturally acceptable in Arabic.

The analysis rightly acknowledges the cultural considerations in this translation. However, it could be more critical in assessing whether the translation sufficiently captures the original's severity. Balancing cultural sensitivity with the need for an accurate psychological assessment would be a valuable discussion point.

Translation of "I would kill myself if I had the chance" to "أفكر في إنهاء حياتي إذا أتاحت لي الفرصة":

This translation directly addresses the intent of the original phrase, making it a powerful and clear expression in Arabic. "أفكر في إنهاء حياتي" is strong and communicates the seriousness of the thought.

The analysis is accurate in its assessment of this translation's directness and clarity. However, a discussion on the potential impact of this phrase in various Arabic-speaking cultures, where discussions of suicide may be taboo, would provide additional insights. Exploring softer alternatives while retaining the original's intent could be considered.

Translation of "I get as much satisfaction out of things as I used to" to "لا زلت أشعر بالرضا عن الأشياء كما في السابق":

This translation captures the original's sentiment, maintaining the idea of satisfaction and continuity. The phrase "لا زلت أشعر بالرضا" effectively conveys the sense of consistent satisfaction.

The analysis identifies the translation's effectiveness. However, a deeper exploration of whether the phrase "كما في السابق" might fully capture the original's meaning could be beneficial. Discussing potential alternatives that might better convey the idea of unchanged satisfaction could add value.

Translation of "I don't enjoy things the way I used to" to "لا أستمتع بالأشياء كما كنت من قبل":

The translation effectively communicates the sense of diminished enjoyment expressed in the original. "لا أستمتع بالأشياء كما كنت من قبل" is clear and appropriately reflects the original sentiment.

The analysis is accurate, but it could benefit from a discussion on whether the phrase "كما كنت من قبل" fully conveys the original's sense of loss. Exploring whether there are alternative expressions that might better capture the gradual decline in enjoyment could enhance the analysis.

Translation of "I don't get real satisfaction out of anything anymore" to "لم أعد أشعر بالرضا":

This translation captures the original's sense of complete loss of satisfaction, which is crucial in assessing severe depression. The phrase "لم أعد أشعر بالرضا الحقيقي" effectively conveys the intensity of the feeling.

The analysis is correct in its assessment of the translation's fidelity to the original. However, a discussion on whether "الرضا الحقيقي" fully captures the original's intensity and specificity could provide additional insights. Exploring alternatives that might better convey the depth of dissatisfaction could add value.

Translation of "I am dissatisfied and bored with everything" to "أنا غير راضٍ وأشعر بالملل من كل شيء":

The translation retains the original's strong sense of dissatisfaction and boredom, making it effective in Arabic. "أنا غير راضٍ وأشعر بالملل" is a clear and direct expression.

The analysis accurately identifies the effectiveness of this translation. However, a more critical evaluation of whether the phrase "وأشعر بالملل" fully captures the original's sense of pervasive boredom could be beneficial. Discussing whether alternative phrases might better convey the depth of the respondent's feelings could add nuance to the analysis.

Translation of "I don't feel particularly guilty" to "لا أشعر بالذنب بشكل خاص":

This translation captures the original's nuanced expression of guilt, retaining the sense of not feeling overly burdened by it. The phrase "لا أشعر بالذنب بشكل خاص" is clear and effectively conveys the intended meaning.

Translation of "I feel guilty a good part of the time" to "أشعر بالذنب في معظم الأوقات":

The translation effectively conveys the original's sense of frequent guilt, which is important in assessing the respondent's emotional state. "أشعر بالذنب في معظم الأوقات" is a clear and accurate reflection of the original sentiment.

The analysis correctly identifies the translation's effectiveness. However, a more critical evaluation of whether the phrase "في معظم الأوقات" fully captures the original's frequency of guilt could be beneficial. Discussing whether alternative phrases might better convey the intensity and recurrence of the feeling could add depth to the analysis.

Translation of "I feel quite guilty most of the time" to "أشعر بالذنب كثيرًا في معظم الأوقات":

This translation captures the original's strong sense of guilt, making it a powerful expression in Arabic. "أشعر بالذنب كثيرًا" effectively conveys the intensity of the feeling.

The analysis is accurate, but it could benefit from a discussion on whether the phrase "كثيرًا" fully conveys the original's intensity and frequency. Exploring whether there are

alternative expressions that might better capture the pervasive nature of the guilt could add nuance to the analysis.

Translation of "I feel guilty all of the time" to "أشعر بالذنب طوال الوقت":

The translation effectively captures the original's sense of constant guilt, which is crucial in assessing severe emotional distress. "أشعر بالذنب طوال الوقت" is a clear and direct reflection of the original sentiment.

The analysis emphasizes the translation's fidelity to the original. However, a discussion on whether the phrase "طوال الوقت" fully captures the intensity and omnipresence of the guilt could provide additional insights. Exploring alternatives that might better convey the depth and constancy of the feeling could add value.

Translation of "I do not feel I am being punished" to "لا أشعر أنني أتعرض للعقاب":

The translation accurately reflects the original's sentiment, maintaining the idea of not feeling punished. "لا أشعر أنني أتعرض للعقاب" is a clear and culturally appropriate expression.

The analysis is correct in its assessment of this translation. However, a deeper discussion on whether "أتعرض للعقاب" fully captures the original's nuance could provide additional insights. Exploring whether there are alternative expressions that might better convey the subtlety of the respondent's feelings would be valuable.

Translation of "I feel I am being punished" to "أشعر أنني أتعرض للعقاب":

This translation retains the original's sense of punishment, which is crucial in assessing the respondent's emotional state. "أشعر أنني أتعرض للعقاب" effectively conveys the intended meaning.

The analysis accurately identifies the translation's effectiveness. However, a discussion on whether "أتعرض للعقاب" fully captures the original's emotional intensity could be beneficial. Exploring alternative phrases that might better convey the respondent's feelings of being unjustly punished could add nuance to the analysis.

Conclusion

This study has explored the application of Skopos Theory in translating the Beck Depression Inventory (BDI) from English to Arabic, emphasizing the importance of linguistic shifts, cultural adaptation, and communicative functions. The findings demonstrate that Skopos Theory offers a practical and effective framework for ensuring that translated psychometric tools maintain their reliability, validity, and cultural relevance.

In addressing the first research question—**What linguistic shifts are evident in the translation of the Beck Depression Inventory (BDI) from English to Arabic, as influenced by Skopos Theory?**—the analysis highlights several significant linguistic changes. Translators, guided by Skopos Theory, adapt specific terms and phrases to better align with Arabic linguistic norms and cultural contexts. For example, certain emotional states like "hopelessness" and "self-disgust," central to the BDI's measurement of depression, may not have direct equivalents in Arabic. Translators must use culturally relevant expressions or modify the intensity of certain terms to ensure that the meaning resonates with Arabic-speaking populations. This shift is not merely a linguistic adjustment but a re-contextualization of psychological concepts within the framework of the target culture. By focusing on the communicative function of each item in the BDI, Skopos Theory helps ensure that the intended meaning is preserved in a way that is understandable and relatable for the Arabic-speaking audience.

Regarding the second research question—**In what ways do translators ensure both reliability and cultural sensitivity in translating the Beck Depression Inventory (BDI) into Arabic, following Skopos Theory principles?**—the findings from the literature and analysis emphasize the importance of cultural adaptation. Skopos Theory encourages translators to prioritize the cultural relevance of the translation, ensuring that the tool does not lose its diagnostic effectiveness in the new context. For instance, translators often adapt items that may be culturally sensitive or interpreted differently in Arab cultures, such as feelings of guilt or personal worthlessness, which may carry different connotations. By making these adaptations, translators enhance the cultural sensitivity of the BDI, ensuring that respondents can relate to the items without feeling alienated or confused by culturally foreign concepts.

In short, This study investigates the application of Skopos Theory in the translation of the Beck Depression Inventory (BDI) from English to Arabic, focusing on linguistic shifts, cultural adaptations, and the preservation of communicative functions. The analysis of 21 randomly selected BDI items reveals that translators employ various strategies, including omission, addition, and cultural substitution, to ensure clarity, emotional resonance, and cultural relevance. The findings demonstrate that adapting the BDI through Skopos Theory ensures that the translation remains faithful to its intended psychological function while being linguistically and culturally appropriate for Arabic-speaking populations. This study highlights the critical role of purpose-driven translation in maintaining the reliability and validity of psychometric tools across different languages and cultures

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