TERCÜMEDE KÜLTÜREL REFERANSLARIN İŞLENMESİ: ZEİN DÜĞÜNÜ ÖRNEĞİ *

Saad Alyamam VAFAIBAAJ [1]

Öz

Çeviri sürecinde kültürel referanslarla ilgili çeşitli değişimler yaşanmaktadır. Bu makale, çevirmen Denys Johnson-Davies'in Sudanlı yazar Tayeb Salih tarafından yazılmış "Zein'in Düğünü" adlı eserdeki zengin kültürel referansları aktarmak için gösterdiği çabaları ele almaktadır. Çevirmenin gösterdiği çabalar mevcut çalışmanın hedefidir. Bu makalenin odaklandığı nokta, çeviri kuramlarının, özellikle kültüre özgü referansların aktarımında çevirmenin kararlarının ve eylemlerinin ardındaki mantığı nasıl açıklamaya çalıştığıdır. Makale, Johnson-Davies'in kaynak metnin (ST) tercümesinde hedef okuyucunun (TR) merkez olduğunu göstermektedir. Makale, çevirmenlerin bir metni işlerken tek bir yaklaşımı değil, okuyucunun elindeki edebi eseri sindirmesine yardımcı olacak çok sayıda tekniği takip ettiğini gösteriyor.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Denys Johnson-Davies, Tayeb Salih, kültür, Skopos

TREATING CULTURAL REFERENCES IN TRANSLATION: THE WEDDING OF ZEIN AS AN EXAMPLE

Abstract

Several shifts related to cultural references take place during the translation process. The current article deals with the attempts the translator Denys Johnson-Davies makes to address the rich cultural references in The Wedding of Zein by the Sudanese writer Tayeb Salih. These attempts are the target of the current study. This paper focuses on how theories of translation attempt to explain the rationale behind the translator's decisions and actions, particularly when dealing with culture-specific references. This article demonstrates that the target reader (TR) is the central focus of Johnson-Davies' approach to translating the source text (ST). The paper argues that translators do not follow one single approach when rendering a text, but instead employ a plethora of techniques to help the reader digest the literature.

Keywords: Denys Johnson-Davies, Tayeb Salih, culture, Skopos

[1] Lecturer Doctor, Sakarya Applied Sciences University, yamam@subu.edu.tr ORCID ID: 0000-0002-3773-8610

1. Introduction: Initiating Culture in Translation

Culture has always been a focus of discussions and arguments in the world of translation, very similar to the hive formal and free translations have received. In the 1940s and beyond, "theory and hermeneutic inquiry" were introduced into translation and, consequently, translation was approached as a branch of knowledge, scientifically traced and delicately measured (Bassnet, 2002, p. 47). For the first time, translation theorists were undertaking attempts to explain the translation process.

Translation theories originated from the field of linguistics. Theorists initially aimed to explore comparisons between the languages of the source text (ST) and the target text (TT) on the principle of "determination of adequacy" (Venuti, 2004, p. 123). Later, translation theorists moved to paratextual effects on the output text, such as the role of the translator, the reader, and the discrepancies between the cultures of the ST and TT. The main goal was to reach a case of translation where the "value" of the output texts was precisely equivalent to that of the input texts (Baker, 2006, p. 71).

Modern translation theorists have focused on why a text may be more effective when it moves further from its original narrative to the target language's discourse patterns. The syntax is no longer the sole focal point of translation studies as language "speakers [also] differ in cultural and social behaviour" (Mouakket, 1986, p. iii). In other words, the text should be dynamic and live for the new reader and their culture. To solve this problem, cultural translation focuses directly on the final product. Part of this process is how culture-specific elements in the ST are adapted in the TT, as this can provide the target reader (TR) with a sense of the original text. Cultural translation (CT) "raises complex technical issues: how to deal with features like dialect and heteroglossia, literary allusions, culturally specific items such as food or architecture, or further-reaching differences in the assumed contextual knowledge that surrounds the text and gives it meaning" (Baker, 2009, p. 67).

Several scholars have explored cultural issues in translation. A reviewer can trace the dilemma of cultural translation and how best to deal with alien cultures back to the nineteenth century. Munday (2001) cites the German theologian and translator Friedrich Schleiermacher (b.1768-d.1834) in *On the Different Methods of Translating* when he asserts that cultural issues are difficult to fully translate, and a loss in translation is inevitable. Thus, the only solution is to "leave the reader alone as much as possible and move the writer toward the

reader" (Munday, 2001, p. 28). However, Walter Benjamin (1891-1940) called rather for bringing the reader closer to the ST. In his analysis of translation, Benjamin followed what Schleiermacher called "foreignising the TT" (Benjamin, 2000, p. 341). Benjamin believes 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 middle of the twentieth century, the trend was to seek a middle ground, where the ST and the TT affected each other equally. In 1958, Jean-Paul Vinay and Jean Darbelnet outlined their seven translation methods. They referred to two cases relevant to this study: *equivalence* and *adaptation*. In equivalence, the goal is to precisely match the message of the ST to the TT. In adaptation, however, the translator might be forced to adapt the text to suit the background knowledge of the new reader or audience. This approach is "used in those cases where the type of situation referred to by the SL message is unknown in the TL culture" (Vinay & Darbelnet, 2000, p. 90-91). This is central to the current article. A careful examination of *The Wedding of Zein* reveals intense culture-specific references. In addition to the chromatic Sudanese cultural references, the context of *The Wedding of* Zein is very localized; the whole story takes place in a single village, mostly disconnected from any neighbouring civilization.

Willard Van Orman Quine (2000), in his essay "Meaning and Translation," refers directly to what is left from the source when translated to the TL. Quine says that a good translation should be empirical and should not take meaning for granted. A literal translation from the SL to the TL may produce a contradiction in essence, making the end product "alien" (Quine, 2000, p. 94). Following the same thread, the linguist Eugene Nida (2001), famous for his *Theory of Dynamic Equivalence*, argues that there can be no absolute reciprocity between two languages as "most expert translators actually improve the style and organization of a discourse in the process of translating." To "deforeignize" a text, Nida claims, is to make it closer in form and appearance to the texts of a reader's mother tongue (p. 68). Nida even advocates changing the style of the original text when the translator has "a feeling for what is appropriate for different types of texts being translated for different kinds of audiences" (p. 85). In such cases, there is a shift in intention on the part of the translator, as they are interested in the new reader and their needs.

In terms of context, Reiss (2000) believes that language is a "temporal phenomenon and thus subject to the conditions of time" (p. 162). In other words, the translator can enjoy more flexibility when dealing with the given text. They should not confine themselves to the TT. Translation with adaptation is no longer a transgression; it is the norm. Reiss further holds that the translator naturally reflects part of their identity in the text. The translator "always brings his own knowledge and his expectations, which are different from those of the sender" (Reiss, 2000, p. 161). Reiss distinguishes between "intentional and unintentional changes" to the text. Unintentional changes are brought about by the effect of the TL. Syntax is often central to this issue. When there is a conflict between the grammatical structures of two languages, translators may have multiple syntactic options.

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, through the translation process, the main characters in some novels are portrayed with different manners in comparison to how they act in the ST. This, Guessabi argues, leads to a "creative work" living "a life of its own" (p. 224). Guessabi claims that one of the main reasons for the shifts that take place in the TT is the concept of changing cultures. Every language is the outcome of its own culture, with which it forms a "complex homologous relationship" (Guessabi, 2013, p. 225). Consequently, the interpretation of meaning in a language often depends on its culture.

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 is to find linguistic counterparts that adequately convey the text's message to the new recipients. If the grammar of the ST and TT are closely matched (for example, originating from the same mother language or family) the translation will be more "equivalent" to its origin (p. 24). However, "identical translation becomes impossible" when the cultures and roots of two languages conflict (p. 23). In this case, the translator will be the only source of this novel combination, necessitating explication for readers from different backgrounds.

Thus, some translators retreat to domestication to deal with culturally specific texts. In this case, translators take on the role of the interpreter, facilitating an understanding of the information provided by the source text author. Geographical, historical, and cultural concepts are the elements translators attempt to interpret in any foreign pre-translated text. This is, in

fact, one of the reasons why translated texts are often significantly longer than the original text.

Antoine Berman (2000) was one of the pioneers who introduced the idea of foreignization and domestication to the translation literature. Berman believed that despite the success achieved in dealing with the concept of domesticating the foreign to make it more comprehensible in literature, a complete application of the idea might not result in reasonable results. Berman claims that translators sometimes opt for domestication due to ignorance. They invent a meaning that is closer to their own culture, as it is the only language they can best understand (Berman, 2000, p. 284). One can view the translator as the first reader of a text. Consequently, the translator renders his reading of the literary product, adapting the text to a different level of cultural hybridity. The general audience then primarily read through the eyes of the translator. Thus, there is a shift in fidelity in the translated text as the target text, rather than the source text, becomes the arbiter. This is demonstrably evident in Johnson-Davies' translation of Tayeb Salih's *The Wedding of Zein*. Several translation shifts are implemented in the TT by the translator. All these shifts were only to facilitate the cultural references in the ST; thus, the literature's content can be more comprehensible to the English reader, and the author's message easier to digest. However, as it will be revealed, this clarifying approach is not systematic.

2. Salih and Johnson-Davies

Tayeb Salih was born in 1929 in Karmakol, near the village of al-Dabbah in the Northern Province of Sudan. As a child, he attended a religious school, finishing his secondary education at Gordon College in Khartoum. Salih joined the University of Khartoum later to work as a teacher. A few years later, Salih joined the University of London. In England, Salih worked at the BBC as Head of the Drama Department for the Arabic Service. He later moved to Qatar to work as Director-General of the Information Ministry of Qatar State. After this post, Salih joined UNESCO to be its representative in the Gulf countries (Hassan, 2003, p. 15).

Most of Salih's works are centred on bridging the gap between the East and the West. This theme is present in his construction of the fictional Sudanese village Wad Hamid. Salih focused on one critical idea: when there are feelings of nostalgia, the East becomes the Orient, but when facts take over, the dismantled image of the East dominates (Constance,

1981, p. 118). A more of "utopianism" takes place when speaking about the village; at the same time, Salih never stops trying to free himself from the boundaries created by the society of Wad Hamid. In all of his works (*The Wedding of Zein* (1964), *Season of Migration to the North* (1969), *The Cypriot Man* (1978), and *The Doum Tree of Wad Hamid* (1985)), there is a kind of "juxtaposition of narrative points of view" where "narrative possibilities and pits" reveal "several ideologies dialogically against one another (Hassan, 2003, p. 52).

Denys Johnson-Davies was a Canadian translator and trilingual who mastered French, English, and Arabic. Johnson-Davies also worked at the BBC London Arabic Service in the 1960s. His Arabic colleagues helped him to discover and appreciate modern Arabic literature. Driven by his enthusiasm for this genre, Johnson-Davies took on the responsibility of translating and adapting a significant portion of the literature for the benefit of the Western reader (Davies, 2006, p. 37). Johnson-Davies later moved to Cairo, where he met many literary figures of the 1950s and 1960s, including Taha Hussein, Tewfik al-Hakim, Yahya Hakki, and Mahmoud Taymour. In fact, Johnson-Davies' first experience in Arabic-English translation entailed translating a collection of Taymour's stories. In addition to translating novels, Johnson-Davies translated Arabic poetry, such as a selection of pieces by the Palestinian poet Mahmoud Darwish, children's literature and eventually went to more challenging works, such as translating sections of the Hadith.

The relationship between Salih and Johnson-Davies began at the end of the 1960s when they first met in London. The first work Johnson-Davies read for Salih was *The Doum Tree of Wad Hamid*, which he considered "an excellent piece of writing," reporting being "immediately struck by the easy style and its underlying sense of humour" (Johnson-Davies, 2006, p. 83). From that moment, Johnson-Davies decided to take on Salih's entire body of work and adapt it for publication in English (Johnson-Davies, 2006, p. 20). Salih continued his collaboration with Johnson-Davies to the end of his life.

3. *The Wedding of Zein*

Excerpts of *The Wedding of Zein*, Salih's seminal work, were first published in the May-June issue of the magazine *Hiwar* in 1964. It was released as a complete work in the December 1966 issue of *Al-Khartoum* magazine and as part of a collection titled *The Wedding of Zein and Seven Stories* in Beirut 1966. Like most of Salih's stories, *The Wedding of Zein* is set in

the fictional village of Wad Hamid, located in Northern-central Sudan. Salih always tends to opt for the rural and exotic. The protagonist is always an Afro-Arab Sudanese villager.

Salih's characters evolve dynamically, enhanced by poetic images that demonstrate to the reader the characters' growth over time. These images appear to offer a juncture between the past and the present. Thus, everything taking place has a past, present, and future. In *The Wedding of Zein*, the narrative revolves around the unexpected and unexplained events of the wedding of a man regarded as the fool of the village. Suddenly, Zein becomes engaged to Nima, the most beautiful and the most morally and financially elite young lady in the village. An explanation for this apparent mismatch is offered through a mystical figure al-Haneen. This wise old man can see through Zein and highly appraises the innate difference of Zein from the surrounding villagers.

Zein has a pure heart and a clear mind but oscillates between "unconsciousness and awakening" in a sophist phase barely understood to the Wad Hamid's villagers or the typical reader (Al-Haggagi, 1983, p. 20). Moreover, Zein acts as a bridge between the village and the outer world. The Dome of Wad Hamid is represented as an island connected vaguely to other worlds that have very little in common: the worlds of the gypsies, the Africans, the nomads, and the sinful dens. The only figure who can move through each of these worlds with ease is Zein. Salih made Wad Hamid a symbol of discordant Sudan; he hoped that Sudan might also find the bridges that could connect its different ethnicities. Unfortunately, united Sudan remained mere fiction and the islands are, in fact, countries inflicted by civil wars.

The whole village of Zein seems frozen, out of time and place. However, life begins a fresh cycle as the wedding reaches its climax. The wedding represents the moment when the villagers decided to change their lifestyle and be a part of what is happening around them in the nearby villages and even cities.

4. Cultural Shifts

The following shifts are chosen according to the chronological order of the novella *The Wedding of Zein.* The shifts narrate the approach Johnson-Davies usually follows to deal with cultural references. Though Johnson-Davies does not follow a particular systematic style, the given examples demonstrate that the main goal is to facilitate the ST's reading and make it nearer to the new reader.

1- وقالت بنت مجذوب ضاحكة: "خفنا أن تعود إلينا **بنصرانية غلفاء**". [Emphasis added] **(صالح، 1997، ص 8)**

Wa qālat bintu majzūb dāhikata[n]: "khifnā an taʿūd ilaynā bi nasrāniyati[n] ghalfāa".

Bint Majzoub laughed. 'We were afraid,' she said, 'you'd bring back with you an uncircumcised <u>infidel</u> for a wife.' (Salih, 1988, p. 18)

The word *infidel* holds a negative meaning regarding treason and dishonesty (Puri, 1995). نصرانية refers in Arabic to the supporters and disciples of Jesus Christ. In Islam, they are considered to be the rightful Christians who answered Jesus' call while others refused him and decided to remain "infidel[s]" (Salih, 1988, p. 172). Probably, the best translation for the word nasrāniyah (**نصرانية**) is *Christian*. However, Bint Majzoub uses cursing words in several occasions in the novel. Thus, Johnson-Davies translated not what was said but what was meant, as the character never stops using insulting words, and this scene is not an exception. Johnson-Davies insists on using the word *infidel* depending on his readership to Salih. Bint Majzoub uses many filthy expressions in her dialogues, and this racist expression is not an exception.

2- وروجت أم الزين أن ابنها ولي من أولياء الله، وقوى هذا الاعتقاد صداقة الزين مع الحنين. كان رجلا صالحا منقطعا للعبادة، يقيم في البلد ستة أشهر في صلاة وصوم. **(صالح، 1997، ص 22)**

Wa raw wajat ummu l-Zeyni anna ibnaha min awliyāi llāhi, wa qawwa hāth āliʿtiqāda ṣadāqatu l-Zeyn maʿa l-Hanīn. Kān al-Hanīnu rajula[n] ṣālihan munqatiʿa[n] llʿibadah, yuqīm fi l-baladi sitata ashur[n] fi ṣalāti[n] wa ṣawm.

Zein's mother put it that her son was one of God's saints, and this belief was strengthened by Zein's friendship with Haneen. Haneen was a pious man wholly dedicated to his religious devotions who, having stayed six months in the village praying and fasting. (Salih, 2009, p. 30)

This mystic text is open to different interpretations. The text starts with a religious idea extending to the paraphysical world: the concept of sainthood. In Arabic, the word used is *waliy* (**ولي**), while in English, it is *saint*. The translation here lacks a cultural element. In the ST, *waliy* describes an individual who has powers that defy the physics of nature, and yet can enjoy life as it is among the ordinary people. In English, the title of *saint* is always awarded

posthumously (Casiday, 2012, p. 451). Sainthood usually accompanies someone wise and respected, but Zein is the opposite –void of any sanity.

Though Zein's mother calls him a saint or a blessed boy, she only does so in an attempt to cover his idiocy and inconsistent behaviour. The only man who is able to see this foolery as the unorthodoxy of a nonconformist is al-Haneen. In the narrative, al-Haneen is drawn as a mystical figure who enjoys paranormal powers that go beyond the common understanding of the laypeople. References show throughout the novel that he has an insight that others do not. This is demonstrated through his respectful relationship with Zein.

In both its original form and when understood as a *saint*, the religious reference waliy, depends in the current translation on the translator's given interpretation. Here, it is envisaged through some of the sophist sects spreading in some parts of Sudan, including the fictional Wad Hamid (Firat, 2014, p. 196). Sophism, in Islam, was originally an outcome of the rueful state of some poor who were homeless. Thus, "a block, attached to the Madinah Mosque," was built for them. Those "people were called Ahlu l-Ṣuffah **(أهل الصفة)** or the people of Sopheh" (Knysh, 2010, p. 5).

In Johnson-Davies' translation, only one meaning is met: the sophist image of al-Haneen. The aspect of his character, which serves as a remnant of the glorious past, is not incorporated. Al-Haneen could be a symbol of the Mahdist Revolution in 1882. Through this revolution, Sudan first gained independence from Egypt and, consequently from the British colonization (Abbas, 1974).

The Mahdist Revolution ended with its founder, as is the case in *The Wedding of Zein*, where Al-Haneen represented an era, coming to end with his death. The death of al-Haneen leaves the village of Wad Hamid in the hands of Zein and his companions, who seem less inspired than their former master. In fact, Salih creates a strange image by making Zein a symbol of Sudan's future- a future which fails to take its full shape until the moment, as Sudan still suffers from civil wars, coups and famine.

As evidenced, translators may have a plethora of interpretations for the text, but should ultimately be decisive about opting for one. Without such conviction, translation becomes an open-ended dilemma: an act that can never reach its goal. The consequence of this in Johnson-Davies' version in *The Wedding of Zein* is that al-Haneen is represented only as a

sophist character, and his political dimensions and the symbolism of the history of Sudan are lost.

The translation style Johnson-Davies employs is *codification.* This approach of translation later came to be known as *localization* (Pym, 2004, p. 66). As in the theory of equivalence, deletion is used as a means of delivering meaning which, despite the loss, is still reserved. In the *Season of Migration to the North*; the idiom shana yaʿrifu matà yulāqī tabaqah شنى يعرف متى يلاقي طبقه is mentioned two times in the ST.

3- ذخيرتي من الأمثال لا تنفذ. <u>البس لكل حالة لبوسها، شنى يعرف متى يلاقى طبقه.</u>

[Emphasis added] (صالح، 1997، ص 46)

dhakhīratī min l-amthāl lā tanfadh. Ulbisu kulla ḥālatin labūsahā, shana yaʿrifu matà yulaqī ṭabaqah.

ذخيرتي من الأمثال لا تنفذ. <u>شنى يعرف متى يلاقى طبقه.</u> [Emphasis added] (صالح، 1997، ص 51)

dhakhīratī min l-amthāl lātanfadh. Shana yaʿrifu matā yulaqī tabaqah.

Johnson-Davies translated both underlined parts as "My store of hackneyed phrases is inexhaustible" (Salih, 1988, p. 47-51). Johnson-Davies reverts to the technique of deletion in the underlined parts of the first example. Some translators may have opted for some further exposition or an equivalent English idiom, such as *to know chalk from cheese*, to compensate for what has been lost. Though the proposed English expression may not deliver the exact message, it at least signals to the reader that there is an idiom at this point of the narration and offers a similar parallel to the writer's intended meaning.

4- تمر النخيل كثير لا من غلبنا من الشولات النشيلة فيها الثلج نزل. دا كلام! (صالح، 1997، ص 67)

tamr l-nakhīl kathīr lā min ghalubnā min l-shwālāt l-nshilah fīha l-thalj nezil. da kalām!

'The dates from the palm trees were so plentiful we couldn't find enough sacks to carry them in; also, it snowed—can you imagine such a thing? Snow falling from the sky on a desert town like this?' (Salih, 2009, p. 51)

The translator here adds a full sentence which is not present in the ST: *Snow falling from the sky on a desert town like this?* It could be argued that Johnson-Davies is taking a risk by adding one complete sentence to the text. However, it is clear that the translator is solely

focused here on the readers of the TT and their understanding. Instead of adding a note, the translator somewhat adds an expository sentence highlighting that snow is a rare phenomenon in Sudan- not commonplace as it is in much of the Western world. Emphasizing this rarity offers the reader a complete understanding of the occurrence. Johnson-Davies employs this technique on several occasions, including the following:

5.a- تعجب الناظر في سره كيف عرف شيخ علي اسم شجرة الدر. ووقع الاسم موقعا حسنا على أذن عبد الصمد وكان جاهلا به لكنه تحرج من السؤال مخافة أن يفضح جهله. (صالح، 1997، ص 73)

Taʿjjaba l-naziru fī sirrihi kayfaʿaraf sheikh Ali isma Shajarati l-Dur. wawaqaʿ l-ismu mawqiʿa^n hasana^n ʿlā udhuni Abd al-Samad wakān jahila^n bihi lākinnahu tahrraja min l-su'āli makhafata an yufḍaḥa jahluh.

The headmaster secretly wondered how it was that Sheikh Ali knew the name of Shajar ad-Durr, <u>the former slave girl who ruled Egypt in the thirteenth century</u>. Though ignorant of it, Abdul Samad found the name pleasant-sounding. However, he was embarrassed to enquire lest he shows his ignorance [Emphasis added] (Salih, 2009, p. 54).

Here, Johnson-Davies' addition explains the role of a queen mentioned in the original text by her name only. This was Shajar ad-Durr, (Tree of Pearls عصمة الدين أم خليل), who was famous for her role against the Seventh Crusade between 1249-1250 (Zaydan & Allen, 2012). Assuming that Western readers lack this historical knowledge, Johnson-Davies adds his exposition without note or reference. In his own words, "Translators take upon themselves not only the role of the translator but also the role of the person deciding what should be translated" (Johnson-Davies, 2006, p. 59). This is just one example of Johnson-Davies co-authoring the text during translation. Such additions may be controversial. On the one hand, it offers necessary exposition. On the other hand, it could be equally viewed as a form of interference with the original text when a direct footnote would have sufficed. However, Johnson-Davies opted not to interrupt the flow of the passage with such a footnote.

Further examples of Johnson-Davies' "interference" with a TT can be found in other literary works he has translated. In "The Doum Tree of Wad Hamid," another of Salih's works, Johnson-Davies corrects a semantic error from the original.

5.b -وتجيئنا صيفا فتجد عندنا <u>ذباب البقر</u>، ذباب كحملان الخريف، كما نقول بلهجتنا. **(صالح، 1997، ص**
(34

watajī'una ṣayfa^n fatajiduʿindanā dhubaba l-baqar, dhubabu^n kaḥimlān l-kharīf, kamā nakūl bilahjatinā.

If you were to come to us in summer you would find the <u>horse flies</u> with us—enormous flies the size of young sheep, as we say. [Emphasis added] (Salih, 2009, p. 1)

In the ST, Salih erroneously writes "horn-flies", while the surrounding context indicates "horse-flies" would be correct. Again, taking on the role of facilitator, Johnson-Davies substitutes the mistake and provides the correct term without referring back to the original text via note or, for example, by making a blanket declaration in the introduction such as "Where necessary, the translator has explicated oblique or mistaken notions."

5. Translation Criticism: Text-oriented or Reader-based Shifts

The fundamental symptom of modern translation criticism is the concentration of translation on the TT. Previous schools of translation focused more on the source literature. Currently, translators consider the changes made to the TT to be of central interest, as the reader generally cannot refer to the ST in their evaluation. The reader accepts the TT as the original writer's work and makes their judgment according to this translated version (Pym, 2004; Baker, 2006).

The translator can simply explain any shifts through notes. Here, they can indicate that they intended the extra details to convey the atmosphere of the original message to the reader. However, when the shift is ST-oriented, i.e., the TT is rendered literally, blame is usually placed on the translator (Bassnett, 2002, p. 34). The translator might be regarded as lacking sufficient knowledge about the linguistic system of the ST or the TT, as having misunderstood the message of the author. This can result in both direct and indirect messages, which may not even have occurred to the author when they were writing the text.

What is discussed here is how extensively a translator can interfere with a text without harming its unique qualities, such as the author's voice. In other words, the reader should directly experience the original writer rather than the translator. Another question can be raised here: Is our discussion theoretical or axiomatic? Allen (2010) describes translation as

"a maximal act of interpretation" (p. 472). Yet critics should not solely blame translators who think too often of the reader. Authors are also targeting a special category of readership to take them to the ladder of international fame, which results in hybrid literature (Kolchevska, 1983). In this category of art, the writer targets not only the local reader but also readers who might be both geographically & culturally remote. International fame can become the ultimate goal in such cases.

Johnson-Davies does not, in fact, restrict himself to comparatively superficial structural and expository changes. Occasionally, he alters the broader structural distribution of the text itself. This can be seen in "A Handful of Dates," a short story which originally consisted of one very long paragraph. Johnson-Davies renders the story into seventeen paragraphs, thus simplifying the organization of the text for the new recipient (Salih, 1997). However, Johnson-Davies is not alone in this tendency. In "Translation Translated: Rasid Abu Gadra's *Marakat Al-Zuqaq*," Allen (1997) describes how Antoine Moussali, who translated the literary work into French, carried out the translation "in collaboration with the author" (165). Moussali in "the French version incorporates such more specific information into the text itself" (170). Johnson-Davies (2006) states that, in certain cases, "strict adherence to the original would serve little purpose", (p. 65) as the reader might not "know a single word" in the ST (p. 30). Thus, the goal is to have "a text that reads well in English. After all, translation is an art and the role of the translator is to take the original text, thoroughly digest it and then regurgitate it in an acceptable English" (p. 31).

However, this explicatory drift is inconsistent. In *The Wedding of Zein*, Johnson-Davies leaves some passages almost exactly as they occur in the ST, albeit with a touch of transliteration. This move becomes obvious in the last scene of the novella:

<div dir="rtl">

6- أجواج أجوج أجوج أجوجأجوجا.

أيويأيوي أيويا

أوو.... او... ووا (Salih 1997, p.99-100)

</div>

ajwājajwājajwājajwājā

ayuyayuyayuyā awūawūawūwā

Awoo—awoo—awoowa. (Salih, 2009, p. 67-68)

The translator keeps the Sudanese ululations in their original Arabic dialect without trying to approximate them through any other cultural parallels. Although Johnson-Davies previously interfered whenever the cultural reference was not clear for the reader, in this instance, he does not attempt to explain what has transpired. It is unclear exactly why Johnson-Davies made this decision. Perhaps here, he opted to maintain the "soul" of the original text despite the risk the Western reader might fail to comprehend what is meant.

In fact, the pragmatic purpose of ululations differs between societies. Although they appear joyful in *Zein* based on the fact that they accompany marriage rituals, ululations can also be produced to express utter despondency. In ancient civilizations, ululations were used "for both: joy and fury" (Pendle, 2001, p. 430). In some African tribes, they are referred to as mystic rituals. For example, in the Ethiopian Orthodox Tewahedo Church, worshippers tend to ululate while serving their prayers.

A good solution for dealing with such culturally specific oral expressions is to provide a note, illustrating the exact reference the author is making in the ST. An endnote can serve this goal and avoid the translator from too extensively "co-authoring" the text and leaving too visible a mark on the TT. In *Memories in Translation*, Johnson-Davies (2006) argues that if adding a few words to the English translation can more fully demonstrate the artistry of the original text, then the translator should indeed supplement (p. 100). In 1988, Johnson-Davies started translating "Half a Day" by Naguib Mahfouz. During the translation process, he believed that the English text needed more explanation. He called Mahfouz, explaining the importance of such an addition. Johnson-Davies "was not surprised when [Mahfouz] agreed wholeheartedly to the addition in the English translation" (Johnson-Davies, 2006, p. 100).

Through the ululation scene in *Zein*, Salih paints a vivid picture for the reader of what life looked like in Sudan at the time of British colonisation, in the first half of the twentieth century. In such cases, the translator must make particularly taxing choices over whether to translate the text in a literal way or change the whole wedding scene and exchange it with another one from the new reader's culture. The wedding scene is almost non-verbal; feelings dominate the given setting. In this scene, the translator retreats to mere translation as the images presented are the author's memories when he was a little kid in mid-north eastern Sudan. The wedding is reserved as it is, and the reader is given the freedom to draw the scene they wish (Abbas, 1974). Readers are now mature enough to read for themselves.

6. New Skopos

The amendments or shifts that Johnson-Davies added to the original text represent a shift also in the methodology of dealing with the translated literature in general. Translators are no longer the followers of the source text; they are enthusiasts of the target text. In other words, the goal or *skopos* of translation has changed its direction. The deep change in the target text can make the translator go as far as claiming the translated work his own. The original text is the author's in Arabic, but the translator's in English. Translators, like Johnson-Davies, may view this as the original work. This perspective reflects that the English audience may have never heard of the text had it not been translated by its new author (or, at least, co-author). Through this work, the reader is now brought to an arena previously considered prohibited due to the exalted status given to the mother text and its language. The translation is now a means to an end, and the end differs according to the skopos.

Similar to the descriptive theory of translation, skopos theory depicts the effects of the culture and the taste of the target reader, which are regarded as the focal point of any translation. Consequently, the linguistic elements of translation are now a minor issue as they do not serve the new audience. Hans-Josef Vermeer (1989), a German scholar and linguist, was one of the main theorists who crystalized the skopos concept. Vermeer declared that every work of translation is the result of "commission" where a "statement of goal and condition" is "explicitly negotiated between the client (commissioner) and the translator" (Vermeer, 1989, p. 229). *In The Wedding of Zein*, Johnson-Davis' approach was, in fact, a case in point of what Vermeer called for. The additions and changes in the TT are showing that the translator has put himself in the TR's shoes. He tried to clarify any semantic or linguistic element which could hinder the smoothness of the reading process. In the examples discussed above, 5.a and 5.b demonstrate the skopos methodology when dealing with texts carrying references far from the TR's culture and literature. In 5.a, Johnson-Davies directly offered the needed historical explanation and the meant image standing behind the metaphor offered in the Arabic text.

Thus, in skopos theory, the translator is a catalyst of languages and cultures. Consequently, the translator bears more responsibility than ever as they might sometimes be forced to share the task of writing with the author to meet the goal of the commission. To reach the targeted *translatum*, the translator is free to choose which type of translation suits the target text best. "[F]idelity to the source text (whatever the interpretation or definition of fidelity) is one

possible and legitimate skopos or commission" (Vermeer, 1989, p. 230). Moreover, the language of translation is no longer autonomous; it is part of the target culture (Jabir, 2006, p. 40). In example 4, Sudanese slang was used; however, the translator gave a clear translation made of standard English, so the reader would not lose the thread of the story. Had Johnson-Davies given a note that this text was originally written in slang, the chain of reading would be most probably broken. In fact, one can claim that using any English slang can soothe one TR and let the other readers just suffer to understand what is meant by this thread of language.

But, when it came to cultural references, the translator never hesitated to decide to explain why the speaking character is amazed that snow has fallen: "can you imagine such a thing? Snow falling from the sky on a desert town like this?" (Salih, 2009, p. 51). The translator adds the whole quoted words here to explain the uniqueness of the incident in the eyes of the original reader: the Arabic reader.

With skopos, the text also loses its position as an independent entity of linguistic isolation: it is dependent on the receptive reader. The text is announced as an extra-linguistic entity of world-continuum existence. The source text "does not determine the variety of the target text, nor does the text variety determine ipso facto the form of the target text" instead, the skopos of the translation stipulates the output text (Vermeer, 1989, p. 232). The text can now stand alone as a raw material to build on. The translator uses the ideas and the main concepts of the ST to implement or plant them in a text which no reader perceives as a translated version of original literature.

In skopos, translation has one main goal: giving information, whether cultural or specific. Any other target is of no importance. The translation should meet the goal of the client. The functionality of the translation in terms of its effectiveness for the target audience is generally based on this goal. In other words, one can infer that skopos can be applied to both the process of translation and the product expected out of the translation process.

Thus, equivalence in translation is no longer judged on the level of the text; it is now regarded through cultures. The translator's work is to search for how to equalize the culture of the ST with that of the TT. A full cultural turn takes place: "translation is [now] a bicultural practice requiring mind-shifting" (Baker, 2009, p. 72). Extract 6 is a case in point. The ululations were kept as they are. This time, no explanation is given, unlike many other occasions in the

translation of *The Wedding of Zein.* The ululation scene is the last act of the novella; the reader has now absorbed the Sudanese culture. There is no need for any explication given on the part of the translator to facilitate the understanding of the cultural references in the novel. One can claim that the translator is delivering to their readers a message saying: It is now your turn to look for more details, if you wish, about the Sudanese culture. However, the cultural turn in translation has been criticized for giving the translator a limitless zone of movement; even when cultures appear similar, disputes tend to occur during the translation process.

7. Conclusion

The result of the translator Denys Johnson-Davies's attempt to localize the text to suit the target audience's culture has resulted in both a loss and gain in the output text. For example, there is a loss in the spoken part of the text (the dialogues); there is no element in any dialogue which signals to the reader that this text is spoken in a Sudanese dialect. Consequently, the value of the spoken discourse is lost. A possible solution could be to tell the reader directly that the translation necessitated adaptation to bring the reader closer to the possible meaning of the original text, or to adopt a dialect with which the reader is fully familiar.

Moreover, there is direct interreference as the text goes international. In his translation of The Wedding of Zein, Johnson-Davies portrays a new text to suit a wider audience who share more cultural elements with the translator than the writer and his original readers. The translated text gains credibility from the new readers or clients. Clear shifts have resulted in the text being more widely-read, but this moves it away from the original. Translation, in this way, is no more than an adaptation moulded to please, not to direct and reflect, as any genre of literature should do.

What Johnson-Davies has done to Zein through the translation process is similar to adding condiments to make the outcome more to the general taste of the new reader. However, in *The Season of Migration to the North*, Tayeb Salih, the writer himself, has moved the text to the reader from the very beginning- from the moment of writing itself. Texts are now re-localized to serve different targets; often one or several targets which the writer already envisaged during, if not before, the moment of creation.

The translated text is not called on to represent any previous texts. Instead, it is subject to modification and recreation. The text is initiated in one culture, to be introduced later to many others. The text has become a mobile structure, not limited in time and space, not limited to an author or translator, and not limited to a single culture or reader. In other words, Zein would have remained in Wad Hamid forever had he not had the chance to meet Denys Johnson-Davies.

References

Abbas, A. (1974). Notes on Tayeb Salih: *Season of migration to the north* and *the wedding of Zein*. *Sudan Notes and Records*, *55*. Khartoum: Khartoum University Press.

Al-Haggagi. A. (1983). The myth maker: Al-Tayyeb Salih's The Wedding of Zein. *Alif: Journal of Comparative Poetics*, (3). Cairo: AUC Press.

Allen, R. (1997). Translation translated: RašīdabūĞadrah's "Ma'rakat al-Zuqāq". *Oriente Moderno, 16 (77)* (2/3), 165-176. Pendle, K. (2001). *Women & music a history*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press.

Allen, R. (2010). The happy traitor: Tales of translation. *Comparative Literature Studies, 47*(4). Pennsylvania: Penn State University Press.

Antoine, B. (2000). Translation and the trials of the foreign. *The Translation Studies Reader.* Venuti, L. (Ed.). London: Routledge.

Baker, M. (2009). *Encyclopaedia of translation studies*. New York & London: Routledge.

Baker, M. (2006). *Translation and conflict: A narrative account*. London: Routledge.

Bassnett, S. (2002). *Translation studies*. London: Routledge.

Benjamin, W. (2000). The task of the translator: An introduction to the translation of Baudelaire's "Tableaux Parisiens". *The translation Studies Reader*. Venuti, L. (Ed.). London: Routledge.

Casiday, A. (2012). *The Orthodox Christian world*. New York: Routledge.

Constance, B. (1981). The contours of Sudanese literature. *Africa Today*, (2). Indiana: Indiana University Press

Davies, j. D. (2006). *Memories in translation: A life between the lines of Arabic literature*. Cairo: AUC Press.

Firat, A. (2014). Sufism in the contemporary Arabic Novel. *Middle Eastern Literatures*, *17*(2). Amesterdam: Brill.

Guessabi, F. (2013). The cultural problems in translating a novel from Arabic to English language: The Algerian novel. *Arab World English Journal*, *(2).*Bechar University: Algeria.

Hassan, W. (2003). *Tayeb Salih: Ideology and the craft of fiction*. Syracuse, N.Y.: Syracuse University Press.

Jabir, J. (2006). *Skopos theory: Basic principles*. Basra: University of Basra.

Knysh, A. D. (2010). *Islamic mysticism: A short history*. Leiden: Brill.

Kolchevska, N. (1983). Toward a "Hybrid" Literature: Theory and Praxis of the Faktoviki. *The Slavic and East European Journal*. California: American Association of Teachers of Slavic and East European Languages.

Munday, J. (2001). *Introduction to translation studies: Theories and applications*. London: Routledge.

Najjar, M. (1984). *Translation as a correlative of meaning: Cultural and linguistic transfer between Arabic and English*. Indiana University, Bloomington.

Nida, E. (2001). Principles of correspondence. *The Translation Studies Reader.* Venuti, L. (Ed.). London & New York: Routledge.

Puri, S. (1995). *The Cambridge dictionary*. Delhi: Sahni Publications.

Pym, A. (2004). *The moving text: Localization, translation, and distribution*. Amsterdam: Benjamins Publishing.

Pym, A. (2008). On Toury's laws of how translators translate. *Beyond descriptive translation studies investigations in homage to Gideon Toury*. Pym, A., Shlesinger, M., & Simeoni, D. (Eds.). Amsterdam: Benjamins Publishing.

Quine, W. V.O. (2000). Meaning and translation. *The Translation Studies Reader*. Venuti, L. (Ed.). London: Routledge.

Reiss, K. (2000). *Towards a general theory of translational action: Skopos theory explained*. New York: Routledge.

Salih, T. (1988). *Season of migration to the north* (D. Johnson-Davies, Trans.). New York: Review Books.

Salih, T. (2009). *The wedding of Zein and other stories.* Davies, j. D. (Trans.). New York: New York Review.

Venuti, L. (Ed.). *The translation studies reader*. London & New York: Routledge, 2004.

Vermeer, H. (1989). Skopos and commission in translational action. *The Translation Studies Reader*. Venuti, L. (Ed.). London: Routledge, 2004.

Vinay, J. & Darbelnet, J. (2000). A methodology for translation. *The Translation Studies Reader*. Venuti, L. (Ed.). London: Routledge, 2004.

Zaydan, J., Selim, S., & Allen, R. (2012). *Tree of Pearls, Queen of Egypt*. Syracuse University Press. http://www.jstor.org/stable/j.ctt1j1w0s9

صالح، ط. (1997). *دومة ود حامد: سبع قصص*. بيروت: دار العودة.

صالح، ط. (1997). *عرس الزين*. بيروت: دار الجيل.

صالح، ط. (1997). *موسم الهجرة الى الشمال*. بيروت: دار العودة.