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## Problems of Translating Taha Hussein's *'alā Hāmeš Al-Sīrah*: A Cognitive-Pragmatic Approach

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### ABSTRACT

The hypothesis of the study is that cognitive-pragmatic aspects, and context-based utterances in literary texts can be problematic issues in translation due to differences between cultures and languages which can affect the quality of translation. On the basis of Gutt's (2000) cognitive-pragmatic theoretical framework of translation and Pedersen's (2011) model of translation strategies, this thesis attempts to present a cognitive-pragmatic analysis of the translation of the Arabic novel *'alā Hāmeš Al-Sīrah* by Taha Hussein (1933) and its English translation entitled *Marginalia on the Prophet's Biography* by Mohamed Enani (2021). Gutt's cognitive-pragmatic model of translation has been built upon Relevance Theory of Sperber and Wilson (1995). According to Sperber and Wilson (1995), Relevance Theory is the main theoretical framework in the area of cognitive pragmatics and, according to Sperber and Wilson (1995), the only cognitive-pragmatic approach within translation studies. The results of the study show that the translation strategies that have been most applied to the selected data are generalization, specification and substitution. Due to the different cognitive environments of the source and target audiences, the indirect translation approach proved to be the appropriate method of translating the selected data. It enabled the translator to convey the intended message as much as possible without causing distortion or loss of meaning.<sup>1</sup>

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## 1. Introduction:

Language has always been seen as an expression of the speaker's culture and individuality (Baker, 2011). Newmark (1988) defines culture as "the way of life and its manifestations that are peculiar to a

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This research is part of an MA thesis entitled "A Cognitive-Pragmatic Analysis of Taha Hussein's *'alā Hāmeš Al-Sīrah* and its Translation *Marginalia on the Prophet's Biography*" by Merna Walid Abd El-Monem Zaki, a teaching assistant in the English Department, Faculty of Arts, Benha University. [mernawalid7@gmail.com](mailto:mernawalid7@gmail.com)

community that uses a particular language as its means of expression” (p. 94). Therefore, translating a literary work is equivalent to translating the culture or cognitive environment where the work is produced, as Sperber and Wilson (2002) suggest.

Nida and Taber (2003) argue that the primary goal of translation is to reproduce the intended message in the receptor language, in terms of meaning and style. To explore the transfer of intended meanings from the source text to the target reader and the shifts in translation that could alter the intended meaning, this study adopts a cognitive-pragmatic approach to translation. Cognitive pragmatics focuses on the cognitive aspects of interpreting meaning-in-context, which relates translation and interpretation to the mental processes involved in communicating. It examines the cognitive principles and processes that are used in interpreting meaning in a given context (Bublitz & Norrick, 2011).

Relevance Theory is considered the main theoretical framework in the area of cognitive pragmatics (Huang, 2007) as well as the only cognitive-pragmatic approach within translation studies. According to Gutt, relevance theory holds the key to providing a unified cognitive-pragmatic account of translation (2000). Translators of literature must make assumptions about the cognitive contexts and communicative clues present in both the source and target texts. They must also consider the potential relevance of any aspect of literary or stylistic interpretation in the context of the target text.

## 2. Statement of Research Problem

The research investigates, from a cognitive-pragmatic perspective, Taha Hussein’s novel *‘alā Hāmeš Al-Sīrah* (1933) and its English translation entitled *Marginalia on the Prophet’s Biography* (2021). The study applies Gutt’s (2000) cognitive-pragmatic model of translation and his recent findings which develop Sperber and Wilson’s (1995) relevance theoretical framework. The study also investigates how cognitive-pragmatic inference is vital for the success of literary translation.

Moreover, in order to illustrate the substantive role of cognitive-linguistics and cultural turn in translation studies, the study applies Pedersen’s (2011) model of translation strategies to the culture-specific items extracted from the selected data. The study attempts to illustrate how the translator could, or even could not, overcome the obstacles faced while transferring Hussein’s idiosyncratic style and loaded language to a foreign culture adopting different translation strategies.

### 3. Objectives of the Research

The study aims at: (1) examining different translation strategies used while transferring culture-specific items between different cultures considering the different cognitive environments of the source and target readers, (2) investigating the problems that translators might face while translating cultural reference in literary texts, (3) uncovering how direct and indirect translation approaches might be used to overcome such problems, (4) investigating to what extent the translator succeeded in conveying the intended meanings of the source text.

### 4. Research Questions

In order to fulfil the thesis objectives, the study attempts to find answers to the following questions: (1) what are the translation strategies that can be used to transfer culture-specific items between different cognitive environments? (2) what are the problems that translators might face while translating cultural reference in literary texts? (3) how the context of a target text may differ from the context of the source text in direct and indirect translation approaches? (4) to what extent does the translator succeed in conveying the intended meanings and the contextual effects of the source text?

### 5. Research Methodology

Encouraged by Gutt's cognitive-pragmatic model of translation (2000), this research adopts a relevance theoretic approach and attempts to present a cognitive-pragmatic analysis of the translation of the Arabic novel '*alā Hāmeš Al-Sīrah*' by Taha Hussein. Moreover, in order to build the bridge between translation and cognition, the analysis is focused on the translation of culture-specific items in the novel adopting Pedersen's (2011) model of translation strategies. A descriptive and qualitative method is used.

### 6. Literature Review

El-Bahy (2019) applies relevance theory to the translation of Arabic proverbs into English. She uses Gutt's (2002) approaches of direct and indirect translation and claims that both are effective translation tools in relevance theory. However, she argues that indirect translation is more effective in achieving optimal relevance because it provides an explanation of the implicit message of the source text to the target readers, making it easier for them to understand the contextual effect of the source text.

Zhu (2021) compares Mai Jia's novel *Jie Mi* to its English translation and examines the communicative clues found in the proper nouns, culturally-specific concepts, and figurative psychological descriptions of the source text. The study also analyzes whether these clues were accurately conveyed in the English version for the benefit of the target readers. The paper highlights the importance of cognitive-

pragmatic inference in the success of literary translation and provides translators with practical ways to improve the quality of their translation in terms of literary style.

Al-Jarrah, Abu-Dalu and Obiedat (2018) utilize a relevance-theoretic approach to investigate how to translate structures that contain strategic ambiguity. The researchers find that a "good" translation, from a relevance-theoretic perspective, is one that permits all valid interpretations supported by the source text rather than representing a specific interpretation. Therefore, the translator's role is to "translate" rather than to "interpret."

Alwazna (2017) offers an account of relevance theory and its connection to translation within the sphere of pragmatics, emphasising the great importance of context and its fundamental role in clarifying the intended meaning of a particular utterance. The paper presents the translator's task that is to identify the illocutionary act and perlocutionary effects of the source text and then to attempt to reproduce them in the target text.

Besbes (2013) conducts a research in which he attempts to deal with the relevance of Relevance Theory to the teaching and learning of literary translation in the Arab-speaking world. He seeks to illustrate how the communicative clues in the source text can aid literary translation students in producing translations that are relevant both culturally and communicatively from English to Arabic and vice versa. The study suggests new avenues for exploring the handling of figurative language from the perspective of the relevance theory of communication.

Zhonggang (2006) tries to provide an explanatory framework for translating the implicit information in literary texts building on Gutt's relevance-theoretic approach (1991). The thesis focuses on a study of the implicit information, its origin and its nature, and concludes that the implicit information is inherent in human communication and it is a prerequisite for relevance: to be relevant, an utterance must convey some implicit information.

Lin (2010) explores the translation of humorous metaphors in the novel *Fortress Besieged* from a relevance-theoretic perspective, using Gutt's cognitive pragmatic model of translation. He finds that while Gutt's translation theory does not offer concrete solutions to problems faced by translators of humorous metaphors, it provides a practical direction for them to follow. Translators should consider the cognitive environment of the target audience and their possible reaction to a translation based on their cognitive environment. Therefore, relevance theory is a useful guiding theory for translators of humorous metaphors.

Hakimi (2019) proposes solutions for addressing the discrepancies between the literal and implied translations of Badawi, LeGassick, and Redenbeck in Naguib Mahfouz's *The Thief and the Dogs*. The study aims to identify effective strategies for bridging problematic linguistic, pragmatic, and cultural differences

between the source and target text. Hakimi concludes that the difference between literal and implied translation can create a significant gap for the reader.

## **7. Theoretical Background:**

### **7.1 Cultural Turn in Translation Studies**

According to Pym (2010), cultural turn is “a term proposed by Snell-Hornby and legitimated by Lefevere and Bassnett, whereby translation studies should focus on the cultural effects of translation” (p. 149). Snell-Hornby (1990) defines cultural turn as ‘the move from translation as text to translation as culture and politics’ (p. 42). It is the analysis of translation in its cultural, political and ideological context.

### **7.2 The Strategies for the Translation of Culture-Specific Items**

Pedersen’s (2011) model of translation strategies gives seven strategies. The seven defined strategies are classified into two main categories: source language oriented and target language oriented. The source-language oriented strategies can be classified into the following sub-categories:

#### **7.2.1 Retention**

Retention is when a given word or expression in the original text is directly carried over to the target text with no change in the form (Pedersen, 2011).

#### **7.2.2 Specification**

Specification refers to keeping the ST CR untranslated but adding some extra information that does not appear in the source text. There are two ways of employing Specification strategy: Completion and Addition (Pedersen, 2011).

#### **7.2.3 Direct Translation**

In Direct translation, the sense of the ST CR is conveyed with no additions or omissions. The translator does not make any effort to make the ST CR more accessible to the TT reader or to convey its connotations in any way (Pedersen, 2011).

*As for TT-oriented strategies, they are:*

#### **7.2.4 Generalization**

Generalization refers to replacing a specific CR by something more general. This can be done either by replacing the ST CR by a Superordinate term, or a Paraphrase (Pedersen, 2011).

#### **7.2.5 Substitution**

Substitution strategy involves substituting the ST CR with either a different CR from the SC or the TC (Cultural Substitution), or something completely different that suits the situation (Situational Substitution) (Pedersen, 2011).

### 7.2.6 Omission

Omission strategy refers to deleting a ST CR in the process of translation or replacing it with nothing (Pedersen, 2011).

### 7.2.7 Official equivalent

Pedersen (2011) states that for there to be an Official Equivalent, some sort of official decision by people in authority over a CSI is needed. For instance, the conversion of measurements.

### 7.3 Cognitive Pragmatics:

According to Bara (2010), cognitive pragmatics refers to the examination of the mental states of individuals involved in communication, and it involves the study of cognitive principles and processes that facilitate the interpretation of meaning within a specific context. The primary focus of cognitive pragmatics is on the inferential processes required to comprehend a communicator's intent. It aims to explore the mental processes engaged in intentional communication, in essence, to understand the cognitive processes involved in a communicative interaction (Gutt, 1998).

### 7.4 Relevance Theory:

Wilson (2000) defines relevance as “a property of inputs to cognitive processes and analysed in terms of the notions of cognitive effect and processing effort” (p. 423). An input is more relevant when it gives more cognitive effects with less mental processing effort (Allot, 2013).

*Extent condition 1:* An assumption is relevant in a context to the extent that its contextual effects in that context are large.

*Extent condition 2:* An assumption is relevant in a context to the extent that the effort required to process it in that context is small. (Sperber & Wilson, 1987, p. 703)

The major tenets in Relevance Theory include :

#### 7.4.1 The cognitive principle of relevance

Human cognition tends to be geared to the maximization of relevance. (Wilson & Sperber, 2004, p. 255)

According to Wilson and Sperber (2004), humans possess an innate inclination to maximize relevance owing to the development of our cognitive systems. Wilson (2019) explains that constant selection pressures during human evolution have led to the development of mental mechanisms or heuristics in the human cognitive system. The primary purpose of these mechanisms is to identify potentially relevant stimuli and process them in the most relevance-enhancing way possible.

#### **7.4.2 Ostensive-inferential communication**

(a) Informative intention. The intention to make manifest or more manifest to the audience a certain set of assumptions.

(b) Communicative intention. The intention to make mutually manifest to audience and communicator the communicator's informative intention. (Sperber & Wilson, 1987, p. 700)

Relevance theory postulates that a communicator generates a 'stimulus,' which the recipient uses to deduce two ideas. The first notion is that the communicator intends to convey a message, known as the communicative intention. The second concept is that the communicator has specific information to impart, known as the informative intention. Communication that includes both the communicative and informative intentions is referred to as ostensive-inferential communication (Sperber & Wilson, 1986/1995).

#### **7.4.3 Context and Contextual Effects**

According to Wilson and Sperber (1985), the context for interpreting an utterance is defined in psychological terms as the background beliefs and assumptions the recipient employs during the interpretation process. Gutt (2000) notes that, in relevance theory, context pertains not to the text, situation, or preceding or subsequent utterances, but to the individual's cognitive environment, including their assumptions about the world. Context is a subset of the recipient's existing assumptions, which, when combined with new assumptions, produces various contextual effects (Sperber & Wilson, 1986/1995, 132).

According to relevance theory, in order to get the speaker's intention, the hearer should be able to access his own context by comparing the new given information to his own existing or stored knowledge (Martinez, 1988). According to Sperber and Wilson (1986), "an assumption is relevant to an individual at a given time if and only if it is relevant in one or more of the contexts accessible to that individual at that time" (p. 144).

Sperber and Wilson (1985) argue that the recipient's task in interpreting an utterance is to choose a suitable context against which the utterance will be understood. Each utterance requires a different context for interpretation, which is selected based on two principles. The first principle is the ease of accessibility, where the recipient selects the most accessible context to minimize effort. The second principle is the optimization of benefit, where the context is chosen to maximize the contextual effects gained from interpreting the utterance (Malmkjar, 1992). The hearer selects the context that helps him to gain as most contextual effects as possible.

So, relevance is established by the relationship between an utterance and the recipient's perspective of the world. As a result of different cognitive environments, the same utterance can be interpreted differently by different individuals (Perez, 2000). This variability in interpretation makes an utterance

relevant to one person and irrelevant to another. The recipient's comprehension of the speaker's intended meaning can be restricted by the absence of a shared cognitive environment caused by cultural differences (Zixia, 2009). However, if the speaker and recipient share the same cognitive environment, this issue can be resolved. To ensure that the recipient correctly interprets the intended meaning, Sperber and Wilson (1995) argue that both parties must have mutual knowledge of the contextual information.

### 7.5 Cognitive-Pragmatic Model of Translation

In order to give a unified account of translation, Gutt (2000) builds on relevance theory and comes up with the notion of "direct translation" and that of "indirect translation". Smith (2002) argues that the primary distinction between these two approaches is that direct translation attempts to achieve complete interpretive resemblance, while indirect translation pursues interpretive resemblance in relevant aspects. The goal of direct translation is to convey the entirety of the source message, whereas indirect translation aims to communicate only the portions of the source message that are relevant to the target audience (Smith, 2007).

Indirect translation aims to convey only those assumptions of the source text that are relevant to the receptor audience. The target audience do not need to familiarize themselves with the original context. They can interpret the text in their own context because the relevant points can usually be conveyed in the receptor context (Smith, 2002). Thus, the point of indirect translation is "to give access to an interpretation that resembles that of the original in relevant respects" (LIU & ZHANG, 2006, p. 59). If the original text cannot be made sufficiently relevant to the receptor language audience, indirect translation enables a translator to increase relevance by, for example, providing the target audience with further background information in order to widen their contextual background (Dong, 2012).

## 8. Analysis & Results

As illustrated in Table 1 below, Indirect Translation has gained the highest percentage of use. CSIs have been divided into four categories: (1) CSIs related to Social Customs, (2) Religious CSIs, (3) CSIs specific to the SL, (4) Names of Food, Places and People. For each category, the translator applied the most appropriate translation strategies that can help him to overcome difficulties faced while transferring cultural-references.

Firstly, taking into consideration that CSIs that are related to social customs are always loaded with intended meanings and beliefs, the translator applied the indirect translation approach in most cases to



provide the TR with the closest equivalent that enables them to achieve contextual effects similar to those attained by the ST reader.

(1) ST: “ فقال له ابن أبي الفرات في كلامه : **يا بن بركة** (يريد أم أيمن) فقال الحسن : اشهدوا . ورفعته إلى أبي بكر محمد بن عمرو بن “ (Hussein, 1933, p. 169).  
وقص عليه قصته”

TT: “During the verbal exchanges, the former addressed the latter, inter alia, as ‘**thou son of Baraka!**’”.

CSI	Translation	Strategy	Gutt's Approach
يا بن بركة	thou son of Baraka!	Explication	Indirect
صدي ابنك يدعو من يسقيه	The thirsty soul of your son still hovers over his grave, calling for a drink of vengeance.	Explication	Indirect
ورجمته طير أبابيل ، ترمى عدوه بحجارة من سجيل ، فإذا هم كعصف مأكول	The flocks of birds pelting the enemies with pebbles as hard as shotgun-pellets, so that the soldiers looked like a field of stalks and straw [of which the corn] was eaten up	Paraphrase	Indirect
يبلغ الكتاب أجله	When the moment of truth is to occur, that is at the right juncture	Paraphrase	Indirect
بَرْزَة	the kind of self-assured woman who tends to accept socializing, i.e. not being loath to talk to men - described as <i>Barzah</i> -which means 'she who has a high profile'	Retention + Paraphrase	Indirect
مولي	Mawla	Retention + Explication	Indirect
غربان العرب	Arabian ravens	Direct Translation	Direct
شواء غريض، عسل هُدَيل	succulent cuts of roast meat, milk sweetened with the honey of the Hudhail tribe,	Addition	Indirect
شبيه	Old man	Direct translation	Direct

Table 1. Translation Strategies Adopted in the selected data.

Now, Baraka is the proper name of Umm-Ayman, and in Arabia it is considered great shame to utter the name of a man's mother aloud. Al-Hassan, offended, cried, Be my witnesses!" to those present.

He then took his complaint to Abu Bakr Muhammad Ibn Amr Ibn Hazm, who was then the judge of al-Medina, or the local governor, appointed by Omar Ibn Abdul-Aziz (Enani, 2021, p. 144).

(2) ST: “فارجع أدرجك فاتخذ لك ملكاً حول هذا البيت الذى لم يُرضك أن تكسوه الوشى، حتى كسوته الحرير والديباج، أو اتخذ لك ملكاً” (Hussein, 1933, p. 76).  
 فى يثرب حيث دم ابنك ينتظر من يثأر له، وحيث صدى ابنك يدعو من يسقيه”

TT: “Go back, establish a kingdom for yourself around that house which you, not satisfied with clothing it in fine embroidered material, dressed in ornamented silk. Or you may have a kingdom in Yathrib, where the spilt blood of your son still waits to be avenged-**the thirsty soul of your son still hovers over his grave, calling for a drink of vengeance**” (Enani, 2021, p. 80).

Example (1) is based on a belief among Arabs that calling someone by his mother's name is offensive, which is explained by the translator both in-text and in a footnote applying **explication** strategy and following **indirect** translation approach to enable the TR to get adequate contextual effects. Adopting that strategy enables the TR to understand why Al-hassan complained Ibn Abdul-Furaat after being called by his mother's name, which might sound normal to the TR with his different cognitive environment, customs and background. Similarly, example (2) is based on a social custom that has been common among Arabs a long time ago. They believed that when someone is killed, his soul hovers in thirst until his death is avenged. Without explicating such information to the TR, the text, being specific to the source culture, is vague and the meaning is incomplete and confusing. Therefore, adopting **explication** strategy following the **indirect** translation approach in this context is an appropriate decision by the translator, it enabled him to provide the information needed to be added to the target reader's cognitive context to infer the intended message.

Secondly, in the following examples, where the problematic CSIs are related to the source readers' religion, the translator adopted a variety of strategies following the indirect translation approach to be able to transfer the right meaning of the religious CSIs as much as possible to the TR.

(3) ST: “وأذن مؤذن أن قد أن لأهل الدير أن يأووا إلى حجراتهم ؛ ففترقوا وما في نفوسهم رغبة فى سمر ولا ميل إلى حديث ، وما منهم ” (Hussein, 1933, p. 146).  
 إلا من يفكر في هذا البيت الذي أحجم عنه الفيل ، ورجمته طير أبابيل ، ترمى عدوه بحجارة من سجيل ، فإذا هم كعصف مأكول”

TT: “An announcement was made to the effect that all the monastery's denizens were to go back to their rooms. They dispersed, having relinquished all desire to have entertaining conversations or listen to any narrative: they were all thinking of that shrine from which the elephant flinched; they kept visualizing the **flocks of birds pelting the enemies with pebbles as hard as shotgun-pellets, so that the soldiers looked like a field of stalks and straw [of which the corn] was eaten up**” (Enani, 2021, p. 128).

(4) ST: "هنالك رأى الطفل قبر أبيه . وهنالك لعب الطفل مع أطفال مثله سيكونون له أصدقاء وأنصاراً حين يجِدُ الجدَّ، وحين يبلغ الكتاب" (Hussein, 1933, p. 162).

TT: "The child sees his father's grave, and plays with toddlers of the same age, destined to be friends and partisans **when the moment of truth is to occur, that is at the right juncture**, when the Heavenly decree is to be enacted on earth" (Enani, 2021, p. 140).

Example (3) contains a part of a qur'anic verse related to a specific incident in Islam. Taking the target reader's ignorance of such an incident into consideration, the translator applied **indirect** translation approach by adopting **paraphrase** strategy which enabled him to make the religious CSIs explicit to the TR so that the TT will be as relevant to them as possible. In example (4), 'يبلغ الكتاب أجله' is a religious concept implies, in Islam, the right time to disseminate Islam and to convey God's message. The implied meaning of the source utterance cannot be inferred from words by a reader who does not share the same religious background with the author. Direct translation of such an expression could have distorted the meaning. Consequently, the translator, considering the cultural gap between SR and TR, adopted **paraphrase** strategy following the **indirect** translation approach to provide the TR with adequate contextual effects like those attained by the ST readers.

While translating the CSIs of the third category that are specific to the source language and have no equivalent in the target language, the translator tried to convey them to the TR without causing any loss or distortion of meaning by using the indirect translation strategies.

(5) ST: "وكانت فاطمة الخثعمية بَرَزَةً مُتَبَدِّئَةً في مكة بعض الشيء لا تكره أن تظهر للرجال وتأخذ معهم في ألوان الحديث . وكان شباب قریش يحبون منها ذلك ويكلفون به ، ويخالفون إليها إذ كان المساء ، فيقولون لها ويسمعون منها حتى يتقدم الليل ، وربما أديرت عليهم في الشتاء أقذاح من خمر بيسان ، وفي الصيف أقذاح من زبيب الطائف" (Hussein, 1933, p. 39).

TT: "Fatima al-Khath'amiyya was **the kind of self-assured woman who tends to accept socializing**, i.e. not being loath to talk to men - described as *Barzah*-which means '**she who has a high profile**' in Mecca. The young men of Quraysh loved that quality, and would visit her in the evening for lengthy conversations well into the night. She may regale them in the winter, offering wines of Beisan, and in the summer, offering cups of raisin liquor from al-Ta'if" (Enani, 2021, p. 55).

(6) ST: "وانظر إليه حريصاً علي أن تحيا وتنعم بالحياة، حريصاً على ألا يكون حظها من السعادة في هذه الدنيا أقل من حظ غيرها من الحرائر، انظر كيف يلتمس لها الزوج فيقول لأصحابه: مَنْ سرّه أن يتزوج امرأة من أهل الجنة فليتزوج أم أيمن. هنالك أسرع مولاة زيد" (Hussein, 1933, p.164).

TT: "See how he cares for empowering her to enjoy life, so that her happiness would be no less than that of free women, and how, to that effect, he looks for a worthy potential husband for her: "He who is pleased

to marry a woman destined for Paradise," he tells his companions, "let him marry Umm-Ayman!" Then Zayd, his *mawla*, was quick to marry her" (Enani, 2021, p. 141).

(7) ST: “وقد سمر الفتى مع السامرين، فسمع احاديث التجار عن غرائب الأقطار: هذا يحدث عن صور بصري وعظمتها، وهذا عن الخورنق والسدير، وهذا يذكر غمدان، وهذا يصف أخلاق اليمانيين ومكرهم بالتجار، وهذا يتحدث عن سذاجة أهل الشام وانخداعهم لغربان العرب” (Hussein, 1933, p. 5).

TT: "Abdul-Muttalib joined the circle of men gathered for conversations in the early hours of the evening . He heard the strange tales told by travelling merchants about various places: one spoke of the magnificent sights of the city of Busra, another about al-Khawarnaq and al-Sudair, a third about Ghomdan. One described the manners of the Yemenis and their deception of merchants, another talked about the naivety of the Levantines, and how easily they were gulled by **the Arabian ‘ravens’**." (Enani, 2021, p. 28).

In examples (5) and (6), the translator used indirect translation strategies; paraphrase in transferring ‘بُرْزَة’ and explicitation in transferring ‘مولي’. ‘برزة’ is an Arabic CSI refers to a dignified, self-respecting woman who mixes with men and takes part in their conversation and is listened to because of her wisdom and status (Mujaam Almaany). The translator succeeded in explaining the item meaning using **paraphrase** strategy following the **indirect** translation approach. Similarly, ‘مولي’ is an Arabic CSI that is considered one of ‘al-addad’ in Arabic. Words of that category can refer both to a thing and its opposite. Thus, ‘مولي’ in Arabic can mean master or slave (Mujaam Almaany). In this context, Zayd was a slave freed by Prophet Muhammad. Lack of sharing that background knowledge with the author could have led the TR to the opposite of meaning. Therefore, the translator explicated the item by adding a footnote using **explicitation** strategy and following the **indirect** translation approach. On the other hand, when the translator used **direct translation** with a CSI like ‘غربان العرب’ by transferring it directly into 'Arabian ravens', the translated version, lacking the background information needed to infer the intended meaning, is less relevant to the TR. ‘غربان العرب’, in brief, are a group of Arabs who, despite including great knights and poets, were known for being trickers, wicked and rebels (Manzur, 1873). This explains why the Levantines in the example above are described as naive and easily gulled by them.

Finally, names of food, places and people are also considered problematic CSIs that require attention while transferring them to a different culture.

(8) ST: “أيام منذ أخته يزور أقبل حين البادية هدايا من حمل فيما خاله حمله الذي هُدِيل عسل يمازجه للبنأ فيها وإن غريضا لشواء فيها” (Hussein, 1933, p. 14).

TT: “Here were **succulent cuts of roast meat**, milk sweetened with **the honey of the Hudhail tribe**, which his maternal uncle had carried to them as part of the gifts from the Bedouin District, whence he had come to see his sister in Mecca a few days ago” (Enani, 2021, p. 35).

(9) ST: "إيه يا شيبية ! ما خطبك؟ إني لأنكرك منذ أيام" (Hussein, 1933, p. 7).

TT: "What is it, my **old man**? What is wrong? For days on end you haven't been yourself" (Enani, 2021, p. 30).

Concerning example (8), 'غريضا' is a culturally specific Arabic expression that denotes meat that is 'soft,' 'juicy,' or 'ripe' (Mujaam Almaany). Allayani (2012) notes that 'هُدَيْل' is a tribe of Adnanite origin located in the western region of Saudi Arabia, specifically in Hijjaz. As food types and place names are cultural presuppositions that necessitate the target readers' awareness of the source utterance's cognitive environment, the translator applied **addition** strategy following the **indirect** translation approach to explicate such CSIs to the target readers. On the other hand, using **direct** translation strategy in example (9) is considered mistranslation. The prophet's ancestor is named Shayba ibn Hashim, he is better known as Abd al-Muttalib. Thus translating his name into 'old man' can be considered a type of overtanslation.

From the examples above, it is clear that in most cases the translator adopted the indirect translation approach using strategies such as explication, paraphrase, and addition, taking into consideration the huge cultural gap between the source audience and the target audience. However, when he applied direct translation with such specific items in some of the extracts, it resulted in a TT that is not as relevant to the TR as the ST is to the SR. Consequently, the most adopted translation strategies are the indirect ones, for instance, explication, paraphrase, and addition. However, direct translation strategies have been less used. Therefore, it can be concluded that indirect translation approach is much more appropriate in translating such literary works.

## 9. Conclusion

The study aimed at examining different translation strategies used while transferring culture-specific items between different cultures considering the different cognitive environments of the source and target readers. To this end, examples have been extracted from the English translation of the case study of this thesis and analysed in order to prove this aim. The study also aimed at investigating the problems that translators might face while translating cultural reference in literary texts. The examples extracted from the case study have shown instances of the different problems that a CSI might cause for a translator while transferring it to a different culture. Finally, the main aim of the study has been to uncover how direct and indirect translation approaches might be used to overcome such problems. In the analysis of the extracted examples, it has been illustrated when direct or indirect translation approach is more appropriate to overcome the problems of transferring culture references between different cognitive environments.

In order to achieve the previous aims, the study tries to answer the questions asked in the first chapter. Concerning the first question, Pedersen's (2011) translation strategies have been applied to the translation of the extracted CSIs. These strategies are retention, specification, direct translation, generalization, substitution, omission and official equivalent. The seven defined strategies are classified into two main categories: source-language oriented and target-language oriented. The strategies of retention and direct translation are source-language oriented; and the strategies of generalization, specification, substitution, omission and official equivalent are target-language oriented. It has been found out in the selected data that the strategies of Generalization, Specification and Substitution have been mostly used while the strategies of Retention, Direct Translation and Omission have been less used.

Concerning the second question, the problems that translators might face while translating cultural references in literary texts are numerous. For instance, a CSI might have no equivalent in the target language. Or, a CSI might exist in the target culture but with different meaning or different connotations, which might cause miscommunication problems. Moreover, a culture reference might have an equivalent in the target culture that does not convey all the connotations implied in the ST CR. Some of these problems have been practically discussed in some of the extracts and some solutions to such problems have been provided.

Concerning the third and fourth questions, while translating directly, a translator seeks a complete interpretive resemblance and does not make any source text implied meanings explicit. A TR has to read the text using the source context. Therefore, when there is a huge cultural gap between the SC and TC, direct translation approach might be an unsuccessful choice as has been seen in some of the extracts. On the other hand, while translating indirectly, the translator is very sensitive to the target reader's cognitive environment. He provides the TR with what he needs to make a right interpretation of the text. In the selected data, it has been observed that the translator tended to indirect translation approach much more than to direct translation taking the target audience cognitive context into consideration. Thus, in most of the extracts the translator has succeeded in conveying the intended meaning to the TR adopting the appropriate translation strategy and following the indirect translation approach.

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