Arapça Örneği Üzerine Odaklanarak Çeviri Tarihinde Geçmişten Günümüze Eşdeğerliliğin Kökleri *

Roots of Equivalence in Translation History Till The Current Times With Concentration on Arabic as an Example

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Öz

Kaynak metin (ST) ile hedef metin (TT) arasında eşit değere veya eşdeğerliğe ulaşmak, her çeviri girişiminin tartışmasız hedefidir. Bununla birlikte, bu hedef hala elde edilmesi çok zor bir hedeftir çünkü ister bir yaklaşım, ister bir ilke veya kuram olarak ele alınsın, eşdeğerliliğin tanımı tam olarak hiçbir zaman yapılamamıştır. Bu gözden geçirme makalesi, eşdeğerlik kavramını çeşitli çeviri kuramları üzerinden, esas olarak 1950'lerden sonrasına odaklanarak izlemeye çalışmaktadır. Çalışma, eşdeğerliği kuramsal bir yöntem olarak çeviribilimcilerin gözünden ele almaktadır. Verilen örnekler Arapçadır, çünkü Arapça, kökleri ve gelişimi söz konusu olduğunda İngilizceden tamamen farklı bir dildir ve bu, herhangi bir çevirmen için eşdeğerliğe ulaşmayı daha da zorlaştırır.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Çeviri geçmişi, eşdeğerlik, kaynak metin, hedef metin, Arapça

Abstract

Achieving equal value or *equivalence* between the source text (ST) and the target text (TT) is the key aim of every translation attempt. However, since equivalence evades a concrete definition, this can complicate the translation process. This review article attempts to track the concept of equivalence through the various translation theories, focusing mainly on the 1950s onwards. Rather than viewing equivalence as an approach or principle, the study investigates its use as a theoretical method. To best illustrate the complexities of this task, this study focuses on equivalence in Arabic-English translation, given the lack of commonality in the roots and development of these respective languages.

Keywords: Translation history, equivalence, source text, target text, Arabic

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1. Introduction: Beginnings

Translation has been with humanity since people started interacting with each other, yet the development of translation theory as a discipline is relatively recent. The early days of translation theories were merely comments offered on works of literature where translators played a direct role in presenting or obscuring their messages (Baker, 1998). However, translation theories did not take place in international literary circles simultaneously. Languages developed following different approaches within their lifespans. Consequently, every language has its history of translation. In the past three centuries, most cultures have had more opportunities for interaction (Pym, 2017). Translation was their primary means of knowledge exchange in all fields of art and science. In the twentieth century, translation theorists started working on unifying the concept of translation. Many theories emerged, all looking for the actual value of translation. Mona Baker (1998), in her *Encyclopaedia of Translation Studies*, believes that there has been a dual focus on the history of translation through practice and theory. Baker states that the "history of translation deals with what translators have had to say about their art/craft/science" and "how translations have been evaluated at different periods" (Baker, 1998, p. 101).

The history of translation studies started with depicting the shifts a literary text witnesses as it moves from language A to language B. In ancient times, poetry, which was considered the language of expression for the elite, was the primary focus (Karoubi, 2015). Good living examples are Homer's and Shakespeare's works which were the main subjects for early translation attempts. In fact, comparative translation studies emerged because of the popularity of these works of art and the inevitable existence of multiple interpretations therein. In order to depict the history of translation theories as pertains to equivalence, this study will refer to specific shifts in the history of translation theories as seen in the twentieth century – the point from which translation was considered a branch of science (Baker, 1998).

The first known translations were sign-oriented, later developed into interpretations and then into written translations (Janson, 2002). However, data shows that early discussions on the role of translation go back to the first century BC Marcus Tullius Cicero (106 BC - 43 BC), Quintus Horatius Flaccus (known as Horace 65 BC - 8 BC) and Eusebius Sophronius Hieronymus (known as St. Jerome 347 - 420) were among the first to discuss translation concepts, theorising about "good" and "bad" translation. Their writings had a great influence on the tradition of translation till the 20th century. Cicero said in his translation of the speeches of the Attic orators Aeschines and Demosthese in his *De Optimo Genre Oratum* that he had translated the speeches

as an orator rather than as an interpreter. He "did not hold it necessary to render word for word," but rather, he "preserved the general style and force of the language" (Munday et al., 2022, p. 22). Cicero stated clearly his preference for free translation over literal. He chose freestyle to maintain the spirit of the enthusiastic oratory mode. The same approach was adopted by Horace. In *Ars Poetica*, Horace believed that the main target of translation should be to reach an artistically elevating and creative text in the TL (Target Language). Horace said: "Nor should you be so faithful a translator, careful to render word for word" (Long, 2007, p. 69), discouraging any verbatim effect on the translated text.

St. Jerome followed the Ciceroean approach in translating the Old Testament, considering it the basis for translating from Greek into Latin. St. Jerome opted for sense-for-sense translation. However, he was criticised for his "free" approach and was accused of not rendering the full original text (Birdwood-Hedger, 2008, p. 53). Jerome said that he was looking for the content rather than the syntax unless this syntax played a role in the general meaning of the text (Birdwood-Hedger, 2008, p. 55). From St. Jerome and beyond the issue of Literal or Free translation became of significant concern, especially for the Roman Catholic Church, which sought a translation of the Holy Bible that provided the correct established meaning (Munday, 2022, p. 28). More than a thousand years later, Martin Luther (1483-1546) provided a new translation for the New Testament (1522) and the Old Testament (1534). Luther translated from Latin to East Middle German. He followed again the sense rather than the word whenever he faced an oblique structure in the original text (Nida, 2001). Thus, the concept of finding the equal value or translation *equivalence* for every word, phrase or sentence was a result of dealing with scriptural languages, including Hebrew with the Old Testament, Aramaic with the New Testament and Arabic with the Koran. A tremendous burden was put on the shoulders of the translators, who were stigmatised as traitors due to the fluency they sought in their language at the expense of the original language (Allen, 2010).

This paper tracks modern translation theories with reference to the concept of equivalence. The period covered in detail is the 1950s onwards, which represented the era where a crystallised version of translation theory and science took place. However, the bulk of translation theories this study covers emerged from the Western World, and all such theories were based on a comparison between English and other European languages (Conway, 2022). This study, therefore, employs examples from Arabic/English translations in an attempt to show the applicability of these theories to more disparate languages. The study is written in chronological order, aiming to depict how equivalence concepts in translation theories developed over time.

1.1   Elements of Equivalence in Primal Theories

In seventeenth-century England, John Dryden (1631-1700), the English poet, dramatist, and literary critic, in his *Ovid's Epistles*, reduced all translations to three categories: *Metaphrase* or word-for-word translation, *Paraphrase* and *Imitation* (or *adaptation*) (Munday et al., 2022, p. 35). Dryden searched different literary works to compromise between *Metaphrase* and *Imitation*. The outcome was *Paraphrasing*, where the author "is kept as near as [he] could, [thus] preserving the beauty of his words" (Munday, 2022, p. 36).

In the nineteenth century, a new issue was raised: were there specific texts that could be considered untranslatable due to certain inherent factors? The German theologian and translator Friedrich Schleiermacher (1768-1834) wrote *On the Different Methods of Translating*, asserting that translations should be responsive to the individual's inner feelings and understanding. Schleiermacher believed that cultural issues are difficult to translate fully, and a loss in translation is inevitable. Thus, the only solution is "either the translator leaves the writer alone as much as possible and moves the reader towards the writer, or he leaves the reader alone as much as possible and moves the writer toward the reader" (Munday et al., 2022, p. 39). Schleiermacher believed it is preferable to bring the reader closer to the author through a translation that evoked a similar impression to the source text (ST).

1.2   Translation until the 1950s

What marks this era as different is that its early days witnessed the assumption that translation was an autonomous subject like all other fields of science. Translation began to take the shape of a theoretical science supported by practice. In 1923, Walter Benjamin (1891-1940) called for bringing the reader closer to the ST. In his analysis of translation, Benjamin follows what Schleiermacher calls "foreignising the TT [Target Text]" (Benjamin, 2000, p. 341). Benjamin believed in prioritising texts over readers. The writer or poet does not write their piece thinking of the reader and their demands. Consequently, the translator should not take the reader and their culture into his consideration. A faithful translation brings the reader to the text and its language rather than following the common norms of the TL, as the "consideration of the receiver never proves fruitful" (Benjamin, 2000, p. 15). Benjamin affirmed that translation is a bridge that brings two languages together and shows what they have in common. Translation can revive a sense of languages that are no longer in use and give them their right equivalence in the modern age. Benjamin believed that it is almost impossible to fully transfer the original meaning of a text due to "the inherent connotations of the poetic literature" (Benjamin, 2000, p. 16).

In the 1940s, the concept of text translatability was raised again. Theorists started discussing the notion of equivalence and its validity according to every text type. Vladimir Nabokov (1899-1977) postulates in his article "Problems of Translation: '*Onegin*' In English" that the basic notions a poet depends on in his or her poetry are rhyme and rhythm, questioning the possibility of a translator preserving both form and meaning when carrying out his translated piece as "it comes as a shock to discover that a work of art can present itself to the would-be translator as split into form and content and that the question of rendering one but not the other may arise at all" (Nabokov, 2000, p. 77).

In 1958, Jean-Paul Vinay and Jean Darbelnet introduced seven methods of translation. The importance of these methods stems from the fact that some of them represent the first cornerstone of the Equivalence Theory in translation. Previous writers solely provided a kind of briefing for the previous thoughts and ideas in translation analysis.

In their article "A Methodology for Translation," Vinay and Darbelnet (2000) distinguish between two kinds of translations: *Direct* and *Oblique*. With *Direct*, Vinay, and Darbelnet refer to the fact that both the syntactic and conceptual bases of the SL (Source Language) & the TL are identical. This stands a better possibility with languages of the same origin. However, even in this case, the translator might face some syntactic and semantic differences as in the case of French and English which, despite their Indo-European origin, are now different in most of their linguistic aspects (Vinay & Darbelnet, 2000, p. 85).

Vinay and Darbelnet discuss seven translation procedures: three are *direct*, while the others are *oblique*. In the *direct* approach, *Borrowing* is the first procedure, which is a means used to transfer the essence of the ST into the translation. The second procedure is *Calque*, "a special kind of borrowing whereby a language borrows an expression form of another, but then translates each of its elements literally" (Vinay & Darbelnet, 2000, p. 86). The third procedure is *Literal Translation*. Both Vinay and Darbelnet refer to the same unsolved dilemma of Literal vs. Free Translation. Their given examples, which prove the possibility of this kind of translation, are all English-French.

However, Vinay and Darbelnet believed that if a translator finds that *Direct Translation* is inappropriate, they can move to the *oblique* methods of translation. The first one is *Transposition,* where a one-word class is changed with another without changing the message's meaning. The second is *Modulation*, which is a variation in the form should the translator find that literal translation results in a reversed meaning. The third is *Equivalence,* where the

concentration is on delivering an equivalent TT, which provides the original message. Finally, there is *Adaptation*, which is "used in those cases where the type of situation being referred to by the SL message is unknown in the TL culture" (Vinay & Darbelnet, 2000, pp. 90-91).

Willard Van Orman Quine (2000), in his essay "Meaning and Translation" referred directly to what is left from the source when translated to the TL. Quine says that a good translation should be empirical and not take the meaning for granted: What works in the SL might contradict meaning if translated literally in the TL. Quine speaks of certain shared cognates, such as culture and origin, between languages. However, if the two languages have completely unrelated cultural origins, then meaning will be detached from its "home language" (Quine, 2000, p. 94).

Quine believed that a translator should look for words equivalent in both the SL and TL. These words are, in one way or another, synonymous and would refer to the same concept even if they were written in different languages. The translator should test the validity of these words in the SL in different contexts. Afterward, they should check if the translated words are also of the same sense in their language when replaced with those in the TL (Quine, 2000, pp. 95-96).

Most of Quine's examples are word-centred, and the analytical approach he follows is again word-built, which gives little room for manoeuvre for the translator. Quine even asks the translator to have a list of words that have no equivalence and are not exchangeable with the TL, while all other words should be translated one for one without any loss; the translator should "segment heard utterances into conveniently short recurrent parts, and thus compile a list of native words." Quine states that "the word-by-word approach is indispensable to the linguist in specifying his semantic correlation and even in thinking it up" (Quine, 2000, p. 110).

Though Quine sometimes talked about equivalence on the sentence level, all his focus was on the segments of the sentence, i.e., the word itself. The main change in translation studies started with Roman Jakobson in 1959 who spoke directly about equivalence in meaning rather than in words as they were.

Translation after the 1950s

At the beginning of the second half of the twentieth century, translation theorists presented more unified theories. The concept of equivalence gained clarity, and translation critics started to give more theories that were attached to the richness of globalisation and mixed communities.

Roman Jakobson and Equivalence Possibilities

Roman Jakobson (1896-1982) searched for equivalent cases in translation. He drew norms for a theory comprising all the ideas translation practitioners thought of while creatively putting their words together to transfer content from language A to language B. Jakobson tackles empiricist semantics by looking for "meaning, not as a reference to reality, but as a relation to a potentially endless chain of signs" (Jakobson, 1971, p. 232). In his essay "On Linguistic Aspects of Translation," Jakobson discusses three kinds of translation: *Intralingual* (rewording in the same language), *Interlingual* (an interpretation of verbal signs via other languages) and *Intersemiotic* (translation of verbal signs). He believes that even within the *Intralingual* level, equivalence is difficult to achieve. His example, in this case, is the difference between *bachelor* and *celibate*. Although these words are considered synonyms, they are not inter-exchangeable; "every celibate is a bachelor, but not every bachelor is celibate" (Kumar Das, 2005, p. 29). On the interlingual level, he provides examples from the Russian language where again, no full equivalence can be found compared with English. Thus, the solution is to look for equivalence above the word level: the message level.

> Most frequently translation from one language into another substitute messages in one language not for separate code units but for entire messages in another language…Equivalence in difference is the cardinal problem of language and the pivotal concern of linguists. Like any receiver of verbal messages, the linguist acts as their interpreter. (Jakobson, 1971, p. 233)

Jakobson believed that issues arise when, for example, the SL is more developed than the TL. In this case, the only solution is to revert to loaning. As for grammatical equivalence, it is quite clear that even in languages of the same tree, possibilities for grammatical equivalence are a rare occurrence. Jakobson gives the case of definite articles in both English and French (Jakobson, 1971, p. 234). Again, if a certain grammatical case is not found in language B, Jakobson believes that lexical items can handle the problem, as is the case with duality. He suggests using words such as *two* and *both* when translating from Russian, for example.

Jakobson focused on specific cases that a translator might face, paving the ground for more research on the interlingual level. However, Jacobson's main interest was in the language itself and its different functions. These functions gain importance when it comes to the detailed study of the language of translation, but not as the translator is in the hectic process of translation.

Eugene Nida and the Principles of Correspondence

Linguist Eugene Nida (1914-2011), famous for his Theory of *Dynamic Equivalence*, uses the term "correspondence" to indicate equivalence in his writings. Nida argues that there can be no absolute reciprocity between two languages. Thus, there can be no meticulous translations. Nida believed that words are turned into concepts, and then these concepts are translated. A translator might interfere in the TT to improve the style of the original, as translators are "more proficient in stylistic matters than are the original writers of the documents submitted for translation" (Nida, 2001, p. 68).

Nida believed that learning the norms of translation by heart is of no use if compared to acquiring the intuition that expert translators enjoy. For Nida, an experienced translator develops "a feeling for what is appropriate for different types of texts being translated for different kinds of audiences who will no doubt use the translation for different purposes" (Nida, 2001, p. 85). He considers that a translation learner needs an expert teacher who himself is a translator. Translation is a skill that one gets through practice. Nida believed that some translators do not require much instruction on the science of translation as they have an inherent capacity for bilingual communication, allowing them to provide the right conceptual equivalence of each unit.

Nida, like all other theorists, tackled the issue of content and form. He reached the same results concerning the precedence of content over form, except for poetry, where the form itself is part of the content. As for the translator's accuracy, Nida believed that the need for accuracy stems more from texts that lead to practical matters: a manual for a machine, for example. While in translating myths, the story or the plot is the goal, hence translation should be more concerned with depicting images and metaphors that bring about the finale in a style comprehensible to the reader (Nida, 2001, pp. 91-92).

Nida stated that there is no identical option in translation. Instead, he suggested that there are two kinds of equivalence: *Formal* and *Dynamic*. Formal equivalence entails depicting the original text in minute detail, continually comparing the original text and its translation until a final version is reached. For Nida, poetry best exemplifies this type of equivalence. Nida referred to this as *structural translation of gloss*, where the "translator attempts to reproduce as literally and meaningfully as possible the form and content of the original" (Nida, 2000, p. 129). Later, Nida established the main principles that govern formal translation. For him, a translator should reproduce various elements, including a) grammatical units, b) word usage and c) meanings

directly related to the context. These principles are applicable to all types of language translations.

With dynamic equivalence, Nida considered that the focus of the translator's attention shifts. The recipient becomes his target, which forces the translator to be not only bilingual but also bicultural. In dynamic equivalence, the main target is to transfer the same effect of the original text to the reader. To produce the necessary effect, the translator may use elements of the recipient's culture and frames of reference. The key concept in this process is "natural translation" (Nida, 2000, p. 135). By *natural*, Nida meant that if the recipient reads the translation, they will experience it in the same manner as the original. Naturalness should be felt at the level of word class, grammatical categories, semantic classes, discourse type, and cultural contexts. Overall, the translation is the writing of the original author as if he were a master of the TL; not only the message of the original text is transferred but also its emotional tone, as this is the true reflection of the thoughts of the author. Consequently, sarcasm, irony, social class, and geographical dialects should also be evident in translation.

Katharina Reiss: Translation in Function

Katharina Reiss (2000), the linguist and translation scholar, tackled equivalence from a functional point of view. Reiss believed that it is difficult to give a full equivalent translation as the translator will naturally reflect part of his identity in the text. Moreover, the new reader is different from the main audience targeted by the original author as "the receiver always brings his own knowledge and his own expectations, which are different from those of the sender" (Reiss, 2000, p. 161).

Reiss distinguished between *intentional* and *unintentional* changes in translation. Intentional changes take place when the translation aims to produce a different medium from that of the original (Reiss, 2000, p. 160). For example, a novel is translated into a play to be performed in a theatre or a movie shown in a cinema. This is called a "functional communicational change" (Reiss, 2000, p. 161). A novel is a means of one way of communication, while a play waits for its audience to judge whether it is a success or not.

Reiss believed that certain texts are multi-intentional, and the success of the translation depends on the capacity of the translators to discover these different intentions, which the text type helps them shape. However, time is always present in any work of translation. Reiss believes that language is a "temporal phenomenon and thus subject to the conditions of time" (Reiss, 2000, p. 162). If we translate from language A in the 15th c. into language B in the 21st c., then language

B is six hundred years ahead and by no means can reflect the original text. Thus, functional equivalence is non-existent. An example of this case is *Gulliver's Travels* by Jonathan Swift (1667-1745) and *Don Quixote* by Miguel de Cervantes Saavedra (1547-1616). Both works were originally meant for political purposes, while in our age they are looked at, at least from one angle, as stories suitable for children's literature.

As for the translation process, Reiss starts with an analysis of the original text. The translator should know precisely what the function of the text is, an aim that can be met through exploring the framework of the written form. In other words, the translator should know the text type, whether informative, expressive, or operative. Sometimes, if not most of the time, there can be a mixture of all types. After deciding on the text type, it is essential to establish the variety of text. Throughout the history of any language, specific incidents and existing natural elements lead particular styles to occur and develop till they become a distinctive feature of the language itself. Reiss encourages the translator to analyse the author's style by searching for the linguistic tools he used. The translator has to analyse the text on the word level, the sentence level and "up to the level of the entire text" to be comprehensive in his translation (Reiss, 2000, p. 166). This trilevel analysis came in its complete working Arabic-English examples with Mona Baker, who dissected the translation text starting from the lexis to the entire sentence.

Equivalence in Practice: Mona Baker

Mona Baker is the first to discuss Equivalence Theory through a textbook full of practical examples. Baker has several works in the translation field. Still, her most renowned is *In Other Words* (first edition in 1992) where she tackles almost all the concepts of equivalence mentioned by other critics but from a practical point of view. She offers many examples from different languages, focusing on English-Arabic translation. According to Baker (2018), translation has never been recognised as an independent profession, even by its practitioners. Even though translation is a medium of war and peace, a bridge that takes man from ignorance to civilisation, it has not been regarded as important as engineering or medicine (2018, p. 3). The main reason for this is that translation used to lack any guidebook and steps which a researcher can follow to acquire the needed knowledge. *In Other Words* follows a bottom-top approach. Baker first discusses word-level equivalence moving up to the text itself. Her main task is to look for a book that tackles theory depending on the facts practice brings (Baker, 2018, p. 5).

Equivalence at the Word Level & Above

Baker believes that equivalence is always relative because of the variety of cultural and linguistic values each language enjoys. She considers that equivalence can be achieved at the word level in most cases, as bilingual dictionaries have already covered this field of knowledge. Exceptions occur in concepts a culture is not aware of or did not experience in the same way as the counter-culture (Baker, 2018, p. 18). However, when two words are semantically combined, a different level of equivalence begins. Baker takes collocation as a transitional phase between word and text. She raises again a variety of problems that a translator might face while translating at the level of collocations before moving to the text level. The translator might misunderstand the meaning of a source-language collocation because of misinterpretation. One of the examples given by Baker is translating "a man with *modest means*" as someone who is humble, ignoring the embedded or cataphoric reference to the level of fortune this man has and the fact that the adjective *modest* describes a characteristic in the man himself. In other words, *modest* carries two levels of meaning; one is material and the other is personal (Baker, 2018, p. 62).

Baker also speaks about a tension between accuracy and naturalness, as there is no absolute equivalent translation for any collocation. Translators tend to search for a collocation in the TL that sounds natural in the TT. She provides an example of the collocation "*good* or *bad law*." Baker says that the translation into Arabic can be "*just* or *unjust law*." Of course, a change in meaning is obvious between "*good* and *just*" (Baker, 2018, p. 63); it is odd to give the literal translation even if it is more faithful. Moreover, the translator might face marked collocations in the ST, intentionally set by the writer; the author could sometimes mark a particular concept, so they bring out an unusual combination of words, creating a new collocation that was just authored for this idea to show its uniqueness (Baker, 2018, pp. 63-67).

Concerning idioms, Baker speaks about four problems that one faces in the translation process. A translator might encounter an idiom or fixed expression which may have no equivalent in the TL, or the idiom has a counterpart in the TL, but it is used in a different context. For example: to translate "*To sing a different tune* into Arabic as كل يغني على ليلاه ; back-translation: *Each sings for his own Leila.*" Moreover, an idiom can be used in the ST in both its literal and idiomatic sense. For example, "in Arabic: يقطع يده ; back-translation: *To cut off one's hands*" (Baker, 2018, p. 75).

Baker also refers to the fact that an idiom might be more frequently used in the SL than the TL. A case in point is the idiom *to hang around*. In its English semantics, one finds Google giving around 80 million examples where this structure is used. However, its Arabic counterpart يَتسكع appears 144,000 times. This is likely because يَتسكع is not even an idiom but is instead an interpretation of the English idiom.

Textual Equivalence

Mona Baker discusses, at the text level, the idea of information flow in translation. She gives different examples covering many languages. Baker states that in any thematic structure, there are two segments: *theme* and *rheme.* Theme is what the clause is about. Theme works as a connector between a previous discourse and the coming one. Rheme is the goal of the discourse. There are also conjunctions and disjuncts that play an important role in either connecting the discourse or ending and initiating a new idea in the discourse (Baker, 2018, p. 150). In the translation process, a translator is usually judged for the balanced theme and rheme they offer, considering that coming out with an acceptable text is far more important than coming out with an accurate grammatical structure signifying nothing.

Baker raises a few issues related to the difficulties that a translator faces in dealing with the Arabic language on the level of the text. One such issue is that Arabic is an inflected language. For example, *I saw* is translated as رأيت where the dependent pronoun ت takes the place of *I*. Thus, we lose the fronting of the subject in English, which leads to a little variation in the theme. Similar problems can be seen in negation, as the negative particles come in front of the verb in Arabic and with certain tenses that cannot be tracked in Arabic, such as the category of perfect tenses (Baker, 2018, p. 183).

Mona Baker believes that "translation on the text level stems from the fact that individual lexical items depend on the network of relations in which they enter with other items in [the] text" (Baker, 2018, p. 236). Thus, words are imbued with extra meaning through their relations with each other, which may not be achieved if they were independent items. Moreover, the level of lexical repetition in each language differs. Arabic, for example, can bear more repetition of lexical items and still sound natural compared to English.

Arabic Literature Through Equivalence

In fact, in the Arabic translation literature, several attempts were made to cover the shifts taking place during the translation process. In the following few pages, a summary of the problems raised by some researchers will be given. Those chosen studies share similar viewpoints on

equivalence and discuss the same problems of the discrepancy between the ST and the TT. However, this does not mean that they share the same research methodology or the inferences provided in the current article.

A dominant topic in Arabic Translation Studies is the treatment of culture when translation takes place. Guessabi (2013) tackles the cultural problems in translating a novel from Arabic to English language, taking the Algerian novel as an example. Guessabi believes that in the translation process "the main characters" in some novels develop in a way different from their origins, leading to a "creative work" living "a life of its own" (p. 224). Guessabi claims that one of the main reasons for the shifts taking place in the TT is the concept of changing cultures; every language is the outcome of its own culture, in which it is in a "complex homologous relationship" (Guessabi, 2013, p. 225). Consequently, the interpretation of meaning in language is culture-dependent. As a case study, Guessabi chooses *Memory in the Flesh* by Ahlam Mosteghanemi. To introduce the culture-specific idiomatic structures of Algerian Arabic to the TT, Guessabi discusses fifteen examples that the translator, Baria Ahmer Sreih, rendered during the translation process, one of them is the following:

Algerian Dialect: نستعرف بيه (Literal: To get to know him)

MSA (Modern Standard Arabic): التعرف على صديق الطفولة (Literal: to get to know a childhood friend)

Actual meaning: I will take my hat off to you! Well done! Bravo! (Guessabi, 2013, p. 229)

The cases show deep knowledge on the part of the translator in understanding structures which "do not exist in any dictionary" (Guessabi, 2013, p. 229). Guessabi concludes that being a native of a language is not enough; a translator should be a native of the culture of the ST to render the text with its right cohesive means.

In a different study tackling the translation of Arabic literature into English and the shifts that dialects force on the TT, Najjar (1984) believes that equivalence is possible when the cultures of the ST and the TT share "baselines of knowledge" (p. 23). Consequently, the translator's task will be finding the linguistic counterparts which carry the message in an approved way to the new receptors. If the grammar of the ST and TT are close, originating from the same mother language or family, the translation will be more "equivalent" to its origin (p. 24). "Identical translation becomes impossible" as conflicting cultures of different languages, originating from different sources, try to meet on the new written piece of art (p. 23).

Najjar (1984) cites Roman Jakobson (1959) concerning the untranslatability of poetry in both form and the "socio-dialect" nature (p. 25). Moreover, he discusses the untranslatability of the Iraqi dialect to the American English of the twentieth century. Najjar explains the existence of different versions of the same TT by the fact that no two translators "experience identical sensitivity to the stylistic features" of the TL (p. 26). Every translator decodes language in a manner direct to his reception and his expectations of the new reader. There are "perlocutionary effects [that] differ on hearers if these hearers do not share similar beliefs, similar knowledge of the world, and similar cultural background" (Najjar, 1984, p. 45).

A further ideatum related to the current study discussed by Najjar (1984) is introducing to the TT concepts only present in the ST. Najjar claims that in this case, the translator will be the only source of this ideatum which needs explication to cohere with the background of the new receptor. Najjar (1984) concludes his research by raising a discussion on "the indeterminacy of translation" (p. 289). He argues that indeterminacy is the outcome of the randomness of meaning and interpretation. Najjar further claims that the translator is also an element of uncertainty, as each translator reads first for themselves and then translates. Thus, multiple interpretations are possible. Apart from the assumption of different readings, there is the probability that the lexeme itself might carry different shades of meaning. As an example, Najjar (1984) provides different interpretations of the word *Samad* in the Quranic surah الإخلاص (al-Ikhlas) in its second verse.

 a. Allah, the eternally Besought of all. (Pickthall, 1930, p. 676)

 b. Allah, the Eternal (Bell, 1939, p. 685)

 c. Allah is He on Whom all depend (Ali, 1951, p. 1219)

 d. God, the Everlasting Refuge (Arberry, 1955, p. 353)

                 (Najjar, 1984, p. 292)

Najjar (1984) explains that *Samad* as a semantic unit meant at the time of Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) the One on whom to depend in the times of "exigency" (p. 293). All the translations are correct as they are synonymous but not "semantically identical" (Najjar, 1984, p. 293). This is why the translators of the Quran prefer to call their translations interpretations; they offer a shade of meaning adjacent to the ST according to the limits possible for the translator as a reader and researcher to infer and digest (Pickthall, 1996).

Gewaily (2007) conducted a study on the translation of *For Bread Alone* by Mohamed Choukri. The main goal of the study is to discuss the elements of explicitation and implicitation in English

translation. Before digging deeper into the details of the study, Gewaily discusses the point of using Standard Arabic in the ST to avoid any misunderstanding on the part of the translators, as most of them are non-native speakers of Arabic. However, Gewaily says that although Modern Standard Arabic (MSA) can help in avoiding misconceptions, the natural development of the language should be present for the new receptor. Consequently, Arabic dialects have to be manifested in the ST and the TT. However, according to Gewaily, Arabic nationalism forced many writers to retreat from using dialects in their writings (2007, p. 16).

In terms of explicitation and implicitation, Gewaily (2007) believes that the translator's main task is to explicate what they consider implicit in the SL. Gewaily provides examples from *For Bread Alone*, where the translator Paul Bowels (1973) adds explanations to the TT whenever there is a probability that the reader might lack the right interpretation. However, the translator did not refer to these additions on a separate note to acquaint the new reader with these supplements to the message of the ST.

ST:

ـ الناس، أحيانا، يدفنون أمواتهم حيث <u>يسقطون</u>. (Choukri, 1972, p. 8)

Literal: People sometimes bury their dead where they die.

TT:

-When someone died along the road, <u>his family buried the body there in the place where he had died</u>. (Bowels, 1973, p. 8)

Gewaily (2007) discusses several examples from the ST and the TT where shifts exist due to the following reasons: implicitation, lexical ambiguity, terminology, idioms, word choice, repetition, reiteration and cohesion. *For Bread Alone* in its English copy is quite rich with examples of shifts one can assign to a fact which precedes the existence of the TT itself: the author Choukri verbally interpreted his work, which is written in Standard Arabic, to Bowels the translator, who used to understand the Moroccan dialect of Arabic only (Gewaily, 2007, p. 8). One can infer that the shifts taking place are, in fact, explanations and explications given by the author himself.

ST:

ـ إنه يستغلنا أنا وأمي. صاحب المقهى يستغلني أيضا <u>لأن هناك غلمة مقاهى يتقاضون أكثر من راتبي.</u>
Choukri, 1972, p. 28)

(

Literal: .. .because there are other cafe workers like me are paid more than me.

TT:

"He was using me, and I hated him for it, as I hated everyone who used others in this way. My father uses my mother and me. The man who runs the cafe uses me, too, since he makes me work longer than I should. But what can I do?" (Bowels, 1973, p. 21)

ST:

ـ سأستغل كل من يسرقني حتى ولو كان أبي وأمي، هكذا صرت أعتبر السرقة حلالا مع أولاد الحرام. (Choukri, 1972, p. 28)

Literal: I shall steal all who uses me even if he was my father or my mother. And thus, I became to consider stealing legitimate with the illegitimate sons.

TT:

"I can steal. I can steal from anybody who uses me. I began to think of stealing as a way of gaining that which had been taken from me." (Bowels, 1973, p. 21)

A similar case to the one discussed above regarding the type of cooperation taking place between the author and the translator is in the translation of *The Forty Rules of Love* by Elif Şafak (2015). Şafak worked hand in hand with the translator to bring an edition closer to the Turkish reader (Şafak, 2015). Another example of an extreme case of interpretation, rather than translation, is the works of Mustafa Lutfi al-Manfaluti (1876-1924) from Egypt. Al-Manfaluti did not master French; however, some of his works are translations from French Literature. Al-Manfaluti (2020) simply asked his friends to interpret verbally what he considered attractive to the Arabic reader. The result was superb as these works are today read according to the interpretations rendered by al-Manfaluti a century ago.

Gewaily (2007) concludes his research by referring to the pragmatic losses the TT suffers. The number of shifts discussed in his study reached eighty-three cases; thus, one can claim that the English text is almost a rewriting of the source text with permission given by the author (Gewaily, 2007, pp. 8-9).

Equivalence Theory Re-evaluated

In this review article, examples from the theories and theorists have been explored to demonstrate how some professional translators attempt to apply specific methods around equivalence. However, these methods appear to be more apparent at word level and harder to discern at sentence level (Ghazala, 2002, p. 32). Catford (1965), in his *A Linguistic Theory of Translation*, states clearly that attaining equivalence must necessarily be at sentence level. This

is because words have transitional stages, and therefore their meaning can change even within the same language at the intra-translational level:

> The SL and TL items rarely have 'the same meaning' in the linguistic sense, but they can function in the same situation. In total translation, SL and TL texts or items are translation equivalents when they are *interchangeable in a given situation.* This is why translation equivalence can nearly always be established at sentence rank – the sentence is the grammatical unit most directly related to speech function within a situation. (Catford, 1965, p. 49)

When translating on the text level, some paratextual effects are involved (Pym, 2004, pp. 4-9). Overlaps by the translator and what the TL assumes create a hybrid language, which is neither the product of the ST nor an offshoot of the TT (Allen, 2010, p. 482). The newborn text is the core of the translation process, where different languages and cultures are combined. It is very difficult to claim that the new product is purely a result of language A or B, source or target. If the translation is fluent, then it follows the norms of the TL, as the one who gives this quality decision is the new reader: the target that all translators usually try to satisfy. Thus, the more appealing the translation is to the reader, the more it has detached itself from the original text. The result is a new text which has only the soul of the original, but not the language and partially not the culture of that text (Pym, 2004, pp. 30-37).

The inevitable shifts which are forced on the translator on the grammatical level can be justified, especially when the source and the target languages have almost nothing in common. Consequently, the choice of translation is very subjective and paratextual. The main goal for the translator is to bring about a text which is plausible and convincing for the target reader and even the publishing houses. Allen (2010) discussed several cases where omitting or adding certain parts to the TT was solely on behalf of the translator or the publishing house. The former and the latter aimed to ease the reading process and deforeignize the TT:

> The English translation of the *Cairo Trilogy*, for example, inclines in the direction of domestication. For example, it includes virtual footnotes within the text itself in the form of the designation of a street in Cairo as "Shari` al-Nahhasin or Coppersmiths Street" (has anyone heard of a street in Paris called "Elysian Fields"?!). (Allen, 2010, p. 479)

Throughout the translation of the literary work, the reader is actively present. Changes that the translator adopts are all to serve the reader. The translator is willing to interfere whenever he expects the reader to be out of context. In fact, if one digs deeper into the translation outputs, one

finds that most of the TTs are a result of adaptation rather than translation, interpretation rather than depiction. This claim does not postulate that translators avoid formal translation completely. It simply outlines that individual translators often navigate different modes of translation without explaining the cause of this fluctuation.

From the viewpoint of Equivalence Theory, this deviation might raise a question concerning the validity of the new work of art: the translated text (Baker, 2018; Pym, 2008). From a formalistic point of view, the new text can be regarded as an independent entity though its lifespan cannot be as prevalent as the original text since it is created to suit "specific readerships" living in a certain period of time (Pym, 2004, p. 74). The text has been domesticated but for a purpose, which has been crystallised in the real success of the translation in the publishing world (Davies, 2006, p. 58).

Conclusion: Beyond Equivalence

Though translation has always been criticised for its shifts, whether semantic or syntactic, it is difficult to defame this branch of art and science. Translation plays the role of a bridge between languages and cultures, which can never interact except on the papers a translator has chosen to translate. In the literary era extending between the 1960s and the 1990s, several writers have sought translators capable of globalising their literature via translation. A case in point is Yusef Idris's novel *al-Haram* (The Pyramid), where "more than a million copies" were sold in the Russian translation, while only a few were sold in Arabic. Naguib Mahfouz was among these writers who believed in translation and the powers of good translators. He always insisted "on getting some of [his] works translated and published in English and other languages" (Davies, 2006, p. 40). These writers knew from the very beginning that their works were going to be translated literature specially tailored for the Western reader. They are meant to introduce this reader, in particular, to Arabic literature. The result is hybrid literature, even in culture, as many Western references can be cited in these literary texts.

In fact, one can infer that new literature is born: the literature of hybrid texts. It is no longer necessary to believe that the ST outlives the TT or that the lifespan of a translation cannot be longer than its origin. The different translations are almost independent entities, having their status away from their source. Consequently, adaptation in translation is exchanged by entirely restructuring the ST, even before its creation, to suit the expected readers and their backgrounds. Authors have recently started playing on the language itself to provide unique texts accessible and intelligible for both the local reader and the international receptor, escaping thus the role of

the translator and the translation process altogether. This phenomenon is evident, for example, in the *Season of Migration to the North* by Tayeb Salih (1988). In this novel, the writer, instead of using the multi-dialectical versions of Arabic, which are limited in intelligibility to a few readers, decided to cover a wider variety of audiences and help future translators deal with the text without being swamped in ambiguous cultural discrepancies resulting from the heavy investment in local dialects. Salih simply thought of the different audiences and the coming translations. The result was a text culturally valid for everyone and ready-made for translators to work on.

All in all, as much as translation continues to depend on human elements, it is hard to consider translation a pure branch of science. Translation is similar to the various schools of art. A clear methodology is present through the diversified theories and the rich approaches translators follow. However, every professional translator is special and unique. In the world of academia, there are attempts to uncover the exact science behind the process of translation. Among these attempts comes the project carried out by the Centre for Translation and International Studies at the University of Manchester. Translators there have until now collected five million words and structures, which are indexed and then digitised. The result is computer software, giving the ability to trace how the styles of translators have developed through their lives and where they meet or disagree with each other (Luz, 2004, pp. 1-5).

Future Studies and Limitations

The concept of equivalence can be further evaluated by digging deeper into the recent translation theories of the 21st century to see how they affect the translation approaches and the decisions translators make while rendering a work of art. Researchers can trace how translation differs in style when the original text is meant for the native speakers of its language, compared to a literary text already domesticated to accept other interpretations suitable for other readers, non-native to the language of the ST, yet envisaged by the writer at the moment of literary creation.

Finally, this study derived its examples mainly from Arabic. However, equivalence cases should be measured in other languages. The world is full of writers who wish to broaden the size of their readership, and consequently, the literature they author might carry a mixture of elements, local and foreign, to harvest worldwide acclaim. Thus, the concepts of hybrid literature discussed here in the Arabic literary examples definitely exist in other languages and are in need of a researcher to uncover them. Translation through history has moved from formal to free

translation. Hybridity in literature has changed all the rules of translation, which should be also investigated in detail as the world is moving fast toward globalisation.

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