

Schema Activation Management in Translation: Challenges and Risks

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Abstract

The present paper investigates the powerful effects of schemata on the translator's choices, and how translation theory and English as a foreign language (EFL) pedagogy can contribute to a better understanding and informed use of schemata. My principal research question is: to what extent could the study of the various types of schemata benefit translation students, professionals and trainers? Drawing on Grice's cooperative principle (1975), Martin and White's appraisal theory (2005), and Pym's risk management analysis (2015), three English excerpts with their corresponding Arabic translations are thoroughly analyzed. This is followed by linking the findings to translator training. The comparative analysis demonstrates that activating schema seems to reflect the translator's ideology and power relations as a result of asymmetric information that characterizes the relation between translators, commissioners and readers. It also shows that the lack of formal schema leads to an inaccurate employment of the linguistic schema and image schema. Finally, the paper argues that the same schema building techniques, such as semantic mapping, adopted in EFL teaching methods could be applied to translator training. The study, therefore, concludes with a call for empirical translation research into the functions of schemata, particularly the linguistic schema, in light of think-aloud protocols.

Keywords: English-Arabic translation, Grice's maxims, risk management, schema, translator training

Cite as: Ali, H. (2018). Schema Activation Management in Translation: Challenges and Risks. *Arab World English Journal for Translation & Literary Studies*, 2 (1).
DOI: <http://dx.doi.org/10.24093/awejtls/vol2no1.11>