

Translation across Time and Space

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By

Wafa Abu Hatab

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

Foreword	vii
Chapter One.....	1
From Theory to Practice: Literary Translation between Visibility and Invisibility Rima Moqattash	
Chapter Two	15
Translation of Cultural Utterances in Literary Discourse from Arabic into English Mohammad Al-Badawi	
Chapter Three	35
The Role of Political Discourse Analysis in Translation: Political Deception in Speeches of Four Arab Autocrats as a Case Study Nehad Helmy Heliel	
Chapter Four	51
The Analysis of Ideology in Translating Political News with Reference to BBC News Discourse Kais Kadhim	
Chapter Five	65
Translating Gender between Arabic and English Djamel Goui	
Chapter Six	81
A Sociological Approach of the Professionalization Process of Interpreting in Greece Anastasios Ioannidis and Zoi Resta	
Chapter Seven.....	97
The Influence of Machine Translation on Students of a Translation Department Laith S. Hadla and Abeer Alhasan	

Chapter Eight.....	117
English 'Eye' and its Arabic Equivalent 'ʿayn': Similar or Different?	
Shyma Al-Shukri and Shehdeh Fareh	
Chapter Nine.....	143
Standard and Colloquial Arabic in Courtrooms in Jordan:	
Forensic Translation and Interpreting Practice	
Wafa abu Hatab	
Chapter Ten	157
Translation in Business Contexts:	
Lexical and Semantic Transfer in Bilingual In-Flight Magazines	
Anca GÂȚĂ and Mohammed Al-Khatib	
List of Contributors	169

FOREWORD

As a human activity, translation can be traced back to the first time man translated his feelings and attitudes into words. With the human circle expanding to incorporate different languages and culture, translation has become a means of bridging cultural gaps and bringing civilizations together. It is not easy to arrive at one definite definition of translation. Some think of it as an art in which the translator's creativity in shaping his knowledge of the source and target languages into moulds that can appeal to the target audience is manifested. Others view it as a science that dwells on the knowledge of linguistics and a profession that demands the skillful handling of all aspects of the meaning of the source and the target language professionally. As such, translation is a dynamic process that has always had the ability to cope with the social developments and changing lifestyles paving the way for international interaction, thus offering a great opportunity for establishing cultural exchange.

With the whole world becoming a global village, translation acquired a remarkable dynamicity that encapsulated time and space, bridging gaps between cultures despite all geographical boundaries. Contributions to this volume crossed various spaces including Jordan, Greece, Egypt, Malaysia, Romania, the United Arab Emirates and Algeria, with studies dealing with several aspects of translation including literary, political, legal, machine translation and interpreting, and covering a diversity of languages including Arabic, English, French and Greek.

The opening chapter of this volume sheds light on the issue of the translator's visibility and invisibility in literary translation. Rima Moqattach provides an account of her own experience in literary translation from Arabic into English trying to explore the extent to which foreignization, domestication and adaptation can be applied. Focusing on the translator's (in)visibility, Moqattach concludes that domestication prevails in the translated text side-by-side, with foreignization calling for practice under the umbrella of theory.

A pragmatic approach to the study of literary translation is employed by Mohammad Al-Badawi, who examines the translation of Arabic politeness formulas into English working basically with two novels translated from

Arabic into English. Focusing on the social and religious aspect of politeness formulas in Arabic, the study provides a critical review of the translation of the lexis that involves politeness. Loss of translation is attributed to the cultural differences between Arabic and English in the way politeness is encoded.

The challenges involved in translating political texts are tackled by Nehad Heliel and Kais Kadhim in chapters three and four. Heliel scrutinizes deception as one of these challenges, stressing the role of political discourse analysis in understanding and translating political texts and calling for applying linguistic strategies to identify deception in political speeches. Kadhim's chapter on ideology in translating political news gives evidence of the effect of the translator's ideology on the translation process.

Djamel Goui shifts the reader's attention to gender differences between Arabic and English, pinpointing the difficulties caused by these differences and calling for identifying the different types of gender to render it accurately and achieve faithful translation.

Interpreting is the focal point of chapter six, in which Anastasios Ioannidis & Zoi Resta investigate the professionalization process of interpreting in Greece, adopting a sociological approach and calling for incorporating the efforts of the country's training institutions or the professional associations, for the professionalization process of interpreting. Within the same line of translators' training, Laith Hadla & Abeer Alhasan attempt to evaluate the efficiency of machine translation and translation aid tools as they are used by translation students at university level.

A detailed account of the similarities and differences between the English body-part term "eye" and its Arabic equivalent "ʿayn" is provided by Shyma al-shukri & Shedah Fareh. The study covers denotative meanings, connotative meanings, morphological specifications, inflections, derivations, compounding, metaphorical meanings and idiomatic uses outlining implications for translators.

The following chapter by the editor of the volume, Wafa abu Hatab, raises the issue of diglossia and interpreting practices in courtrooms in Jordan. The use of colloquial and standard Arabic by witnesses, lawyers and judges in courtrooms is investigated and the need for paying more attention to forensic translation that contributes to authorship identification is highlighted.

The closing chapter by Anca Găță & Mohammed Al-Khatib addresses lexical and semantic transfer in translation from French into English in bilingual magazines issued by Air France. Translators' localization strategies to make the products advertised more appealing to the target reader are outlined.

It is hoped that this volume can provide researchers interested in translation studies with more insight into translation as a product and a process. The pedagogical implications of some papers are expected to trigger future work on translators' training in all types of translation.

WAFA ABU HATAB

CHAPTER ONE

FROM THEORY TO PRACTICE, LITERARY TRANSLATION BETWEEN VISIBILITY AND INVISIBILITY

RIMA EID ASI MOQATTASH

ISRAA PRIVATE UNIVERSITY

Abstract

This study aims to illuminate the essential activity of translation of fiction from two perspectives: the theoretical and the practical. It explains how a good translation of fiction should provide the reader with a similar effect to that gained by reading the original text. It draws upon the personal experience of the researcher in translating different literary texts of Jordanian fiction from Arabic to English. This paper focuses on the researcher's translation of the first two pages of the first chapter of the *When the Wolves Grow Old* novel, written by the Jordanian author Jamal Naji (2008). The present study examines how the techniques of foreignization and domestication are applied in the researcher's own work of translation and how the original text from the source culture is adapted to the target culture. By analyzing the translated text and by focusing on the translator's (in)visibility, the author proves that domestication prevails in the translated text side-by-side with foreignization. She highlights the quality of practice under the light of the theory as presented in Lawrence Venuti's *The Translator's Invisibility* (1995).

Keywords: Literary translation, Visibility, Invisibility, Fiction, Lawrence Venuti.

Introduction

Translation has always involved considering the values of the target language and the source language. Whether these values are linguistic or cultural ones, an equivalent meaning should be given. Some translators prefer changing the source language values to make them readable for the target language readers. The term used to describe this process is domestication. Others, on the other hand, prefer to keep the values of the source language and expose the readers to them. The term used to describe this process is foreignization. When foreignization is used, translators keep the source language values and make them salient in the target language. The field of translation theory has witnessed a strong debate on whether to use domestication or foreignization for a long time. Venuti is a major translation theorist who discussed these two techniques in his book *The Translator's Invisibility*, (1995), where he provides a thorough and critical examination of translation from the seventeenth century to the present. He locates different translation theories and practices in tracing the history of translation, aiming to counter the strategy of fluency, making it possible to keep cultural and linguistic differences to avoid removing them. Venuti does that by using translations and texts that belong to British, American and European literatures to show how fluency was the prevalent strategy over other translation strategies shaping the canon of foreign literatures in English, and interrogating the imperialist and cultural consequences of the inscribed domestic values in the foreign texts during the same period.

He carried out research on translation in Anglo-American culture and found out that most publishers advocate domestication as it makes the translation reader-friendly. Therefore, the dominant trend is to choose texts from other cultures that appeal to Anglo-American values. Venuti considers this method as a means of making the translator 'invisible' on the one hand, and he also believes that it implies 'an ethnocentric reduction of the foreign text to target-language cultural values' (ibid, 20), on the other.

Throughout the years of my study and scholarship, I have thought of my role as a comparatist and literary translator as that of a person building bridges between two cultures and opening a window onto a different culture. I do believe that a good translation should share such features as fluency, smoothness and transparency, but I do not believe that the target text should be free of the slightest trace of translation and read as if it had been written by the original author in the target language. I do not think differences, including the foreignness, strangeness, and otherness, should be

replaced by something familiar to the target reader. While such replacement makes it easier for the target reader to understand translation, it minimizes the foreignness of the target text.

1. Between Foreignization and Domestication

Venuti (1995) presents a review of the history of translation. As far as the domesticated translation approach (the traditional approach) versus foreignization is concerned, translation can be traced back to the essay, “On the Different Methods of Translation” (1813), written by Schleiermacher. Foreignization was introduced by Schleiermacher (Kittel and Poltermann, 1998, 423). Schleiermacher defined it as ‘*the translator...moves the reader towards the writer*’ (as cited in Hatim, 2001). Venuti highlights how easy readability and intelligibility are conditioned by the translator’s efforts to produce a fluent text - a text which would sound as the original, even though at the expense of the culture of the other. He uses the term ‘invisibility’ to ‘*describe the translator’s situation and activity in contemporary Anglo-American culture.*’ (1995,1). Venuti points to a translation strategy commonly adopted in the United States and Great Britain, where a

“...translated text, whether prose or poetry, fiction or nonfiction, is judged acceptable by most publishers, reviewers and readers when it reads fluently, when the absence of any linguistic or stylistic peculiarities makes it seem transparent, giving the appearance that it reflects the foreign writer’s personality or intention or the essential meaning of the foreign text” (Venuti, 1995, 1).

Venuti thinks that Anglo-American culture imposes its own ‘hegemonic’ power upon other minor cultures by domestication; nevertheless, my paper does not tackle this matter in the present analysis. The concentration is on how Venuti recommends applying foreignization as a solution for cultural clashes in terms of translation, a solution that would recover the reputation of translators and highlight their importance according to Venuti (2001, 46). If foreignization is applied to a translation, as Jeremy Munday (2001) argues, the target language readers will feel that the translator is ‘*visible*’ and they will tell ‘*they are reading a translation*’ (Munday, 2001, 147).

Mona Baker is another theorist who distinguishes between domestication, which tends to adapt the source text to the target culture with the aim of making foreign readers understand the source text and culture, and foreignization, which is concerned with the source text. Baker, in her book *Strategies of Translation*, postulates that foreignization has the advantage

of "preserving linguistic and cultural differences by deviating from prevailing domestic values" (Baker 2008, 240). When foreignization is applied, translation registers differences of the foreign text. While the domestication of the foreign text is characterized by fluency, there is a risk of the text being 'appropriative and potentially imperialistic' (Venuti, 2004, 341).

When the text is translated in domestic terms and the translator moves in the direction of the reader in the target language, the original text should, thus, be the victim. Domesticating the text is said to exclude and conceal the cultural and social conditions of the original text to provide the illusion of transparency and immediate intelligibility. This is referred to by G. Rubel and Abraham Rosman in their book *Translating Cultures, Perspectives on Translation and Anthropology* as "the ethnocentric violence of translation" (Rubel and Rosman 2003, 9-10). Within this context, Venuti says that a translation strategy based on an aesthetic of discontinuity can best preserve that difference, that otherness, by reminding the reader of the gains and losses in the translation process and the unbridgeable gaps between cultures, because "a translated text should be the site at which a different culture emerges" (Venuti, 1995, 305).

Foreignizing a text means that "one must disrupt the cultural codes of the target language in the course of translation" (Venuti, 1995, 20). Thus, foreignized translation is seen as a way that "reflects and emphasizes the cultural differences between the source and target languages" (Rubel and Rosman, 2003, 9). One should take into consideration that a text is the product of a social community with a certain culture. When translated, as House says, the recipients "are presented with aspects of the foreign culture dressed in their own language and are thus invited to enter into an intercultural dialogue." (House, 2009 71-72)

This study supports Vinute's foreignized translation approach in translating the culture of the other in a globalized world, as opposed to the currently prevailing state of domesticated translation. Based on the notion of inseparability between language and culture and the fact that culture is a repository of a nation's history, values and norms, foreignizing translation is believed to be one approach in the direction of preserving the language and the culture of the other. By analyzing some aspects of my own translation of the first two pages of the first chapter of *When the Wolves Grow Old* by Jamal Naji (Naji, 2008, 1-2), that I have translated for the purposes of a critical analysis, I'll focus mainly on the way some Jordanianisms (cultural specifics of Jordanian society) and source language expressions

are translated into English because they are peculiar to the cultural context of the source text. The first problem while translating *When the Wolves Grow Old* was how to situate the source text within the English target culture system searching for its significance or acceptability. The action of Naji's novel takes place in the Jordanian capital (Amman) during the period of forty years covering the decades of the sixties, seventies, eighties, and nineties of the twentieth century and the first decade of the twenty-first century. The novel describes the period of Jordanian culture and history which encompasses the transition from the Jordanian rural agricultural period to the period of urbanization and industrialization. When translating the first two pages of the novel, that talk about people living in the bottom of Amman, the problem was how to transfer that source experience into the target system/context which has little to do with the source system/context. It is Jordanianisms from the source text that should be taken into consideration because they best reflect the essence of the source text and the way these expressions are transferred into the target language.

Texts must not be dissociated from their cultural environment. Julian House, in *Translation*, makes it quite clear that it is "*the translator who gives life to the original by giving it a cultural relevance it would not otherwise have*" (House, 2009, 22). Foreignized translation is also described as overt and the domesticated translation is described as covert. Venuti and a number of translation theorists and linguists advocate the foreignized translation mainly because it is an overt translation where the cultural element of the source language is explicitly present.

2. Maintaining the Text's Local Flavor

Normally, reality in the original text would be conceptualized by people through experiences that are bound to be different from those in the environment of the target receiver. *When the Wolves Grow Old* is a mixture of nostalgia of the past, a description of the present moment and reality in general. The novel can be seen as a very good example of a literary work that would never maintain its local flavor or its culture, which is Jordanian-specific if the choice would be domestication in translating it into English. In translating the two pages, I kept asking myself the following questions, What should be my strategy as a translator when it comes to transferring cultural references, for instance geographical names? Have I aimed at foreignization or domestication? What norms have governed my behavior? Have my decisions been governed by norms realized in the source

text, or by prevailing norms in the target culture? Finally, can these norms and strategies say anything about the purpose of the translation?

I have noticed tokens of what could be behavior patterns on my part as the translator. This may be taken to mean that I have been consistent in my strategies and solutions, so that it would be easy to state that as a translator I adhere to such and such a strategy. Even if I want to make generalizations about the decisions made by me as a translator, and to distinguish trends of translation behavior, the practice cannot always agree with the theory, so one has to remember that in the search for trends of behavior, by analyzing translated texts, there is inconsistency to be found everywhere. As Gideon Toury, in *"The Nature and Role of Norms in Translation"* would put it, actual translation decisions involve some compromise of the overall choice (1978/2000, 201).

Then, how should I judge my own translation? House gave translators a formula that says,

"Translation is not only a linguistic act, it is also a cultural act, an act of communication across cultures. Translating always involves both language and culture simply because the two cannot really be separated. Language is culturally embedded; it both expresses and shapes cultural reality" (House, 2009, 11).

So, culture is important and language is essential. In addition to the conventional formula of form and content, a translator would be obliged to convey the aesthetic features of a literary work in a manner that would ideally preserve the aesthetic value of the original work. A translated text should ideally aim to be considered an original work of literature. If I adhere to these terms, then attention should be paid to several elements and the style of the original text is above all. Looking at my own translation, I find that, unconsciously, I have taken different definitions of style into consideration. G. Palumbo, in *Key Terms In Translation Studies*, notes that style has *"traditionally been defined as the manner of linguistic expression in prose or verse—as how speakers or writers say whatever it is that they say"* (Palumbo, 2009, 110). Style, as defined by J. Boase-Beier in *Stylistic Approaches to Translation*, *"is what is unique to a text and it relies on choices, made consciously or unconsciously by the author of source or target text, that have gone into the making of the text"* (Boase-Beier 2006, 50). M. H. Abrams, in *A Glossary of Literary Terms (7th ed)*, defines style as,

The style specific to a particular work or writer, or else distinctive of a type of writings, has been analyzed in such terms as the rhetorical situation and aim; characteristic diction, or choice of words; type of sentence structure and syntax; and the density and kinds of figurative language. (Abrams, 1999, 303)

Jamal Naji's novel is a compact piece of work exhibiting an accessible, natural style that disguises culturally intricate themes. Such literary work in its highly elevated complex style and sophisticated language is exemplary of an aesthetically communicative process, and does indeed present a viable opportunity that constitutes an intricate challenge for literary translation. My approach to translating *When the Wolves Grow Old* is generally consistent with the translation strategies of keeping a balance between visibility and invisibility through the implementation of both Foreignization and Domestication as needed depending on the situation.

There are *examples* of Foreignization to be found in my translation strategies, but occasionally my solutions are somewhat more domesticating. Translating the literary text that belongs to my Jordanian culture involves more than linguistic considerations, which becomes more apparent because the source culture (Jordanian/Arab) is geographically and temporally distant from or otherwise alien to the target culture (English). If I were to translate all of the geographical names literally into English, the result would perhaps be interesting to an etymologist, but maybe not to an ordinary reader. I chose to translate only names that were more or less in etymological accordance with the target language. I have moved, in the process of translating these expressions, in one direction. It is that of the target language reader, which is unfair as far as the source language culture is concerned, especially in translating culture. I would never deny that the master key is fluency in the English-language translation, but one should always remember that, as Susan Bassnett and Harish Trivedi mention in *Postcolonial Translation - Theory and Practice*, “Translation does not happen in vacuum, but in a continuum; it is not an isolated act, it is part of an ongoing process of intercultural transfer” (Bassnett and Trivedi, 1999, 2).

3. Representing the Jordanian Culture

Jan Pederson in, *How is Culture Rendered in Subtitles?*, believes that the translator has to select one of a number of possible solutions, because there is no obvious official equivalent in the target language (Pedersen, 2005, 1). I have done my best to represent the culture of the other in my

translation; for the purpose of this paper it is the Jordanian culture. It is represented in the Jordanian names of people and places used in a sociopolitical context conceptualized by Jordanian people in the local reality of Jordan at a certain point of history. Selected and translated by the researcher, the expressions reflect a certain cultural significance that is not necessarily present in the culture of the target language (English). The first page of the first chapter entitled “*Sundus*”, which is the name of the major female character in the novel, is a clear example,

3.1.

عزّمي الوجيه أدلني ثلاث مرات

الأولى في بيت والده الذي أغرم بي وتزوجني. الثانية يوم ضبطني في الغرفة الدخانية في دار الشيخ عبد الحميد الجنزير. أما الثالثة فبعدهما بثلاثة عشر عاماً؛ حين بلغت الثامنة والثلاثين من عمري.

هو الوحيد الذي فعلها من بين كل الرجال الذين عرفتهم، ولا أدري كيف استعذبتُ إذلاله لي! مع أن أباه، رباح الوجيه، زوجي الثاني، وصبري أبو حصه، زوجي الأول والثالث، حاولا إخضاعني واتباعي لإرادتهما، لكنهما فشلا بشكل يثير الشفقة، ليس لأنني غير قابلة للاستجابة لشهوة السيطرة الذكورية، إنما لأنهما لم يمتلكا سحر ترويضٍ وأسرار تدويب كنتلي، على الرغم من إحساسي بتململ تلك الكتلة التي أتعرف الآن، بأنها شكلت مبعث قلق وعذاب لي.

Azmi al-Wajeeh humiliated me three times.

The first was at his father's house, who fell in love with me and married me. The second was when he caught me at the smoke room at the house of Sheikh Abdul'hameed al Janzeer. And the third time was thirteen years after those two, when I became thirty-eight years old.

He is the only one who did it among all the men I knew, and I don't know how I enjoyed his humiliation of me! Although his father Raba'h al-Wajeeh, my second husband, and Ssabri Abu 'Hussa, my first and third husbands, both tried to overpower me and force me to follow their wishes, they failed pathetically, not because I am not responsive to male desire for domination, but because they didn't have the magic needed to tame me or the secrets of dissolving my body. Despite my feelings of the irritation of that mass that caused my anxiety and made me suffer. (Naji, 2010, 1)

The translation process becomes more challenging to the translator when the word or expression mentioned in the text is a proper name or a geographical place which belongs to a specific culture that is of local origin. Examining the translation of the proper and geographical names in the first two pages of the first chapter of the novel, the question of whether

to use Foreignization or Domestication has become apparent from the very beginning of the novel. In translating what Sundus says when she mentions Sheikh Abdul'hameed al Janzeer, the word 'Sheikh' raises several questions. 'Sheikh' is an Arabic title; titles indicate cultural appearances by nature; the title of Sheikh is well-known in the Arabic culture. If we look up the word 'Sheikh' in an English – Arabic dictionary, a long list of lexical meanings will cause confusion to the translator because 'Sheikh' can be a venerable gentleman, an elderly old man, a chief, head of a tribe, and a religious Islamic scholar. Within the context of the novel, the word 'Sheikh' is culturally used to refer to a person who can deal with demons.

3. 2.

كان في صباه مختلفاً عن أبناء حينا في جبل الجوفة؛ شعره الفاحم الذي يرفعه إلى الأعلى فيوحي بالشموخ والثقة، وجهه المستدير المشرق، عيناه الرمليتان العميقتان، نظراته المطمئنة، ورتابة ملابسه، كل هذا أوحى لي باختلافه عن الشباب الآخرين.

أمه، جليلة، اعتنت به كثيراً، فهي لم تتمكن من إنجاب غيره بسبب حكايتها مع الجني الذي زارها بعد زواجها بأشهر، وكرر تلك الزيارة حين بلغ عزمي التاسعة عشرة من عمره. كثيرون من سكان الجبل يعرفون هذه الحكاية الغربية

He was different in his youth from the children of our neighborhood in Jabal al-Jopha; his pitch-black hair bumped to the top provided him with the appearance of arrogance and confidence; his round bright face, his sandy deep eyes, his reassuring looks, and his neat clothes, all this inspired me that he is different from the other young men.

His mother, Jalilah, cared for him so much, she could not have another child because of her story with the genie that visited her after several months of her marriage, and repeated that visit when Azmi became nineteen years old. Many of the neighbouring residents know about this strange tale. (Naji, 2010, 1)

The names of people are local; therefore, transliteration had to be used in order to reveal the correct pronunciation, "*Sundus*", "*Azmi al-Wajeeh*", "*Sheikh Abdul'hameed al Janzeer*", and "*Ssabri Abu 'Hussa*". The whole context is a local event; the people addressed are local with local Jordanian culture. To keep this local cultural touch, the translator needs to be visible (foreignized translation) and not invisible (domesticated translation). These local names are the production of the material reality of the Jordanian people in a certain geographical area at a certain point of time, Jabal al-Joffeh of Amman during the last decades of the twentieth century and the first decade of the twenty-first century. This means there is a story

behind them. And the story here is related to the local belief in demons by some people living in this area of Amman.

Of course, the novelist uses certain expressions that require a certain manipulation from my part. As a translator, I am required to render elements by applying Domestication into the target language,

3. 3.

كان من الممكن أن يؤدي فشلها معي إلى حزني على كل الذكور، لولا سحر الإثارة والسطوة الغامضة التي يمتلكها عزمي الوجيه، وقدرات الترويض التي تميز بها الشيخ عبد الحميد الجنزير.

ربما كنت بحاجة الى من يكسرنى ويمرغ غروري. ألا يمكن أن تكون رغبتى في الخضوع كامنة تحت قشرة هذا الغرور؟

عزمي هو الذي تمكن من مداهمة معاقلتي، وتحطيمها، إلى حد أنني امتثلت لأوامره جميعها، دون النظر إلى النتائج التي لم أتوقع حدوثها.

يصغرنى بخمس سنوات.

I confess that their failure with me would have caused me to mourn all males, except for the magic of excitement and mysterious influence that Azmi al-Wjeeh had, and the distinguished taming abilities of Sheikh Abdul Hameed al-Janzeer.

Maybe I needed someone who would break me and wallow my vanity. Maybe my wish for submission is lurking under the veneer of this vanity?

Azmi is the one who was capable of attacking my strongholds, and destroying them, to the extent that I obeyed all of his orders without regard to the results that I did not expect to occur.

He is five years younger than me. (Naji, 2010, 1)

The novel begins with the main female character (Sundus) introducing herself by means of her various relationships with the other characters of the novel. Love and other relationships are essential in human experience; the universality of this theme implies that the translation has to follow universal norms in addition to cultural substitutions when the message is delivered to the TL reader.

3. 4.

في ذلك الجبل ، جبل الجوفة، الذي تعطي فيه البيوت بعضها، وتفصل بين صفوفها أزقة وأدراج ذات حواف منحوتة، تحدث أمور أغرب من أن يصدقها أهل عمان الذين تعرفت إليهم في السنوات الأخيرة، فالإنسان هناك ليس هو المالك الوحيد لبيته وفراشه، الملكية موزعة بينه وبين الكائنات

الأخرى، لأن "الشراكة قائمة بين الناس والكائنات الأخرى التي تدب على الأرض بنظام مرسوم"، حسبما قال لي عزمي، بعد أشهر من زواج والده رباح مني.

In that mountain, Jabal al-Jophah, where the houses are riding each other, and the alleys and stairs separating the rows of houses have carved edges, strange things happen and would be considered as unbelievable by the people of Amman, with whom I became acquainted in recent years; in that place, the individual is not the sole owner of his house and his bed, the ownership is distributed between him and other creatures, because "partnership is present between people and the other creatures that creep over the earth in a stated order," as Azmi has told me, after several months of marrying his father. (Naji, 2010, 2)

In describing the surrounding environment in Jabal al-Jophah (the mountain of Jophah), which is inhabited by the folk class of Amman, Foreignization becomes essential and it is employed first by using the word "jabal" followed by the transliteration of the name of the mountain as it is pronounced in Arabic language; second, a detailed description of the area is provided. In fact, the explanation is confusing even for the Arabic native speaker who is not familiar with such places.

3. 5.

فاجأني بقوله هذا ، فهو مقل في الكلام مثل أمه، ويتحدث بطريقة الكاشف لما وراء الأشياء!

فكرتُ في ما قال. بدأت أنظر إلى الأشياء بطريقة مختلفة، وتبين لي أن الحياة في حيّنا السفلي نظاماً خاصاً، على الرغم من الفوضى التي يسببها الناس بعد صحوهم من نومهم وذهابهم إلى أعمالهم. فعصافير الدوري تتناوب على حيّنا فجرًا، ليس بسبب بساطينه أو أزهاره التي لا وجود لها، إنما لأنها تجد ما تقتات عليه من الديدان المذنبة القريبة من قنوات المياه العادمة في الأزقة، وتجد ما تشربه من البرك الصغيرة المتجمعة من المواسير العامة، التي يعمد السكان إلى كسرها، لأنها تمر من الحي وتغذي مناطق جبل التاج والأشرفية وغيرهما، فيما تنقطع عن بيوتهم أياماً طويلة. يكسرونها ليحققوا ثلاثة أهداف، يملأون الأواني بما يلزمهم من الماء، ويوفرون أنماها، ويقطعونها عن الأحياء الأوفر حظاً.

He surprised me by saying that; like his mother, he scarcely speaks, but he talks like a metaphysical detector.

I thought about what he said. I began to see things in a different way, and I found out that life in our bottom neighborhood has a special system; in spite of the chaos caused by the people after they wake up and go to work, finch birds come in turn to our neighborhood at dawn, not because of its orchards or flowers that do not exist, but because they find worms with tails that feed them nearby channels of waste water in the alleys, and they find what to drink from the small puddles accumulated from the public pipes that are broken by the residents because they pass from the

neighborhood and feed the other mountains of Jabal al-Taji and al-Ashrafeyah in addition to other regions, while the water is cut off from their homes for long days. They break the public pipes to achieve three goals, to fill their pots with the water they need, to save the expenses, and to cut off water from the more fortunate neighborhoods. (Naji, 2010, 2)

The previous example has shown us how proper and geographical names are instances of cultural references that constitute translation crisis points for which there is no obvious official equivalent in the target language, where a detailed description is provided of the filthy and dirty local surroundings specially in describing the public water pipes connecting the geographical area of Jabal al-Joffah to Jabal al-Taj and al-Ashrafiyah. The descriptive details provided in this example hold within them a cultural significance that could only be found in such a filthy environment found in the bottom of Amman. In fact, I share Di's opinion presented in the book entitled *Literary Translation, Quest for Artistic Integrity* - I believe that the implicit aim of the literary translator is to "*produce an effect on the target-language readers that is as close as possible to what the original produces on the source-language readers*" (Di, 2003, 52). Thus, this example is a case of being confronted as a translator with SL words which would cover more or less of the TL meaning. The translation in this case becomes a serious challenge for the translator because it is a source of confusion that is important for both the SL and TL readers.

My duty as a translator requires me to select one of a number of possible solutions. These solutions can be analyzed as parts of superordinate translation strategies, which are in turn governed by translation norms. The solutions do not indicate that the translator's strategy is oriented towards the target language, e.g., by substituting a reference, or by omitting it, that may be described as a domesticating strategy, which is governed by norms in the target culture. Target culture norms may exert prescriptive influence on the translation of foreign texts. As a translator, I have retained the names in the original text; it is indicative of an orientation towards the source language, and to norms in the source culture. Examples include the proper names and the geographical names reembody in the mountains of Amman.

Applying mainly Venuti's translation theories as the theoretical framework, the analysis has examined the first two pages of the first chapter of the novel, looking for differences in the translation of cultural references, as regards translation norms, strategies and solutions. This perspective embraces above all my translation behavior as the translator,

as the cultural references present translation problems, or crisis points, which require active decisions from my part. This study shows that my translation is to a greater extent oriented towards the source culture as cultural references, since the names are to a greater extent kept in their original form, occasionally with small adjustments. This is an example of Foreignization, a strategy which resists domesticating norms in the target culture, rather aiming at highlighting the differences between languages and cultures. In contrast, Domestication is also present in other parts of my translation aiming at the assimilation of foreign elements into the target language and culture.

- Apparently, I had the intention to stay close to the original, or, one could say, following Toury (2000), that the basic, initial norm for me, as a translator, was to adhere to the source culture norm-system, or adherence to the source language and culture. In translation into English, strong target culture values seem often to have exerted an influence on me as the translator; i.e., they more or less prescribed a domesticating strategy. As Toury points out, the basic initial norm of translation governs the choice between the norm-system of the source culture and the target culture. The overall impression, the attempt at “*generalizations about the underlying concepts of translation*” (Toury 1995, in Munday 2001, 112). However, according to Toury’s explanatory model, I was also governed by the preliminary norm of the directness of translation. But when the image and sense of the details would be vague to the TL reader if translated directly, my illegible choice as a translator would be rendering them to cultural substitution, which reproduces a similar sense to the original by using a somehow different image as represented in the example talking about the filthiness of the environment in *Jabal al-Jophah*.

Conclusion

In my translation considered, the instances of domestication appear not to prevail over those of foreignization. This study indicates that foreignization *and* domestication, or visibility and invisibility as popularized by Venuti (1995), are concepts that don’t exclude each other. As a translator, the researcher has found out that visibility and invisibility, in addition to domestication and foreignization, are not competing strategies, but just two different modes of translation, both of which can be employed concurrently, as they actually appear to have been in the

translation reviewed. Both strategies of domestication and foreignization could be employed without excluding each other.

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CHAPTER TWO

TRANSLATION OF CULTURAL UTTERANCES IN LITERARY DISCOURSE FROM ARABIC INTO ENGLISH

MOHAMMAD AL-BADAWI
ZARQA UNIVERSITY

Abstract

This paper deals with the translation of Arabic politeness formulas into English in *Fate of a Cockroach* by Tawfiq Al-Hakim, translated by Davies Denys Johnson, and *Men in the Sun* by Ghassan Kanafani, translated by Hilary Kilpatrick. The paper begins with a brief introduction on translation, concentrating in particular on the translatability of literary and cultural utterances. In the data analysis section, the selected utterances will be critically reviewed according to the translation presented by the translated versions of the literary texts considered. It ends with some concluding remarks on the loss in meaning when translation takes place.

Keywords: Cultural utterances, Translatability, Kanafani, Al-Hakim.

Introduction

When translating a text, one transfers a text from its source language (SLT) into a target language (TLT). This transfer is based on equivalence, which according to de Waard and Nida (1986) means a set of forms that will match the lexical grammatical levels of meaning of the original source language text.

Weyland (2000, 8) looks at translation as a subjective process, assuming the vocabulary choices made by translators are more or less determined by their preferences and background. Meanwhile, Nida (1964), cited in Wey-

land (2000), argues against formal equivalence as a central feature of translation i.e. word-for-word or structure-for-structure translation. He prefers dynamic equivalence, meaning a rendering that produces an equivalent effect of the text on the receptor. He believes the notion of equivalence must cover both dynamic and formal equivalence to achieve a satisfactory translation. It must be kept in mind that cultural aspects in the SLT are said differently in the TLT, forming a gap of cultural difference which is one of the most difficult tasks for translators.

This is one of the major differences between literary translations and other translations. With a scientific or legal text, the writer's purpose, among other things, is to impart information, while it is assumed that one of the main purposes of a literary text is to entertain and amuse. This cannot be achieved without good knowledge of the target audience's culture, social values, traditions, and customs, which are then included in the text. But herein lies the problem for translators. There are certain aspects in language that are culture-bound and difficult to transfer into the target text language without considering the culture. Ignoring this aspect or failing to do so causes the rendering to be strange or unsettling, and may even go as far as to cause offense to the readers of the target language. Hall and Feeble (1975), Nida and Reyburn (1981), Bochner (1982), and Smith (1987) are some of the researchers who concur with this view, stressing that communication across cultures involves problems of meaning. A translator must tread carefully with culturally laden expressions and concepts, translating the source text into the target language in a way that will not sound odd.

One aspect that proves particularly difficult for literary translators to manoeuvre is politeness formulas. While it is accepted among linguists that politeness as a concept of 'being socially nice' is universal, the manifestations of this social niceness are culture-bound and culture-specific. To render politeness formulas correctly in the target language, the translator must have an accurate pragmatic knowledge of the functions of those utterances in the source and target text cultures. This means knowing the relationship between the semantic meaning and the pragmatic function of any politeness formula. This relationship can be clear at times, such as in the case of transferring the Arabic expression <shukran>, meaning 'thank you' in English, and not as clear as is the case with <na9iiman> which is said to someone after they have had a shower or a haircut. The translator is left to struggle to find an English equivalent for an invocation to God to

bring that person health, prosperity and happiness, since it marks a casual change in the state of that person in everyday life.

What makes this research significant is that few studies have dealt with the translation of politeness in literary texts. Hatim and Mason (1997) conducted a study on politeness in screen translation, trying to show how politeness is underrepresented in that field. Their use of politeness concepts in the study agrees with Brown and Levinson's (1987) notion of politeness. They used the super strategies in Brown and Levinson's (1987) model to analyse their data, which consists of some examples from the screen translation of the English subtitled French film "Un Coeur en Hiver" ("A Heart in Winter" by Clude Sautet, 1992). An analysis of the data revealed some insights regarding the translation of politeness and came to the conclusion it is almost inevitable some elements of meaning must be sacrificed or omitted, and then considered how this omission might influence the target audience. They also concluded it is difficult for target language auditors to retrieve interpersonal meaning in its entirety and that more empirical research needs to be done in different languages to test the generalizability of their study's limited findings.

In 2009 Al-Adwan investigated the translation of euphemization as a politeness strategy in the Arabic subtitles of the American sitcom 'Friends'. His use of politeness concepts also draws mainly on the major tenets of Brown and Levinson's model of politeness (1987). He proposed a modified and extended model of euphemization as a strategic output of politeness that is basically built upon two other models of euphemization by Williams (1975) and Warren (1992). Al-Adwan's analysis shows Arab subtitlers use different types of euphemization from the proposed model to negotiate sexual, religious and death references in the sitcom. The study also shows that euphemism as a politeness strategy in the Arabic subtitles plays an important role in creating an accepted form of interaction for Arab viewers.

In another study, House (1998) set out to explore the relationship between politeness and translation, specifically from German into English. She began by highlighting the different views of politeness, giving importance to the social-norm view of politeness in relation to translation as she echoes Watts et al (1992) "that's looking at politeness as a set of behavior patterns programmed as social norms which leads us to consider the wider social functions of politeness e.g., in the educational system, prescriptive grammar and translation practices" (House 1998, 55). In her account of the

face-saving quality of politeness, she claims that Brown and Levinson's model cannot easily be adopted in translation. However, other researchers like Hatim and Mason (1997), Hickey (2001), Zitawi (2004), and Al-Adwan (2009), as well as this paper have applied Brown and Levinson's Model of Politeness on translation and it has been considered useful to their data analysis as these studies conform with the face-management view of politeness. Zitawi (2004) concludes that politeness is an important factor in evaluating translation. In her sample she found some aspects in English text rendered differently in German, i.e. interlocutors in German were usually more direct than in English, where she reports that "the translation retains the ideational functional component but substantially changes the interpersonal one because the devices used to mark the original interpersonally are not rendered equivalently in German" (House 1998, 69).

Hickey (2001) also investigates how 'positive politeness readers (Spaniards)' react to literal translations of English texts, which is basically negative politeness oriented. He took six excerpts with negative politeness forms from the English novel *Therapy* by David Lodge and gave them to a focus group of native English-speaking college students, asking them to discuss the person and the type of behavior involved. He then gave the corresponding Spanish version *Terapia* by Fransco Roca (1995) to another focus group of Spanish university students, and gave them the same task as the English-speaking group. A third group of bilinguals of Spanish and English were then given the same excerpts and asked to carry out the task given to the other two groups in the language of their preference. The study concluded that some literal translations of negative politeness markers were not recognized by Spanish readers. Hickey explains Spanish speakers could not recognize the negative politeness probably because this form does not exist in the categories and classifications of politeness pre-existing in their minds Hickey (2001, 238).

In this paper, the researcher attempts to examine 18 examples of translated Arabic politeness formulas in literary texts. The first 10 examples are taken from Tawfik Al-Hakim's *Fate of a Cockroach*, translated by Davies Denys Johnson. The other 8 examples are chosen from Ghassan Kanafani's *Men in the Sun*, translated by Hilary Kilpatrick. The examples were chosen based on their relevance to the social and religious aspect of politeness formulas in Arabic, which are influenced by both the Arab and Islamic culture. The selected examples cannot claim to be representative of the whole problem facing translators, but they do shed light on it and serve as a small contribution towards some possible suggested solutions. This study is analytical in nature and will critically review the trans-

lation of the lexis that involves politeness formulas in an attempt to point out the differences in the realization of politeness in the two languages.

The excerpts will have comments on the pragmatic, social, and religious levels of the politeness formulas. A little context has been given for each example, and the parts of interest are in bold. Examples will be looked at in light of the pragmatic transfer of the Arabic pragmatic function of norms and the forms of performing speech acts into English that have resulted in pragmatic inappropriateness on the level of linguistic politeness between English and Arabic.

1. Examples from *Fate of a Cockroach*

Example1.1

The Minister makes his appearance, wailing.

MINISTER: My Lord King! Help, my Lord King!

KING: What is it?

MINISTER: A calamity! A great calamity, my Lord!

KING: **Goodness gracious!** (*aside*) I told you his hobby was to bring unpleasant news, (*loudly*) Yes? Tell us, delight our ears!

(Davies, J. 1973. p. 6)

(الوزير يظهر وهو يولول)

الوزير: يا مولاي الملك!.. النجدة يا مولاي الملك!..

الملك: ما الخبر؟ ..

الوزير: كارثة!.. كارثة كبرى يا مولاي!..

الملك: يا فتاح يا عليم!.. قلت لك إن هوايته المجيء بالأخبار المزعجة .. نعم؟ .. أخبرنا ..

شنف أسماعنا!..

(Al-Hakim, T.1966. P.18)

The pragmatic function of the Arabic expression <yaafataahyaa 9aliim> which is translated into “Goodness gracious!” in the target language text is said conventionally in informal situations where the speaker meets a person they do not wish to see, and this person is usually the bearer of bad news or brings bad luck. The utterance by itself is usually indicative of the speaker’s attitude towards the hearer, where the speaker expresses his wants to disassociate from the hearer in order to show no appreciation of the hearer’s positive face, which is a positive impoliteness strategy. This positive impoliteness strategy is lost in the translation where “goodness gracious!” is slightly euphemistic, yet it expresses exclamation and disapproval of what the hearer wants to say. So, we can see that the equivalence here is not exact in terms of the pragmatic function.

Example 1.2

QUEEN: And what devious means and measures brought you to the throne and placed you on the seat of kingship?

KING (*indignantly*): Means and measures? **Pardon me for saying so, but you're stupid!**

QUEEN: I confess I'm stupid about this . . .

(Davies, J. 1973. p. 4)

الملكة: وما هي الملبسات والإجراءات التي أوصلتك إلى العرش و أجلسك على أريكة الملك؟! ..

الملك: ملبسات وإجراءات ؟ .. أنت مغفلة ولا مواخدة! ..

الملكة: أعترف أنني مغفلة في هذا الأمر فعلا ..

(Al-Hakim, T.1966. P.18)

The Arabic utterance by the King <?antimughafalah-walahmu?aakhthah> literally means, “you are naïve, don’t be offended.” The word *mughafalah* is translated as “stupid”, while in this context it means someone who does not know what the speaker is talking about. The word “stupid”, however, refers to someone who lacks intelligence or common sense or someone who is not able to think clearly. In which case, we can assume that the word “stupid” is more offensive and face-attacking than the intended expression of ignorance about something.

Example 1.3

KING: What laziness! What laziness!

QUEEN (*making her appearance*): I wasn’t sleeping. You must remember that I have my toilet and make-up to do.

KING: Make-up and toilet! **If all wives were like you, then God help all husbands!**

(Davies, J. 1973. p. 2)

الملك: يا للكسل! ... يا للكسل! ..

الملكة: (تظهر) إني لست نائمة .. ويجب تتذكر أنه لا بد لي من الزينة و التواليت! ..

الملك: الزينة و التواليت! ... أه .. إذا كانت كل الزوجات

مثلك فقولني على كل الأزواج السلام! ..

(Al-Hakim, T.1966. P.14)

When the king says <?aah ?ithaakaanatkuluizzawjatimithlukifaquulii 9alaa kuliil?azwajiisalaam> he literally means “if all wives are like you, then peace be upon all husbands”, implying that all husbands will be in trouble. The speaker here is being ironic, trying to insult while being po-