Translation of Culture-Bound Items from Arabic into English

Mohamed Sidi Mohamed Sidi Mahmoud *

Professor, Department of English, Nouakchott University, Nouakchott, Mauritania

*Corresponding author: sidimahmoud85@gmail.com

Abstract:

This article aims to examine the procedures and strategies followed in the translation of the Arabic Mauritanian novel into English. It explores the difficulties encountered in the rendition of the cultural forms and units such as metaphors, similes, idioms, and culture specific terms from the ST into the TT. For solving the semantic and lexical gaps in Arabic/English literary translation, this dissertation highlights a practical framework that is built on two criteria: consideration of the cultural terms of the source culture and respect for the target language system. To do so, I make use of foreignization strategies including literal translation and borrowing with footnotes to transfer the entire cultural content of the ST. For handling linguistic gaps, I make use of domestication strategies. The study has found that the foreignization strategy in literary translation appears to be more faithful in the rendition of the source culture into the target one. However, it seems inadequate when it comes to the translation of linguistic features of the novel; hence, the domestication strategy proves to be more appropriate in the case of translating lexical, syntactic, semantic and stylistic features from Arabic into English. The obtained findings point out that literary translation is not simply technical renditions of the ST lexemes into their counterparts in the TT, but rather requires the translator to offer explanations and comments to convey the entire meaning of the cultural items embedded in the ST to the TRs.

Keywords: Arabic-English literary translation; culture; linguistic features, foreignization; domestication.

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ترجمة العناصر المرتبطة بالثقافة من العربية إلى الإنجليزية

محمد سيدي محمد سيدي محمود*

أستاذ بقسم اللغة الإنجليزية، جامعة نواكشوط، نواكشوط، موريتانيا

الملخص

يهدف هذا المقال إلى دراسة الإجراءات والاستراتيجيات المتبعة في ترجمة الرواية العربية الموريتانية إلى اللغة الإنجليزية. ويستكشف الصعوبات التي تمت مواجهتها في نقل الأشكال والوحدات الثقافية مثل الاستعارات والتشبيهات والتعابير والمصطلحات الخاصة بالثقافة من النص المصدر إلى النص الهدف. لحل الفجوات الدلالية والمعجمية في الترجمة الأدبية العربية/الإنجليزية، تسلط هذه الأطروحة الضوء على إطار عملي مبني على معيارين: مراعاة المصطلحات الثقافية للثقافة المصدر واحترام نظام اللغة الهدف. وللقيام بذلك، أستخدم استراتيجيات التغريب بما في ذلك الترجمة الحرفية والاقتراض مع الحواشي لنقل المحتوى الثقافي الكامل للنص المصدر. لمعالجة الفجوات اللغوية، أستخدم استراتيجيات التدجين. وقد توصلت الدراسة إلى أن استراتيجية التغريب في الترجمة الأدبية تبدو أكثر

إخلاصًا في نقل الثقافة المصدر إلى الثقافة المستهدفة. إلا أنها تبدو غير كافية عندما يتعلق الأمر بترجمة السمات اللغوية للرواية؛ ومن هنا، أثبتت استراتيجية التدجين أنها أكثر ملاءمة في حالة ترجمة السمات المعجمية والنحوية والدلالية والأسلوبية من العربية إلى الإنجليزية. تشير النتائج التي تم الحصول عليها إلى أن الترجمة الأدبية ليست مجرد عمليات نقل فنية للمفردات المصدرية إلى نظيراتها في النص الهدف، بل تتطلب من المترجم تقديم تفسيرات وتعليقات لنقل المعنى الكامل للعناصر الثقافية المضمنة في النص المصدر إلى النسخ المصدرية.

الكلمات المفتاحية: الترجمة الأدبية العربية-الإنجليزية، ثقافة، السمات اللغوية والتغريب، تدجين.

Introduction

This article contends that cultural items can cause cultural losses in translation. This phenomenon seems mostly inevitable in literary translation. Yet, by adhering to foreignization strategies such as literal translation and borrowing coupled with footnote, the translator can avoid such losses. In this regard, the article shows the extent to which domestication strategy can muffle the voice of the original, resulting in cultural losses. Therefore, the following analysis sheds light on how the foreignization strategy is expected to help the translator portray and present the SC to the foreign audience. The translator has to retain the cultural implications of the ST; hence, he/she is required to culturally understand the ST to convey its meaning to the receptor language.[1] In my translation of *Thakirat al-Raml* (*The Sand Memory*), I try to convey the signification of cultural terms, using borrowing and explanation instead of looking for equivalent terms that may mislead the TRs. The problems generated by translating excerpts from the novel under study are brought into discussion. Further, the procedures and strategies followed to render cultural terms into English are illustrated by examples form the novel.

Figurative Language Analysis

In *The Sand Memory,* the author, to some extent, makes use of the figurative language to enrich his novel and make it more expressive and forceful. On this account, the translator has to opt for preserving the same style, if possible. This emanates from the conviction that any unnecessary change in the style, language or literary method of the ST is a kind of distortion of the SC.

In this respect, translation problems created by the rendition of similes, metaphors, idioms, metonymies, and imagery in the TT can be solved by using foreignization strategy which encompasses translation methods such as definition in a footnote, borrowing and literal translation. On the contrary, the use of the domestication method such as omission, paraphrase and adaptation can sometimes make the translation fail to convey the SC. Therefore, translating literary figures such as similes, metaphors and imagery from Arabic into English may raise many problems since both languages do not share common cultural, linguistic and literary backgrounds. Hence, the use of word for word translation is still more faithful and close to the original because it conveys to TRs the conceptual differences and specificities of the SC. However, the translator, sometimes, finds it necessary to domesticate some metaphors, which might be completely different from the TC.

Similes

The translation of similes may raise challenges for translators. This is because similes in Arabic are, to some extent, culturally and linguistically different from their English counterparts. Thus, the translator has to find out the appropriate strategy to convey the meaning intended by the author.

Arabic similes of some cultural terms cannot be lexicalized in English. On this account, the translator must use literal translation with a footnote in order to avoid cultural loss. Consider the following example of similes from the novel under study:

1- وعند البئر تتعب النواضح وتستبدل وأنت واقف كالوتد

At the well, camels used for watering get tired and replaced while you { Masaoud }are standing like the pole.

When translating this simile using Nida's approach, the translation would be as follows: you are standing like the Gibraltar Rock. Comparing Masaoud's endurance to the Gibraltar Rock can create the equivalent effect among the receptor audience, but it neglects the local context in which endurance or strength can be best compared to the pole. Here, the author has figuratively drawn his simile from item of his source culture rather than of the Western one. Therefore, the translator uses direct translation to get the reader to know about how Mauritanians symbolically describe endurance. Such kind of translation goes against the universalization of Western culture. Therefore, it appears more appropriate to opt for literal translation with a footnote, which explains and conveys the metaphorical meaning of the simile and draws the target readers' attention to the distinctive features of the SC.

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[1] Hanada Al-Masri, "Translation and Cultural Equivalence: A Study of Translation Losses in Arabic Literary Texts," *Journal of Language & Translation* 10, no. 1 (2009): 8, https://www.academia.edu/48543103/Translation_and_Cultural_Equivalence_A_Study_of_Translation_Losses_in_Arabic_Literary_Text

For other similes whose cultural significations my not be lost when directly rendered to English, it seems quite sufficient to use literal translation without footnoting. As stated by Newmark, "literal translation is correct and must not be avoided if it secures referential and pragmatic equivalence to the original."[2] In this case, literal translation is thought to be more capable to faithfully respond to the socio-cultural context of the source literature more than free translation. Consider the following examples of smiles.

وأنتم تموتون كما تموت المعزاة. -2

You die like a goat.

ورغم الجوع لم تطاوعه نفسه أن يرضع كالجديان -3

Despite hunger, his soul did not let him suck goats as kids did.

. اخرجي ايتها الأفعى -4

Go out, you snake!

واليوم ها أنا أبكي كالأطفال لا حول لي ولا قوة -5

Today, here I am, powerless and crying the way a child does.

أنت كالثور تنزو كل يوم على انثى -6

You are like an ox every day making love with a female.

By literal renditions of the above Arabic similes into English, the translator faithfully conveys the Mauritanian culture to the TR. The Western reader is, then, introduced to the nomadic culture of the Mauritanian society. He/she has more chance to know about which kind of animals being most raised in Mauritania.

Furthermore, the translator has to stick to literal translation strategy to reconstruct source cultural paradigms that depict the cultural image of the Mauritanian local context to the foreign reader. See the following examples from the novel

وأنظر في الخلاء فلا أرى إلا ذلك الشارع الإسفلتي يتلوى كالأفعى في -7
الرمل الشاحب

I was looking at the wilderness, seeing only the asphalt road twisting like a snake in the pale sand.

ذلك سحرك أنت وشارعك العنيد المغالب للرمال كأنه نهر مندفع -8

That was your magic and stubborn street resistant to sand as it looks like a drifting river.

By the above renditions, the translator faithfully transmits the cultural environment of Mauritania to the receptor audience. Therefore, it is the literal translation which allows the translator a very active role in transferring a whole image about the SC to TRs.

Metaphors

Another difficulty in Arabic English translation is the translation of metaphors. This is because metaphors are deeply bound to the cultural and linguistic peculiarities of the ST. According to Newmark, "the most important particular problem is the translation of metaphor."[3]This emanates from the cultural and linguistic peculiarities that characterize each language, and the role that metaphors play in representing and communicating knowledge and discourses. As I think, poetic equivalence in translating metaphors from Arabic into English is not always achievable because poetics is inseparable from the source text's metaphor. However, the translator has to strive as hard as possible to render the poetics of the source metaphor by literally translating the rhetorical devices and parts of the metaphor. Consider the following examples of metaphors from *The Sand Memory*.

لكن سليمان لم يمت لقد ذهب ليجلب لنا أسلحة نقتل بها البوليزاريو وسيعود وسيتزوجني وستخسئين أنت وأمك وتشربان سم الغيرة -1

But, Souleyman did not die. He has gone to bring us weapons to kill the *Polisario* and he will be back and marry me. You and your mother will be devalued drinking the poison of jealousy.

ولكن القمر سيحفظ صورة تلك الفتاة وهي تلوذ بالخيمة -2

the moon will preserve that girl's image hiding behind the tent.

لن يكتب الظلام في ديوانه اسم ابنتي -3

The dark will not write her daughter's name in his collection.

ولن تسعد لأكثر من يومين برعي غنم آل الهيبة فقد روعها تعقب تلك الذئاب البشرية أثرها يترصدون غفلتها وبعدها عن الحي - 4

[2] Peter Newmark, *A Textbook of Translation Studies* (New York: Prentice Hall, 1988), 61.
[3] Ibid., 104.

She would not be happy by shepherding the goats of Al Haiba for more than two days. She had been feared by the human wolves tracking her down and lurking her negligence and distance from the neighborhood.

In example given in 1, the Arabic metaphor سم الغيرة is literally rendered as 'the poison of jealousy'. This rendition helps reveal the exact meaning of the metaphor and get TRs to understand the Mauritanian female perception of jealousy. Therefore, the task of the translator, as I think, is not only to render metaphors in the TL equivalent to that of the SL, but also to faithfully transmit the literary and cultural specificities of the SC. Thus, the deviation from the literally translation of metaphor such as rendering its non-metaphorical meaning can serve communicative purposes, but it would be less faithful to the SC. In the last example, I try to stay close to the ST and faithfully render the exact meaning by preserving the foreignness of the original description in the ST in order to convey the values of the SC. Metaphors in examples 2 3 and 4 are likely to be translated directly since they are rooted in nature. This makes their translation easier because the moon and darkness are not culturally specific terms; they are rather universal ones.

Synecdoche

The Synecdoche can be recognized in Arabic as *al-majāz mursal.* It is defined by Arab linguists as "a trope in which the relation between the literal and non-literal meanings is not based on resemblance."[4] In his conceptualization of *al-majāz mursal*, Ahmed Hilal mentions many relations between the literal and non-literal meanings such as "the whole-part relationships, causational and locational relations among others."[5] As regards the synecdoche in English, it is defined as "a figure of speech by which the whole of a thing is put for a part, or a part for the whole."[6] Seemingly then, both Arabic *majāz mursal and* English synecdoche share a common feature; each has a complex and heterogeneous relation between the said and intended meanings. However, the referential meanings of *majāz mursal* and synecdoche still differ according to the linguistic and cultural contexts within which they emerge. This, in turn, can cause translation difficulties.

This section is concerned with the analysis of the stylistic and semantic losses encountered in the translation of synecdoche from Arabic into English. It also discusses how such losses stem mainly from the complex nature of synecdoche in the sense that the relation between the intended figurative meaning and the literal one is not built on resemblance, as it is the case of metaphor. Hence, such relation is heterogeneous and difficult to determine. This accordingly may pose problems for non-native speakers to grasp the intended meaning.

The translation of the synecdoche/ *majāz mursal* poses a problem since the translator's preservation of the stylistic features might lead to a semantic loss and vice versa.[7] Some examples of the synecdoche in the novel under translation are brought to view in order to discuss the appropriate strategy for translating them. Consider the translation of the following synecdoches.

1 . لعلها تلك الفتاة الغرة الزهرة تسرق النومة البريئة لقريتنا.

Could it be that youthful and naïve girl stealing the innocent sleep of the people of our village?

2. تظن أن كأسا من الشاي من يد آثمة سيسرق أرض أم العيد

Al Alia is unjust; she thinks that a cup of tea in a sinning hand can steal Oum El Eid's land.

In the example no. 1, the figurative meaning is "people of the village" because the village itself cannot sleep. In this synecdoche, the relation between said and intended meanings is built on locational relation. If the translator adds the word people before village for the sake of comprehension, he/she is likely to sacrifice the stylistics effects of the ST. That is to say, the figurative language makes the ST more poetic, brief, and forceful. However, the addition of the word "people" is thought to be necessary if the literal preservation of the stylistic feature results in semantic loss. By such addition, the translator ensures a faithful rendition, by which he/she can account for the semantic and pragmatic aspects of the trope in the ST on the consideration of being more important than the stylistic ones. Therefore, synecdoche sometimes cannot be retained in the translation because of the cultural discrepancies between Arabic and English.

The second example is dense of pragmatic implicatures that require the translator to employ different translation techniques so as to ensure a complete transfer of the significations embedded in the Arabic synecdoche, "من يد آثمة" (sinning hand). As Carl DuBois stated, a good strategy to translate synecdoche is to extend the part to its whole.[8] However, such strategy, in this case, may not accommodate the whole pragmatic and semantic meaning of this trope which refers to a particular religious connotation. To illustrate more, the substitution of the word

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[4] Abdelaziz Atig, *Ilim El Beyan*, (Beirut: Dar el Nahda el Arabiya, 1985), 143.

[5] Ahmed Hilal, *El Majāz Mursal vi Lissan el Arab li Ibn Mendohur: Dirassa Tehliliya* (Cairo: Mektebat Wehba,1994), 28.

[6] Carl DuBois, "Metonymy and Synecdoche in the New Testament," *SIL International*, no. 23 (1999), 12, https://www.sil.org/resources/archives/47346

[7] DuBois, "Metonymy and Synecdoche," 12.

[8] DuBois, "Metonymy and Synecdoche," 12.

"hand" by woman may not convey the image of sexual deviance because such practice is regarded as normal in the western society, and thus the western recipient may think that the woman has committed another crime other than sexual deviance. The appropriate way to overcome such translation difficulty is to opt for semantic translation. This can be achieved through footnoting to explain the type of crime.

Metonymy and Idiom as *Kināyah*

The Arabic ***Kināyah*** **refers to the "expression whose associated meaning is intended, with the permissibility of the original meaning to be intended."**[9] The English metonymy is defined as "a figure of speech in which an author uses a word (or words) for another word based upon either a sequential, spatial, temporal, or attributive association between the two."[10] This shows the extent to which both Arabic kināyah and English metonymy are to some extent similar. However, when one dig deep into the Arabic system, he/she finds out that Arabic *kināyah* encompasses both English metonymy and English idiom. For example, the Arabic expression "وسقط في يد الحاضرين" is *kināyah.* But, if it is translated into English, it becomes idiom, "the present is surprised". It can by no means become a metonymy, because the meaning is not indicated by the words. On the contrary, the Arabic *kināyah* "وبلمح البصر," when translated into English it becomes a metonymy, "a very short time" since the intended meaning is understood from the words.

Therefore, unlike some studies that characterize *kināyah* in Arabic as metonymy,[11] this study finds out that in some cases *kināyah* can be recognized as idiom while it can be realized in other cases as metonymy; it cannot be limited to either idiom or metonymy. In other words, if the system of *kināyah* in Arabic is compared to that of English, we find that it can meet the English figurative speech idiom or metonymy. Clearly then, partial conceptualization of *kināyah* can be misleading because it does not accommodate its whole meaning. On this account, this section explores the difference between *kināyah* as idiom and *kināyah* as metonymy.

Kināyah as Metonymy

Like synecdoche, metonymy is a figure of speech that is not based on resemblance but rather on association between the uttered meaning and the implied one.[12] It is different from idiom in that the relation between the literal sense and the metaphorical one is obvious, while the relation in the idiom cannot be understood from the meanings of the words constituting it.[13] Hence, the metonymic sense can be captured by understanding and considering the ST cultural background in order to absorb the meaning and then convey it to the TL recipient. It is, thus, the context that enables the translator as a reader of the ST to determine the meaning intended by the author. For this reason, the translator is supposed to have thorough knowledge of the SC so that he/she can grasp the connotative features of the sentence so as to come up with the intended meaning. Consider the following example from *The Sand Memory*:

1. لقد كنت أفل العشرة بعصاي

With my stick, I used to beat ten folk.

2. والعالية كانت طويلة اللسان

El Alia had a long tongue

In the first example, the *kināyah* stands for the strength as Massoud is able to beat ten men. Here, I opt for literal translation since it accommodates the stylistic and semantic effects of the ST. In the second example, the Arabic *Kināyah* is translated as "have a long tongue," meaning that someone humiliate people with offensive words. If the translator uses semantic translation and renders the *kināyah* as follows "Al Alya humiliates Oum Eleid, he would be then ensuring exact transfer of the meaning into the TT but sacrificing the poetics of the ST style. And if he literally renders it, the TR may not fully grasp the intended meaning. This dilemma is likely to be solved by literal translation accompanied with a footnote.

Kināyah as Idiom

In fact, there is an academic tendency among some Arab and Western linguists and rhetoricians to claim the existence of idiom in Arabic. For example, in his collection entitled *A Learner's Dictionary of Classical Arabic Idioms: Arabic-English,* L. J. MCLonghin translates idioms as تعابير.[14] However, the analysis of this dictionary

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[9] Abdelaziz Atig, *Ilim El Beyan*, (Beirut: Dar el Nahda el Arabiya, 1985), 203.

[10] DuBois, "Metonymy and Synecdoche," 2.

[11] See Noureldin Abdelaal, *Translation Between English and Arabic A Textbook for Translation Students and Educators* (Cham: Palgrave Macmillan, 2020); Abdul Gabbar Al-Sharafi, *Textual Metonymy: A Semiotic Approach* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2004).

[12] David Crystal, *A Dictionary of Linguistics and Phonetics* (Victoria: *Blackwell Publishing*, 1991), 303.

[13] Ibid., 236.

[14] L. J. MCLonghin, *A learner's Dictionary of Classical Arabic Idioms*: *Arabic-English* (Beirut: Librairie du Liban, 1989).

shows that his translation of the term idiom is somehow incorrect, because he simply provides some conventional non-literal expressions as idioms. For instance, he presents the following expressions as idioms while they are *Kināyahs*: " يعرف من اين تأكل الكتف/he knows how to go about things,"[15] and " لايعرف الكوع من البوع/ he has no idea what is going on." 16 Ashraf Abdou wrote a book entitled *Arabic Idioms: A Corpus-based Study*[17] where he claims the existence of idiom in Arabic language. For him, "any Arabic expression that meets the criteria stated in the foregoing characterization but shows some grammatical irregularity has been considered an idiom in the present study."[18] In addition to L. J. MCLonghin and Ashraf Abdou, Nabil Jarad conceptualizes idioms as uncharted area in Arabic language in need of study. In this regard, his study comprises many *Kināyahs* with which he dealt as idioms.[19] Such translations of *Kināyah* as idiom, however, violate the Arabic rhetoric system because they are likely to impose the English Language rhetoric system over the Arabic one. Thus, the study hypothesizes that idiom along with metonymy are included in the Arabic *Kināyah*. This will be illustrated in the following example from *The Sand Memory*.

ستظل أم العيد وابنتها يتفيآنها رغم أنف خديجة والسالكة

Oum El Eid and her daughters will continue to enjoy that land in spite of Khadija and Salcka themselves.

In the rendition of this *Kināyah*, literal translation may not convey the ST intended meaning since the relation between the literal meaning and the non-literal one is not obvious. Adequate rendition of such *kināyah* requires the translator to employ the domestication strategies, particularly sense-by-sense translation. Literal translation would doom failure since the expression is metaphorically used to refer to a meaning different from the literal one. Therefore, a contextual analysis is required on the part of the translator in order to arrive at the ST intended meaning.

The major problem in translating idioms is that the translator can either achieve the semantic equivalence, and in this case the 'lexico-grammatical' equivalence is not achieved, or he can preserve the 'lexico-grammatical' equivalence, and the semantic meaning will be lost.[20] According to Larson, idiom cannot be literally translated. It can, however, be translated as a whole meaning.[21] Faruquzzaman Akan argues that "literal translation often falters, particularly in the case of multi-word units like collocations and idioms." [22] In line with Akan, Hanada al-Masri asserts that the translation of idioms "requires a conscious decoding on the part of the translator before rendering them into the target text."[23] Thus, to convey the intended meaning to the TRs, the translator has to decode the meaning and then convey it to TRs.

When talking about the translation of the Bible expression 'white as a snow' to TLs, which do not have counterparts, Nida presents two strategies for handling this lexical gap. First, the translator must look for equivalent idioms that can construct the equivalent effect in the receptor language. Second, he/she has to opt for non-metaphorical expression to render the meaning of the source idiom in the target language. His latter strategy, however, seems more appropriate for translating idioms since they are profoundly rooted in the source language and culture.

The translation of idioms in the novel *The Sand Memory* poses sometimes problems for the translator; for example, some idioms are profoundly rooted in the SC. In this case, the translator is obliged to slightly deviate from literal translation in order to respect the target language system. See the following example from *The Sand Memory*:

1- وسقط في يد الحاضرين حتى ظنوا أنها متألمة وانزاح الناس عنها ليتركوا الهواء يصل إليها...
- The audience were so touched that they thought she was in pain and they move away to let the air reach her.

2- وخرج الناس عن بكرة أبيهم عصرا لاستقبال أم العيد
- On that afternoon, everyone went outside to receive Om El Eid

3- وقد أغضب ذلك أم العيد فوقعت في الفتاة

This angered Om El Eid, so she attacked the girl

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[15] Ibid., 6.

[16] Ibid., 16.

[17] Ashraf Abdou, *Arabic Idioms: A Corpus-Based Study* (New York: Routledhe, 2012).

[18]Ibid., 5.

[19] Najib Jarad, "Idioms in Arabic-English Dictionary," *International Journal of Arabic-English Studies 17,* (2017):7-28, https://www.researchgate.net/publication/317951902_Idioms_in_the_Arabic-English_Dictionary

[20]Abdelaal, *Translation Between English and Arabic, 35*

[21]Mildred Larson, *Meaning Based Translation: A Guide to Cross Language Equivallence* (Newyork: University Press of America, 1998). 158.

[22] Md. Faruquzzaman. Akan, "An Analysis of Arabic-English Translation: Problems and Prospects," *ALLS* 10, no.1 (2019): 59, http://dx.doi.org/10.7575/aiac.alls.v.10n.1p.58

[23]Al-Masri, "Translation and Cultural Equivalence," 20.

- what is new?

In the first example, the idiom وسقط في يد الحاضرين is very problematic. The direct rendition would be as follows: "*it falls in the hands of the audience.*" Such rendition strays away from the intended meaning of the narrator. Looking for an equivalent idiom, using Nida's model, for example, can erase the foreignness of the ST and prevent TRs from being introduced to SC. Therefore, it seems necessary to adhere to the free translation, using paraphrase technique. The best way to translate idioms is, thus, to transfer the complete meaning with a footnote when necessary to help readers grasp the intended meaning. Therefore, the equivalence is achieved at the semantic level, but not necessarily at the formal one.

In examples no. 2 and 3, I also prefer to domesticate the translation in order to render the meaning of the idiom quite accurately because such strategy is thought to respect the TL system and thus helps TRs understand the intended meaning. Domestication is also favored over foreignization because borrowing more than one word can distort the linguistic structure of the target language, cause vagueness of the meaning and thus lead to confusion for TRs. In addition, borrowing in this case can undermine the major objective of translation which is cross-cultural communication between SC and TC. The same applies to the fourth example which is preferably translated by domestication instead of using literal translation so as to retain the meaning undistorted. If the third example was literally translated, it would be rendered as follows: "What is behind you?" The intended meaning, in this case, could not be communicated because the accurate meaning intended to be conveyed by the author is: "What is new?" In the same vein, the fourth idiom cannot be literally translated. Thus, I opt for using domestication strategy to accurately transfer the meaning of the source idiom. In fact, all these idioms are rooted in the linguistic peculiarities of Arabic language. For this reason, it would be better to provide their semantic equivalents in the target language since it is difficult to achieve equivalence on the multi-word level using foreignization strategies such as borrowing and literal translation.

Imagery

Imagery in the novel is realized through range of symbols dense of social and cultural significations that provide images about Mauritanian society. It is probably more appropriate to use foreignization strategies in order to convey the images of Mauritanian society intended by the author to the English readers. Consider the following examples.

1- وهاهو خيال الدراعة البيضاء يختفي داخل السيارة لتتحرك مخلفة سحابة أتصورها سوداء داكنة تغطي سماءنا...نفثة مسمومة من أخر الليل تتسلل إلى النفوس حين تسحب تلك الضحكة المكتومة الهواء البارد... لعلها تلك الفتاة الغرة الزهرة تسرق النومة البريئة لقريتنا... ولكن القمر الأمين يراقبك من بعيد وحين تتمددين على الرمل فإن الرمل سيدون ذلك...

Oh Salma, you were right… and there is the silhouette of the white robe disappearing inside the car that is moving to leave a cloud that I am imagining deep black covering our sky. A late-night poisonous breath creeps into souls when that muzzled laugh sucks in cold air. Could it be that youthful and naïve girl stealing the innocent sleep of our village? But the trustworthy moon is keeping a close watch on you, from afar. And as you lay on the sand, the latter keep records of that.

2- وبالطبع لن يدون أوهام الصبية صفية ولن تمتلكوا أرضا هنا...يعرف الرمل أنفاس أصحابه ولن تتخلى الصحراء عن ذاكرتها المليئة بالآثار الغائرة

As a matter of fact, it won't keep record of the child, Safia's illusions. You will not own any land here. The sand knows, fully well, the breaths of its people. The desert will not let go of its memory full of deep scars.

3- ليس سوانا نحن الثلاثة نروض ذلك الشارع المجنون وسط أمواج الصحراء القاسية.

There was none but the three of us, taming that crazy road amidst harsh desert waves.

Clearly then, the images presented, here, by the author are rooted in the cultural and religious specificity of the Mauritanian society. Here, domestication strategy is not appropriate because translating these images by using such method may overlook the cultural specificity of the Mauritanian society. It would be, thus, appropriate to render them without any modifications letting the TR to contextualize the meanings which are profoundly framed within Mauritanian geography and culture. It is preferably, however, to write a footnote in which the translator illustrates the social and religious implications in the images. For example, the first excerpt reveals the extent to which Mauritanians rejects sexual relations outside marriage as the sand, symbolically, rejects and condemns such practice. The other two examples reveal more about the geography and environment of Mauritanian.

Food Types

Food types are essential components of any culture; for this reason, they are normally foreignized in order to grant TRs the chance to discover the SC. To achieve this objective, borrowing strategy married with a definition

of the term is preferred. Consider the following examples from the novel '*Sand Memory*' in which I borrowed the names of meals and drinks so as to present them to the target audience.

1 – أما أنت فلا خوف عليك من الشياطين ما دامت القدر تفور وظل السقيفة ممتد ومادام في الشكوة شربة باردة لمسافر

- As for you, there is nothing to fear from the devils as long as the pot kept boiling and the roof is receptive and as long as the Shikwa contains cold drink for the wayfarer

2 – لن يجف الزريق في عروق قريتك ورائحة المشوي الزكية لن تفارق أزقتها... مازال الشارع ثملا من شايك المشعشع بالرغوة البيضاء

- Zrig won't dry up in the veins of your village while the amorous roast odor will not leave its alleyways. The street is still drunk thanks to your white lather-topped well prepared tea

3 – فلم نكن نعرف الكسكس إلا سماعا عن أهل الشرق، وأما المكرونة فكانت جديدة تماما علينا وحتى السمك لا نعرفه إلا مجففا وأما عند أم العيد فقد وجدناه طريا مع الأرز

We knew about the couscous in tales told by people of Sharg. The macaroni was completely a new thing to us. Even fish we had known it only dried; Oum El Eid had served it fresh with rice to us.

In the above examples, I borrowed terms such as *Zrig*, Couscous, and *Shikwa* because their translations are problematic and represent cultural dissimilarities between SC and TC. Here, the specific cultural load of these terms is taken into consideration. To avoid the cultural losses, these terms were recognized as untranslatable, and thus borrowing and explanation were thought to be the best way to communicate their meaning. The colloquial dialect of Mauritanian society was preserved so as to achieve the intercultural communication. This helps present a real image of Mauritanian society in the particular era covered by the novel and introduce some Mauritanian folklore items. In so doing, the foreign audience get understandingly introduced to Mauritanian meals and drinks. Therefore, unfamiliar words were not, here, substituted by familiar ones in the target culture, since this familiarization can distort the source culture and prevents the reader from discovering the source culture. Therefore, this dissertation contends that names of cultural aspects should not be translated by using domestication strategy. Rather, they should be borrowed in order to enhance the intercultural communication between both SC and TC.

Traditions

It seems necessary to discuss the denotation and connotations of traditional social practice in a footnote in order to prevent cultural losses in the TT. Moreover, literal translation appears to be urgently required to convey all cultural concepts and beliefs of the traditional Mauritanian society represented in the novel by el Jadida village. Here are some examples in which I consistently used literal translation in order to represent the traditions of Mauritanian society.

- 1 لكن تلك المرأة لم تمهلكم واقتادت حمار الخيمة إلى قريب من الدكان والأخبية وأصرت على أن تنزلوا هنالك ثم قالت لك: نحن سنبني الخيمة هذا عمل النساء ولا شأن للرجال به. خذ العجوز والأطفال إلى ظل الخباء, أنتم اليوم ضيوف علي.

But that woman did not give you a chance as she led the family donkey to a place very near to the shop and the tent insisting that you unpack there and saying:

- We shall pitch the tent as this is a female task; men have nothing to do with this. Take the old woman and the children to the shade of the tent. Today, you are my guests.

- 2 لا بد أن تنتقم لأم العيد من أولئك الرجال لقد آن الأوان لتكافئ الجميل أتذكر يوم لقيتها فآوتك وقالت لك:
- 3 لا عليك ستبقى معنا هنا وسأفرش لك ذلك الكوخ لتسكنه وحدك. ولن تحتاج إلى شيء ما دمت حية.

You have to have Oum El Eid's revenge on these men. It is high time to pay her back for her good deeds. Remember the day you met her first when she gave you shelter and said to you:

No, don't worry. You would stay with us here. I would prepare that hut for you to live

- 4 ارتجت القرية مساء ذلك اليوم لسماع نبإ إطلاق سراح أم العيد خرج الناس عن بكرة أبيهم عصرا لاستقبال أم العيد وأصرت السالمة وصديقاتها على احضار طبل لضربه بين يدي أم العيد.

The village went wild upon hearing that Oum El Eid got released. On that afternoon, everyone went outside to receive her. Salma and her friends insisted on brining a drum with them to beat when she comes.

In examples 1and 2, we can see different characters in the novel enjoying the generosity and hospitality of Oum El Eid, the protagonist in the novel. Here, Eljadida village represents the traditional moralities and ethics of the Mauritanian society in comparison to Nouakchott which represents the new modern values. In example 3, TRs are introduced to the ways of ceremonies and folklore items such as the drum in traditional Mauritania. These renditions seem compatible with the original and thus, the SC is faithfully represented. That is to say, no detail would be omitted for the sake of brevity and fluency.

Analysis of Mythological Terms

Translating myths poses a serious problem, for it is extremely related with the socio-cultural forces of the SL society. Hence, as a translator, I have been again experiencing the dilemma of domestication and foreignization. It seems very appropriate to foreignize the myths mentioned in the ST in order to provide a vivid image about Mauritanians in a particular period. In so doing, this translation is thought to achieve its main objective represented by enriching English culture with Mauritanian cultural concepts. Below are some examples of myths:

١- لكن أرضك يا أم العيد رملية ناعمة تغوص الأقدام فيها وقد يئست أمي قديما من أن تستلني منها رغم أنها غسلت رأسي بذالك البول الآدمي المقزز لتبطل عني سحر أهل القبلة كما زعمت وكنت أعرف أن ذاللك سحرك أنت

But your land, Oum El Eid, is sandy. The feet go down deep inside it. My mother had, of old, despaired of extricating me from it although she washed my head with that disgusting human urine to unmake the magic of the people of the south as she claimed. I knew it was your magic.

١- لم تفهم أني أنا حارسة الطريق الأمينة والعهد بيني وبين القرية أن أفعل ما فعلته. هكذا قهرت الشياطين

She did not understand that I am the reliable road guard. The only covenant between me and the village was to do what I did. It is in that way that I vanquished the devils.

٢- وقال لي الحجاب إن هذه الأرض ملك لمردة من الشياطين وإن لهم عندي ثأرفقد قتلت وأنا فتاة يافعة أحد أبناء ملك تلك القبيلة وكنت يومها في أرض لقبيلة أخرى من الجن فحمتني تلك القبيلة واليوم قد نزلت بأرض أعدائي وهم يسعون الآن بكل جهودهم للانتقام مني وليس لي إلاّ أن أغادر هذه الأرض المسكونة بالجن فورا

The *hajjab* had told me that this land is the property of ruthless Jinns and that they had a score to settle with me since, when I was young, I had killed one of the sons of that tribe's chieftain. Back then I was residing in another tribe's land protecting me, that I am residing at the moment in my enemy's land devoting their efforts to have their revenge on me. He told me that my only solution was to leave this haunted land immediately.

٣- أعلم أن الشياطين كانت دوما تسعى للثأر مني ولكنني لم أتصور أنها قادرة على أخذ سليمان فقد حرزته مرارا عند كثير من الحجابين. وكان هو قويا بحيث يستطيع أن يهزمها كما هزمتها أنا من قبل

I know that the devils had always wanted to have their revenge on me, but I did not think they were able to take Suleimane as I had recurrently provided him with *hirz* of various *hajjabin*. He was strong enough to beat them as I did before.

٤- هل كنت تحمل خاتم سليمان أم أن الصالحين من أسلافك ركبوا شخص تلك المرأة فسخروها لخدمتك

. Were you carrying Solomon's ring or had your righteous ancestors harnessed her to serve you?

Here, the author is brought to the reader by using foreignization methods such as' word for word' translation, and 'borrowing' with explanation in a footnote. This is important as it introduces some Mauritanian beliefs. It shows how *hajjabin* occupy a powerful position in traditional Mauritanian society as they pretend to have strong relations with abstract powers such as Jinns and Devils. Examples 1, 2 and 3 show both explicit and implicit cultural differences between SC and TC. If we render these rituals and social beliefs using Nida's equivalent effect, the translator will be then invited to fully understand the target culture so that he can construct the source concepts via the use of equivalent myths.

Seemingly, the equivalent effect model deprives translation from its major objective which is the transfer of cultural differences to the TC. For that reason, this study valorizes the theoretical premises upon which thinkers of philosophical approach built their hypotheses. That is to say, they recognize the cultural other. Having foreignized the translation of this cultural aspects, the reader can be alerted that these are foreign cultural aspects. Therefore, these translations are compatible with the original because they convey the real culture of the ST to the target audience.

Analysis of the Religious Aspects in The Novel

Saudi Sadiq prefers the use of paraphrase to render the religious words which don't have equivalence in English. For example, he translates الحور العين as "*extremely beautiful females of bright complexion and lovely eyes.*"[24] Such rendition, however, can cause losses in the religiously intended meaning. This is because religious terms are sensitive and complicated when they are translated. On this account, it appears appropriate to employ the foreignization strategy in order to convey the whole religious signification of the ST to the TRS. See the following examples:

١- لعل صلاة العيد قد قضيت ولم أنتبه للأذان سبحان الله ولاحول ولا قوة إلا بالله

Glorified be His name and might is obtained but through Allah…May be the morning prayers have been performed without hearing the Azzan

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[24] Saudi Sadiq, *A Comparative Study of Four English Translations of Sûrat Ad-Dukhân on the Semantic Level* (Newcastle upon Tyne: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2010), 12.

2- حسبي الله ونعم الوكيل

I rely solely on Allah

3- ولم تزل بها حتى أجلستها واسرعت إليها احدى أخواتها بقدح من الزريق لتشرب منه فامسكت بالقدح تتأمله ثم قالت لأختها:

- إني صائمة.

أجابتها أختها:

لقد غربت الشمس وحان الفطور.

Her mother kept on insisting until she made El Izza sit down. One of her sisters ran toward her with a utensil full of Zrig for her to drink. She held the utensil and looked at it saying:

- I am performing *saum* (fasting);

Her sister answered:

- The sun has already set, and it is time to break the *saum* (fasting).

In the example1, I try to adhere to foreignization strategy in order to avoid losses in the religious connotations of the term. The reader is alerted that the *azzan* is an Islamic term, which has its particular religious implications and method, so as to search and learn about this practice. On the contrary, if *azzan* is rendered as "the call for the prayer," it would be quite inappropriate since the TR might understand that *azzan* can be done in any method using any word that means the call for the prayer. In examples 2, the word 'Allah', which has no correspondence in the TL, is borrowed in order to stay close to the original and preserve the exact religious signification. If it is rendered 'God', the translator will simply give Christian connotation to a text written within a Muslim society.

In a similar vein, the word sawm, for example, can have the following translations: 1). to fast, 2). to perform *saum* (fasting). The first translation seems to be not accurate since the English word fasting denotes a Christian practice which is different from that of the Islam one.[25] The second translation seems to capture the religious signification of the word *sawm* and draw Western readers' attention to an Islamic tradition. On this account, the second translation is thought to be more appropriate for conveying the whole religious connotations to the receptor audience. Such renditions are meant to allow TRs fully grasp the religious denotations embedded in the ways the ST represents society.

Moreover, the study invited any translator of a literary work to extensively analyze the ST so that he can comment on the religious implicatures in the ST. consider the following example:

4- أنت كالثور نتزو كل يوم على انثى. ألا تتعب من الزواج والطلاق خذ إن شئت أربعا. لكن إلزمهن.

You are like an ox every day making love with a female. Don't you ever get tired of marrying and divorcing? If you want, take four wives but keep them

Here, literal translation with a footnote seems to be the appropriate method by which the religious rules of marriage and divorce are likely to be conveyed to the Western reader who may not know that Islam permits a man to marry four women. Without the translator's comment, religious loss in the meaning is inevitable. Therefore, the study views translation as a complex process that aims at transferring the entire conceptual meanings of the ST into TT.

Conclusion

The article discusses the challenges encountered in literary translation between Arabic into English. It shows how religious, cultural, and social differences between the SC and TC can cause translation gaps that pose challenges for translators. In this regard, the article highlights a practical framework that can help the translator solve these problems. He/she can use one of the foreignization strategies elaborated in the above analysis to resolve the gaps in translating novels from Arabic into English.

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[25] Abdelaal, *Translation between English and Arabic*, 97.

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