

CHAPTER TWO

REVIEW OF RELEVANT LITERATURE

For everything one writes is part of the whole story, so far as any individual writer attempts to build the pattern of his own perception out of the chaos. To make sense of life: that story, in which everything, novels, false starts, the half-completed, the abandoned, has its meaningful place, will be completed with the last sentence written before one dies.

Nadine Gordimer (1988, p. 93)

2.1 INTRODUCTION

Translation varies from the communication domain in two ways: (1) the existence of translation intermediary; and (2) the equivalence relations that restraint the Source Language Text (SLT) production. In line with Gentzler (1993), translations “open up new ways of seeing, which tend to subvert any fixed way of seeing” (p. 30). However, they are always controlled by restraining the presence of the original text. In search for equivalence, translators become aware of the nuances, associations, connotation, and that are often lost in translation. Nevertheless, the translated text: (1) produces new associations; (2) obtains new qualities; and (3) undertakes a life of its own.

Biguenet and Schulte (1989), said that since no translation of two translators can ever be the same translation, raised the question on how equivalence can be established and what kind of interpretive reading translators must engage in before actual translation can take place. Hatim and Mason (1990), on the other hand, propose that translation is a negotiation process that considers a translated text as “a means of retracing the pathways of the translator’s decision-making procedures” (p. 4). This view inevitably focuses the attention on translators’ attunement to information from distinct and associated sources: (1) to the original text; (2) to the situation described in the original text; and (3) to the situation in which the original communication took place.

2.2 CULTURE

Culture has always been very much related to language. A number of scholars and researchers believe that they are intertwined. Goodenough (1964) defined culture as:

A society's culture consists of whatever it is one has to know or believe in order to operate in a manner acceptable to its members, and do so in any role that they accept for anyone of themselves. Culture, being what people have to learn as distinct from their biological heritage, must consist of the end product of learning: knowledge [...]; it is not a material phenomenon; it does not consist of things, people, behavior, or emotions. It is rather an organization of these things. It is the forms of things that people have in mind, their models for perceiving, relating, and otherwise interpreting them. As such, the things people say and do, their social arrangements and events, are products or by-products of their culture as they apply it to the task of perceiving and dealing with circumstances. (p. 36)

From the above definition one can realise that culture dominates all people's life. Culture is binding force that "enables human beings to position themselves *vis-à-vis* system of government, domains of activities, religious beliefs and values which human thinking express itself" (House, 2002, p. 93). Moreover, human beings are able to create and shape a language in a way that makes it different from other languages. Thus, the way two languages encode cultural meaning is perhaps quite different. Finally, it is implied that a large number of cultures are in perpetual conflict with one another because each culture has its own customs, beliefs, traditions, and attitudes towards gender differences and many others. What is acceptable in one culture would not necessarily be so in another.

Lotman *et al* (1975) viewed culture as "the functional correlation of different sign system" (p. 57). While Hatim and Mason (1990) state that "different sign systems operate both within and between cultures; and semiotics deals with the processing and exchange of information both within and across cultural boundaries" (p. 105).

2.2.1 ARAB CULTURE

Arabic language was of ultimate importance to the Pre-Islamic Arabs. Arabs used to compete with each other for the composition of the most eloquent and excellent poetry. The Pre-Islamic era, however, is considered as the golden age of Arabic poetry. It is argued that:

Arabic developed an enormous vocabulary [...] that is scarcely matched by any other language except possibly English; [thereby] nothing can be translated from Arabic satisfactorily. The Arabic version of the foreign is always shorter than the original. Arabic loses in translation but all other languages being translated into Arabic gain. (Salloum & Peters, 1996, p. ix-x)

It should be borne in mind that, Arabic and English are, to a large extent, linguistically and culturally alien to each other. It is stated that Arabic is a language with endless vocabulary. For instance, Arabic has more than 200 names for a camel, 450 for a lion, 70 for a sword and 30 for rain, among others. Bearing this in mind, translating Arab cultural elements into English is expected to pose an enormous challenge for translators. A comprehensive classification of culture is rather difficult and is only made to facilitate as much as possible, the study of cultural signs.

2.2.2 LANGUAGE AND CULTURE

The relationship between language and culture has, for thousands of years, evolved in fascinating ways. Goodenough (1964), in this respect, points out that “the relation of language to culture [...] is that of part to whole” (p. 37). Therefore, every language has always been under constant influence from its own and/or other cultures.

Language is a unique pattern of semiotics in which codes are transferred by means of complicated sign systems. Encoding the cultural framework of language as a system of signs helps facilitate both communication and translation. Fisk remarks that:

For communication to take place, I have to create a message out of signs. This stimulates you to create a meaning for yourself that relates in some way to the meaning I generated in my message in the first place. The more we share the

same codes, the more we use the same sign system, the closer our two meanings of the message will approximate to each other. (1990, p. 39)

It arises, therefore, that humans have been involved in developing language as a system of intra- and/or inter-cultural communication, without which communication transactions are doomed to failure.

2.2.3 TRANSLATION AND CULTURE

It is obvious that difficulties in respect of rendering culture-specific items are expected in the course of translating unrelated languages. Lefevere (1992, p. 14) states that:

Translations can be potentially threatening precisely because they confront the receiving culture with another, different way of looking at life and society, a way that can be seen potentially subversive, and must therefore be kept out.

This problem, however, is attainable provided that translators are aware of the languages and cultures of translation. According to Snell-Hornby (1988) language is an “integral part of culture” (p. 42), it is necessary that translators be proficient and talented in both languages and cultures. Translators must meet “the expectations of the members of a particular culture of a translated text” (Nord, 1991, p. 92). Thus, the role of the translator is seen by Leppihalme as:

A cultural mediator and decision maker during the translation process on a micro-level. He or she is an expert who must know which aspects of the SL must be explicitly explained to his or her reader, and which should be regarded as ‘intercultural common knowledge’ [...]. The role of the translator on a macro-level is no longer seen as a mere ‘language worker’, but as a promoter of intercultural communication. The translator should be aware of his/her bonds to his/her own background, but equally of how to overcome them. (1997, p. 87)

Gorlée (1994) adds that translators have dual role by embodying both the receiver of the original message and the sender of the translated message.

2.3 RELEVANT LITERATURE REVIEWS

A large body of literature has been written on translating culture-specific items, mainly from English into other languages or vice versa (e.g., Bezuidenhout, 1998; González,

2004; Dueñas, 2005, among others). However, little attention has been paid to Arab cultural signs when they are translated into English from a critical semiotics perspective. Accordingly, in the absence of a clear-cut theoretical framework concerning Arabic-English cultural signs translation, it seems quite plausible to draw heavily on Hatim and Mason's (1990 and 1997) work in the one hand, and Toury's (1995) notions of 'adequacy' and 'acceptability' on the other. They also address some notion closely related to Discourse Analysis (DA) such as micro-/macro-level signs and intertextuality among others. Hence, making use of discourse approach as a framework for the present study sheds light on the importance of interaction between context, text and language users in determining the meaning of expressions that are being translated.

2.3.1 “PRINCIPLE OF ADEQUACY” VERSUS “PRINCIPLE OF ACCEPTABILITY”

The concepts of 'adequacy' and 'acceptability' refer to the different systems and norms of culture in ST and TT, especially the handling of those in the process of translation. Both concepts constitute extremes, and therefore, actual translations are generally neither totally adequacy-oriented nor completely acceptability-oriented. Adequacy can therefore be depicted as ST-oriented and acceptability as TT-oriented, whereas the TT-orientation usually involves more shifts in translation. However, this does not imply that there are no shifts in a ST-oriented translation. Shifts can be found in both approaches, but the more target-orientated a translation is, the more shifts can be found.

Translation Studies has witnessed intense debate to which translators should give priority: SLT or Target Language Text (TLT). It seems plausible to assume that the end product of translation task can either be Source-oriented or Target-oriented. The former is based on whether or not translators are loyal to the author of the ST, while the latter depends on loyalty to the reader of the TT.

Toury (1980) distinguishes three kinds of translation norms: (1) **Initial Norms:** refers to “the translator’s (conscious or unconscious) choice as to the main objective of his translation, the objective which governs all decisions made during the translation process.” (p. 75). Adherence to the norms of the SL systems leads to adequacy whereas adherence to the norms of the TL systems brings about acceptability; (2) **Preliminary Norms:** includes translation policy, namely, the reason for a selection of certain text for translation in a particular language; and (3) **Operational Norms:** is related to the completeness of TT phenomena (e.g., omission, relocation of passages, and addition of passages). The below figure (2.1) summarises the Source-oriented and Target-oriented translation procedures:

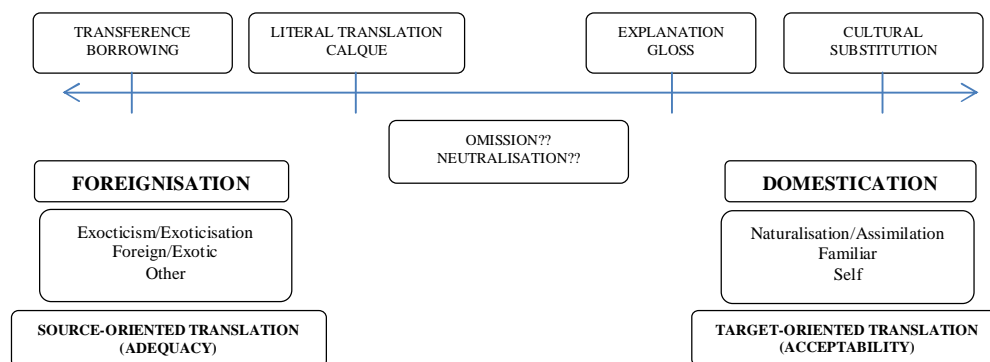


Figure 2.1: Source and Target Oriented Translation adapted from (Ivir, 1987, pp. 35-46)

EXAMPLE (2.1)

إنه مصيبة من مصائب الزمان.
 غضبت. كتمت غضبها تماما. نشط خيالها وتصلبت غرادفها. تظاهرت لا لإستسلام وهي تقول
 لينتظر العدة وعند الله التوفيق... (نجيب محفوظ، ١٩٧٧، ص. ٣٧١)

TRANSLATION OF EXAMPLE (2.1)

“It’s one of the calamities of the age,” said the sheikh apologetically.
 She concealed her anger, her imagination worked frenetically and her resolve hardened.
 “Let him wait **the mourning period** is over, then I’ll marry him,” she said, pretending to give in. (Cobham, 1992, p. 264)

The highlighted Arab cultural item العدة – *iddah* does not exist in the experience of the TL recipient and therefore subject to several interpretations. As can be seen, the

translator explicated the religious sign *iddah* by means of rendering to ‘the mourning period’. Yet, the informational equivalent given in ‘the mourning period’ is still insufficient. According to Islamic Law, a woman may observe two types of *iddah*: the woman whose husband has recently died must observe the period of waiting four months and ten days, whereby the divorcée must observe the period of waiting three months. Therefore, the use of paraphrasing strategy indicates the translator’s adherence to the ‘principle of acceptability’; which, in fact, causes semantic and pragmatic gaps by levelling out the social relations portrayed in the ST. On the other hand, giving priority to the ‘principle of adequacy’, the translator should have elaborated and explained the meaning of the source cultural expression that is non-existent in the target culture in lieu of translating it.

2.3.2 COMMUNICATIVE AND PRAGMATIC DIMENSIONS

It may be helpful onset to state that pragmatic and communicative dimensions of an utterance are so interrelated, in that, the goal of pragmatic meaning is to achieve interaction among language users, a goal that is also shared by semiotic dimension.

Baker (1992) defined pragmatics as “the study of language in use. It is the study of meaning, not as generated by the linguistic system but as conveyed and manipulated by participants in a communicative situation” (p. 217). Hatim and Mason (1990) state that pragmatics is “the study of the relations between language and its context of utterance” (p. 59). In this framework, Farghal and Borini (1998, pp. 77-99) state that pragmatic knowledge the translator has to acquire does not only include propositional content (i.e., semantic content), but also illocutionary act, the pragmatic function of an utterance.

According to Austin (1962) language users use an utterance to perform actions for a particular communicative purpose beyond the sense of the utterance. He

distinguishes three actions performed by language users while producing an utterance: (1) **Locutionary Act:** is performed by uttering a meaningful sentence; (2) **Illocutionary Act:** shows the communicative force with an utterance; and (3) **Perlocutionary Act:** shows the effect of the utterance on the hearer or reader.

In other words, each stretch of language displays its own pragmatic force, in which language users have to locate for any successful communicative transaction. The difficulty the translators are prone to encounter is that an utterance may have several Illocutionary Acts with more than one Perlocutionary Act. The below figure (2.2) sums up the Speech Acts presentation during the process of translation:

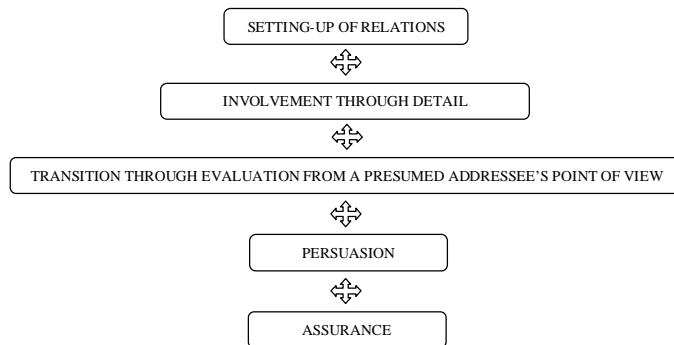


Figure 2.2: Speech Acts Presentation

Grice's (1975) maxims of Quality, Quantity, Relation, and Manner are possibly understood as describing the assumptions listeners usually make about the way speakers talk, rather than prescribing how one ought to talk. Furthermore, Aziz's (2003, pp. 63-82) notion of implicature gains prominence in language use as; (1) it can explicate linguistic phenomena by using pragmatic accounts; (2) it explains how a speaker can mean more than she or he says; and (3) it can be used to simplify structure and semantic descriptions.

To sum up, the pragmatic and communicative thrust of an utterance is contributing to the understanding of that utterance. For better understanding, semiotic aspect should be paid due attention in the course of translation. The pragmatic-related

translation problems from Arabic into English can be attributed to the context, speech acts and conventional implicature and supposition.

2.3.3 SEMIOTICS DIMENSION

Swann (2004) defined semiotics as “the scientific study of the properties of signalling systems, both artificial and natural – sometimes called ‘the science of signs’” (p. 275).

Hatim and Mason (1990) comment on “what constitutes signs, what regulated their interactions and what governs the ways they come into being or decay” (p. 67).

Semiotics is defined from discourse perspective as “a dimension of context which regulates the relationship of the texts or parts of texts to each other as signs” (Hatim & Mason, 1997, p. 223). Along with this definition is the term sign, which is defined as “a unit of signification in which the linguistic form ‘**signifier**’ stands for a concrete object or concept ‘**signified**’” (1997, p. 223). Saussure (1959) distinguishes between the signifier and signified. The former, stands for “the form that the sign takes”, while the latter, stands for “the concept the sign represents” (p. 65). Toury (1989) stated that translation can be visualised as the transmission of “one semiotic entity, belonging to a certain system, to generate another semiotic entity, belonging to a different system” (p. 12).

Ping (1999, pp. 289-300), in shaping a semiotic meaning, states that it is based on three types of semiotic relationship: (1) **Semantic Relation** between signs and entities they refer to; (2) **Pragmatic Relation** between signs and their users; and (3) **Syntactic Relation** between the signs themselves. Consequently, Ping (1999, pp. 289-300) adds another three categories of socio-semiotic meaning as follows: (1) **Referential Meaning (RM)**: when language is used to describe, name, analyse, and criticise its own features; (2) **Pragmatic Meaning (PM)**: includes identificational, expressive, associative, social or interpersonal, and imperative or vocative meanings;

and (3) **Intralingual Meaning (IM)**: which may be realised at phonetic and phonological, graphemic, morphological and lexemic, syntactic, and discorsal and textual levels. The below figure (2.3) summarises the types of Socio-semiotic Meanings:

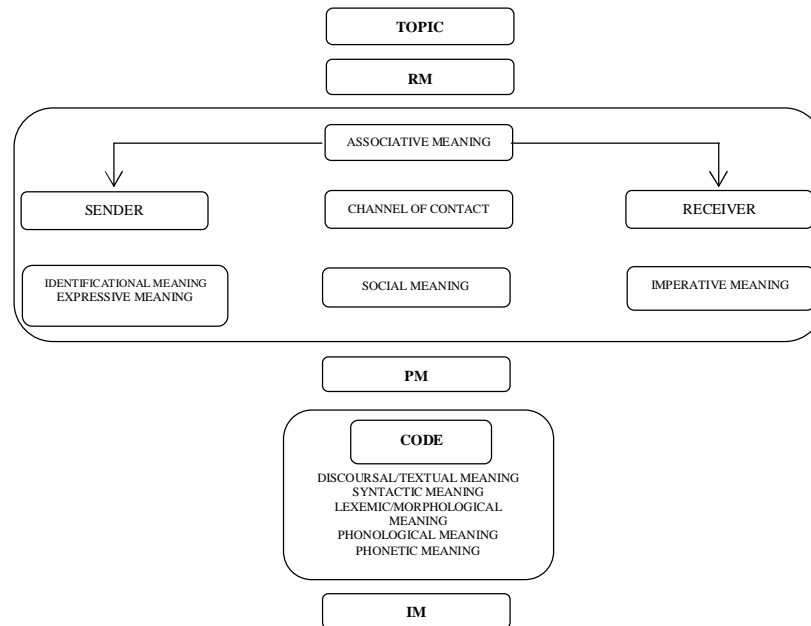


Figure 2.3: A Socio-semiotic Model of Meaning adapted from Ping (1999, pp. 289-300)

EXAMPLE (2.2)

فلطمها لطمه أسقطتها على أرض الحجرة فحنت من الغضب وبصقت على وجهه. عند ذلك
صرخ:
أذهبي فأنت طالق بالثلاثة! (نجيب محفوظ، ١٩٧٧، ص. ٤٧٠)

TRANSLATION OF EXAMPLE (2.2)

He struck her, knocking her to the floor. Crazed with anger she spat in his face.
“Get out of here! **I’m divorcing you**,” he roared. (Cobham, 1992, p. 339)

The translation of the highlighted source item *طالق بالثلاثة* – *talaq bi'l-thalatha* is vague in a sense that it does not explain to target readers the connotation of the Islamic ‘triple repudiation’, which is semantically loaded and pragmatically forceful from what the translation ‘I’m divorcing you’ suggests. From pragmatic perspective, the connotations

behind the triple repudiation reveal a series of complex acts derived from the Islamic Law regulating marriage.

It also needs to be understood that the triple repudiation is a complex process that emphasises two values: marriage relationships are so valuable and have to be respected; and divorce should not be taken lightly. Therefore, the use of paraphrasing strategy caused semantic and pragmatic gaps by levelling out the social relations portrayed in the ST. On the other hand, the translator should have elaborated and explained the meaning of the source cultural expression that is non-existent in the target culture in lieu of translating it.

2.3.4 MACRO-LEVEL SIGNS

The purpose of macro-signs is to “regulate message construction and ensure that texts are efficient, effective and appropriate” (Hatim, 1997, p. 209). Hatim and Mason (1997) include that “more global structures such as text, genre and discourse” (p. 223). Hatim (2002) states that macro-level signs have to do with: (1) promoting specific ideological positions and conveying attitudinal meanings; (2) functioning within well-conventionalised forms of language use by upholding the conventionalised communicative requirements; and (3) achieving various rhetorical aims and attending to specific rhetorical purposes.

EXAMPLE (2.3)

مد يده ولكن يدا أمسكت بيده وصوت قال:
وحدوا الله! (نجيب محفوظ، ١٩٧٧، ص. ٣٩٧)

TRANSLATION OF EXAMPLE (2.3)

He stretched out his hand, but a hand grasped it and a voice intoned, “**There is no god but God.**” (Cobham, 1992, p. 285)

The Arabic interjection وحدوا الله – *Wahhidu-l-lah* has more than the semantic import as ‘Declare God to be One’. Farghal and Borini touch on the above interjection saying that:

It should be noted that the target language reader may interpret [it] as utterance by a preacher who requests his audience to believe in God [...] while the intended illocutionary force in the Arabic formula is a polite piece of advice to calm down. (1998, p. 148)

Furthermore, the *sheikh* encourages the speaker to be patient and to calm down rather than the translation ‘there is no god but God’ suggests. As a micro-sign, the interjection interacts with other signs in the text, for example, the responsive segment لا إله إلا هو – *la ilaha ila hu*, and thus sets forth text as a macro-sign. The translator, therefore, could have better translated the interjection into ‘for God’s sake’ as the closest semantic meaning.

2.3.5 MICRO-LEVEL SIGNS

Hatim and Mason (1997) defined micro-signs as “when the notion of sign is extended to include anything which means something to somebody in some respect or capacity, signs can then be said to refer to cultural objects” (p. 223). Munday (2001), therefore, states that text users utilise these socio-cultural objects locally. Hatim further elaborates on that saying:

Micro-signals are those elements which realize overall structural and textural organization and thus implement the basic rhetorical purpose of a given text. Citing an opponent’s thesis and then rebutting it are micro-signals in a counter-argumentative text. But for these elements to relay the values involved, they must be seen to carry within them clues pointing to a particular cultural code. These discoursal micro-signals enter text organization through the area of texture which enables us to ‘read off’ a given ideological stance, a commitment to a cause or simply an attitude to some aspect of the text-world as in literary or scientific communication. (1997, p. 210)

EXAMPLE (2.4)

وقالت لجبريل الفص:

ليكن معلوماً أني لا ارضى بضرة. (نجيب محفوظ، ١٩٧٧، ص. ٣٧١)

TRANSLATION OF EXAMPLE (2.4)

“Remember, I won’t be a co-wife,” she repeated to Gibril al-Fas.
(Cobham, 1992, p. 264)

Translating the highlighted cultural reference *ضرة - durrah* into ‘co-wife’ solves part of the SL function of the word problem and requires the SLT readers to study the socio-cultural context so that the lexical item makes sense. In which, a micro-level may be conveyed in a single word or phrase that has particular significance for a given culture at a given time. In Islam – the source culture, polygamy is allowed, with the specific limitation that a man can have up to four wives at any one time; whereas, it is considered a social crime in many countries – the target culture. The above translation, therefore, substantially demonstrates that the above micro-sign might be far beyond the TL readers’ understanding. The below figure (2.4) sums up the ways in which the above examples are developed:

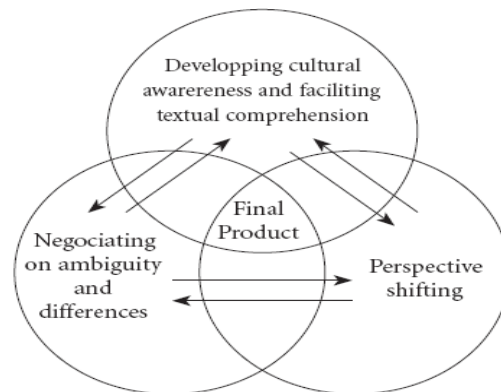


Figure 2.4: Text Development in Translation adapted from Hatim and Mason (1990)

2.3.6 INTERTEXTUALITY

Intertextuality involves phonology, morphology, syntax or semantics (Hatim 1997, p. 201); it varies from single words or phrases that have particular cultural meaning in a particular linguistic community, to macro-textual conventions and constraints related to genre, register and discourse. As such, intertextuality is defined as “a precondition for the intelligibility of texts, involving the dependence of one text as a semiotic entity on another, previously encountered” (Hatim & Mason, 1997, p. 219).

The value of a particular intertextual reference can only be understood in terms of what the producer wants to do with the text – intentionality. Hatim (1997, p. 30) further elaborates on intertextuality saying that utterances interact with each other within and between texts to optimally express meaning loaded with a kind of semiotic values. González (2004, pp. 134-139) points out that cultural intertextuality can be divided into genre-related intertextuality and culture-bound elements. In the same way, Hatim and Mason (1997, p. 18) explicitly state that reference can be a socio-cultural or a set of rhetorical conventions that take over genre and discourse.

Hatim and Mason (1990, pp. 133-137) obtain semiotic approach in translating intertextuality, wherein translators' task is to identify the particular text elements which can act as signs in the intertextual reference, and then outline the ways these signals relate to the previous text. Each intertextual sign needs to be evaluated in terms of informational content, intentionality and semiotic status, in deciding which sign aspects can be omitted during translation. Hatim and Mason (1990, p. 136) suggest that the main concern is whether all the time should be given to intentionality by preserving: (1) the semiotic status; (2) the intentionality; (3) the linguistic devices that uphold coherence; (4) the informational status; and finally (5) the extra-linguistic status.

EXAMPLE (2.5)

فقال باستسلام:

يقول المثل "خذوهن فقيرات يغنيكم الله." (نجيب محفوظ، ١٩٧٧، ص. ٥٢٣)

TRANSLATION OF EXAMPLE (2.5)

"The proverb says, '**If you marry a poor woman, God will make you rich,**'" she said lamely. (Cobham, 1992, p. 379)

The italicised phrase *خذوهن فقيرات يغنيكم الله* – *khudhwhna faqirat yughnykum Allah* is intertextually linked to the below Qur'ānic verse:

“Marry the single people from among you and the righteous (pious) slaves and slave-girls. If you are poor, Allah will make you rich through his favour; and Allah is bountiful, All-knowing.” (*Surat An-Nur* [The Light], Verse 24)

The above verse used to refer to marriage in general and to Muslim society in particular. Islam basically encourages people to marry those who are pious and have faith regardless of race, ethnicity and social status.

The intertextual of the above phrase becomes a sign for most Arabs in the aspect of marriage. In the above example, the speaker was addressing her son, to get married to a woman of his social class, by making intertextual reference to the Qur’ānic verse, which might be difficult for TL readers to capture.

Therefore, understanding the context of situation, in which the source item is used, would be crucial since it plays a major semantic and pragmatic role in facilitating the decoding of the source item. From a discourse perspective, the author employs the Qur’ānic verse probably to win him a kind of reputation. As far as Arab culture is concerned, in everyday conversation, people would use Qur’ānic verses to look more persuasive on the one hand, and to show off their language competence on the other.

2.3.7 CONNOTATION AND DENOTATION

Connotative and denotative meanings are considered important elements in translating cultural signs. The former refers to the strongest, weakest, affirmative, negative, or emotional reaction to words (Nida & Taber, 1969). The latter, however, involves “the relationship between lexical items and non-linguistic entities to which they refer, thus [...] equivalent to referential, conceptual, propositional, or dictionary meaning” (Shunnaq, 1993, pp. 36-37).

In semiotics, denotative meaning is defined as the literal meaning encoded to a signifier and it appears in a dictionary; while the connotative meaning takes place when the denotative relationship is inadequate to serve the community needs.

EXAMPLE (2.6)

فقته غسان وقال:

أحلق شاري لو فعل، ولن نحظى منه إلا بالفقر... (نجيب محفوظ، ١٩٧٧، ص. ١٠٦)

TRANSLATION OF EXAMPLE (2.6)

Ghassan guffawed. “I’ll shave my moustache off if that ever happens,” he said. “All we’ll get from him is poverty.” (Cobham, 1992, p. 71)

Translating the source item *أحلق شاري لو فعل* – *ahluq sharbi lau fa‘al* into ‘I’ll shave my moustache off if that ever happens’ makes it vague as it does not explain to target readers the importance of the Arabic item, in which the translator could have better used the English equivalent to render the source item as ‘I would eat my hat, if he did’ to give more meaning to the target readers. Pragmatically speaking, the connotation behind the source item reveals a series of complex acts derived from the cultural traditions and it could be explained as follows: people build trust by swearing by their moustache and offering them as ransom in the event their integrity is compromised and it is also uttered to show that something impossible to happen.

2.3.8 UNTRANSLATABILITY

From the socio-semiotic perspective, untranslatability is an undeniable reality, to the extent that the base units of a language are concerned. Ping (1999, pp. 289-300) states two causes underlying untranslatability: (1) convention that appears in using referential, pragmatic and intralingual meanings in linguistic signs; and (2) annotations, which are capable of explaining any kind of linguistic or cultural peculiarities for the practical reason that would possibly produce an effusive and incompetent translation.

Ping (1999, pp. 289-300) takes the discussion of socio-semiotic untranslatability a step further by classifying them into: (1) **Referential Untranslatability (RU)**; (2) **Pragmatic Untranslatability (PU)**; and (3) **Intralingual Untranslatability (IU)**.

2.3.8.1 REFERENTIAL UNTRANSLATABILITY

Referential Untranslatability takes place when referential elements, in the source message, are unknown to a specific item in the TL. According to Baker (1992) the SL may have words that are not lexicalised in the target culture. Arabic has innumerable words that are not allocated as an English word to express it, and vice versa. For instance, the RM of the Arabic term محارم – *mahārim* (people who are legally forbidden to marry a particular woman due to blood relationship, such as sharing the nursing milk and in-laws like her father, her father-in-law, her brother, her uncle, among many others) produces an innumerable implicature in the TL.

2.3.8.2 PRAGMATIC UNTRANSLATABILITY

Pragmatic Untranslatability takes place when the PM of the SL signs is not encapsulated in the target culture. PU occurs when PM encoded in a source item that is undetermined equally in a comparable unit in the TL, or when the exact PM carried by the source sign is ambiguous owing to the historical reason or intentional vagueness on the part of the author. The Arabic/Islamic greeting رمضان كريم – *Ramadhan Karim* (a greeting used among Muslims during the month of Fasting) produces an innumerable implicature in the TL.

2.3.8.3 INTRALINGUAL UNTRANSLATABILITY

Ping (1999) defined Intralingual Untranslatability as “any situation in which the source expression is apparently not transferable due to some communicatively foregrounded linguistic peculiarity it contains” (p. 293). It would differ from “linguistic untranslatability” as defined by Catford (1965: 103) than including those usually followed language rules. It concerns only those linguistic features, which are brought out in the context. IU constitutes majority of untranslatability cases.

EXAMPLE (2.7)

الفللي الآن يغط في نومه. يحلم بالزفاف غدا. حدرته الزغاريد والعهود والبسمات. (نجيب محفوظ، ١٩٧٧، ص. ٢٢٠)

TRANSLATION OF EXAMPLE (2.7)

Al-Fulali would be fast asleep now, dreaming of his wedding day, lulled by **joyous trilling**, the pledges of loyalty, and the smiling faces. (Cobham, 1992, p. 152)

The highlighted socio-cultural reference shows the custom of making زغاريد – *zaghareed* (trilling sound) is a fact of life in most of Arab wedding parties or other ceremonial occasions to express jubilation. The signifier ululations has two signifieds, to howl or wail loudly, whereas *zaghareed* is related to Arab women making such noises with their tongues to express joy rather than wailing. Shunnaq (1993) states that the highlighted Arabic lexical item is “untranslatable into English as it connotes numerous emotive overtones; it is an action of joy and extreme happiness, which I cannot find any equivalent for it in English” (p. 54).

In general, the three types of untranslatability, referential, pragmatic, and intralingual may be distinguished. On the understanding that the object of translation is the message instead of the carrier of the message, language-specific norms considered untranslatable by some linguists should be excluded from the realm of untranslatable. And since translation is a communicative event involving the use of verbal signs, the chance of untranslatability in practical translating tasks may be minimised if the communicative situation is taken into account. The below figure (2.5) summarises the three types of Socio-semiotic Untranslatability:

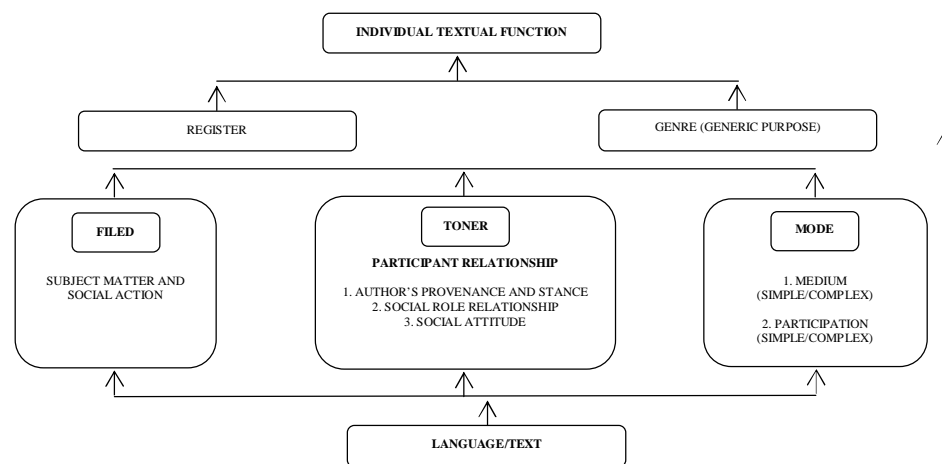


Figure 2.5: Types of Socio-semiotic Untranslatability adapted from Ping (1999, pp. 289-300)

2.3.9 THE CONCEPT OF EQUIVALENCE

Many translation theorists and practitioners argue that each language has its own peculiarities in terms of syntax, semantics, pragmatics, stylistics and culture. Consequently, no translator can provide an infallible translation that fully reflects the original syntactically, semantically and culturally without a loss.

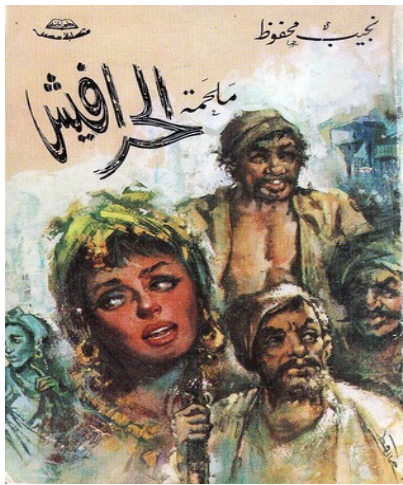
In earlier work on translation equivalence, Catford (1965) defined translation as “the replacement of textual material in one language (SL) by equivalent textual material in another language (TL)” (p. 20). He (1965) distinguishes textual equivalence from formal correspondence. The former is “any TL text or portion of text which is observed on a particular occasion to be the equivalent of a given SL text or portion of text” (p. 27); while the latter is any TL category (i.e., unit, class, structure, etc.) that “can be said to occupy, as nearly as possible, the same place in the economy of the TL as the given SL category occupies in the SL” (p. 27). The problem of equivalence has been looming large in translation theories, and there is a consensus of opinion among translators that regards equivalence as the thrust of translation (Nida, 1964; Catford, 1965; Newmark, 1988, among others). According to Gorfée (1994) there are “varieties of equivalence: functional, stylistic, formal, textual, communicative, linguistic, pragmatic, and semiotic” (p. 170). In other words, the translator has:

The option of focusing on finding formal equivalents which preserve the context-free semantic sense of the text at the expense of its context-sensitive communicative value, or finding functional equivalents which preserve the context-sensitive communicative value of the text at the expense of its context-free semantic sense. (Bell, 1991, p. 7)

Farghal and Shunnaq (1999) state that Formal Equivalence seeks to “capture the form of the SL expression. Form relates to the image employed in the SL expression”. Functional Equivalence also seeks to “capture the function of the SL expression independently of the image utilised by translating it into a TL expression that performs the same function”; while Ideational Equivalence aims to “convey the communicative sense of the SL expression independently of the function and form” (p. 5). Finally, Pym (1992) affirms that Semiotic Equivalence aims at “capturing the semiotic force across the boundaries between the SL and TL; it is defined as unique intertextual relationship” (p. 96). Neubert (1973) states that semiotic equivalence reads as any TLT which purports to be a rendering of a particular SLT’s semiotic content. Eventually, translators have a wide selection of equivalence levels, and such selection depends on language and cultural competence of the translator (as cited in Emery 2004, pp. 143-165).

2.4 SUMMARY OF THE NOVEL

Original Title	: ملحمة الحرافيش – <i>Malḥamat Al-Ḥarafish</i>
Translated Title	: The <i>Ḥarafish</i>
Author	: Naguib Mahfouz
Translator	: Catherine Cobham
Country	: Egypt
Language	: Arabic
Genre	: Novel
Publisher Arabic	: Maktabat Misr
Publisher English	: Doubleday
Publication Date	: 1977
Published in English	: 1992



2.4.1 SYNOPSIS

The *Harafish* by Naguib Mahfouz and translated by Catherine Cobham chronicles the history of the al-Nagi family; beginning with Ashur al-Nagi who leads his life morally and decently. His following generations, however, begin to stray from such morality. In the translator's note, which can be found in the beginning of the book, she says that the historical meaning of *Harafish* is "the rabble or riffraff. In the novel it means the common people in a positive sense, those in menial jobs, casual workers, and the unemployed and homeless". The time and setting of the novel are purposefully made unclear because the messages of the novel are supposed to be universal and timeless.

2.4.2 DETAILED SUMMARY OF THE NOVEL

The novel consists of ten tales that span the history of the descendants of Ashur al-Nagi, who was an abandoned child and was adopted by a blind *sheikh* with a sterile wife. In their tender care, he grows into a strong giant man with an innocent soul and kind heart. Since his childhood he liked the songs of the *takiyya* (a place for spiritual retreat and character reformation). Ashur is expelled from his paradise when the *sheikh* dies and his foster mother is forced to return to her village. Refusing Darwish's order to use his enormous strength to commit crime, he leaves home.

Ashur calls upon the dervishes (members of any of various Muslim ascetic orders) to offer his services, but they refuse to have him. He gets a job as a cart-driver where his devotion and honesty lead his employer to give him his daughter in marriage. Then Darwish opens a bar, of which Ashur's sons, who have grown up, soon become patrons. They fight one another over Fulla, a barmaid at Darwish's place. Going to the bar to bring his sons back, Ashur himself falls for her and marries her as a second wife, much to the shock of the people of the alley. Fulla bears him a son, Shams al-Din.

Then a plague strikes the alley killing many people. Ashur sees a vision of his foster mother leading him into the desert. Deciding to act on the vision, he invites his first wife and his sons to accompany him but they refuse and so do the people of the alley, who deem him disgraceful because of his second marriage. Thus only Ashur, Fulla and Shams al-Din move to the desert. The life there provides him with ample time to worship and meditate. In his meditation he has a mystical experience.

Eventually, they return to the alley, which is completely deserted. Only the *takiyya* and the signing of the dervishes remain intact. One day, he and Fulla surrender to the temptation of walking into what used to be the mansion of the wealthiest family in the alley and decide to live in this deserted mansion. He begins to spend money lavishly on the poor from his newly acquired wealth and builds a mosque and a drinking fountain. The common people, having never known a rich man who behaved in this manner, call him a saint and argue that it was for his saintliness that God saved him from the plague.

Soon, however, the government begins to take stock of the properties and estates of the dead. When Ashur is unable to produce proof of ownership, he goes to prison. During his absence, Darwish takes control of the alley as the head of clan chief, and a reign of terror begins. When Ashur is released from jail, the *harafish* give him a hero's welcome, while Darwish vanishes into thin air.

One day, Ashur disappears mysteriously and a wrestling contest for the head of clan chief leadership takes place and is won by his youthful son, Shams al-Din, whose reign continues by his father. On Shams al-Din's death, his son Sulayman takes over and for a few years follows in the footsteps of his father and grandfather. Then he falls for a wealthy man's daughter and gradually begins to offer concessions to the prominent people including members of her family. His two sons grow up to be successful merchants who do not care about the noble heritage of the Nagi family. Sulayman's health deteriorates owing to his life style of leisure and pleasure. Eventually, one of his followers declares himself chief of the clan, the Nagis lose the leadership, and the alley enters into an age of darkness.

Three generations later, a young man called Jalal appears. His tragedy begins in his childhood when he witnesses his beautiful mother's head smashed by her ex-husband. He never forgets the scene and grows up with agonising questions: why do we lose what we love and suffer from what we hate; why do we die? The sudden death of his beloved fiancé intensifies his agony.

With the clan leadership in the hands of Jalal, the hopes of the *harafish* revive. However, as Jalal's thoughts are focused on the fear of death, wealth, and strength, he becomes completely indifferent to the suffering of the people in the alley. In his immortality, he obtains from a dubious *sheikh* some difficult tasks to perform. The price includes his largest apartment block, the construction of a ten-story-high minaret without a mosque as additional conditions to fulfill, total seclusion for a year. Jalal accepts and endures his solitary confinement for a whole year. Jalal being in comes out of seclusion and installs himself anew as the head of clan chief. Zinat, his mistress, was disappointed with his action in eating and drinking excessively, owing to his illusion of eternal life. Eventually she poisons him and Jalal dies a painful death.

Two generations later, Samaha takes control of the *futuwwa* (young-manliness or chivalry). He proves to be one of the most evil clan chief ever to have controlled the alley and shatters the hopes of the *ḥarafish*. On the other hand, his nephew, Fath al-Bab, a young man of gentle nature and good behaviour, is enchanted with the story of their great ancestor, Ashur al-Nagi. As he grows up, Fath al-Bab joins Samaha's business as an apprentice. Through hard work he acquires confidence and pride. Soon after, there is a rumour rise about impending famine. Food prices rise, especially of cereals. However, Fath al-Bab knows the real reason for the lack of food: Samaha has withheld grain in order to raise the prices.

There is a rumour in the alley that someone received a sack of food; from Ashur al-Nagi, where a voice whispered, and then a dim shape melted away in the darkness. It is widely rumoured that Ashur has returned to life under cover of night. The *ḥarafish* come to feel that it is better to take a risk than to die of hunger. How can they hesitate when Ashur al-Nagi is by their side?

However, it is only a matter of time before Samaha finds out that the Ashur al-Nagi who appears in the darkness is really Fath al-Bab. Samaha seizes him in the warehouse and hangs him by his feet from the ceiling, leaving him to die slowly. The *ḥarafish* divide themselves into groups and break into the houses of Samaha's men. They succeed in the revolution.

Fath al-Bab is appointed as head of the clan chief against his will. It does not take long before his henchmen start to behave lightly. After they take full advantage of the charm and authority that Fath al-Bab has among the *ḥarafish*, Fath al-Bab's shattered body is found one morning at the foot of the minaret.

Ashur, the youngest son of a poor family, grows up to be a strong man who recalls the image of his great ancestor. From an early age he is also attracted to the *takiyya* with its inscrutable and inspiring songs. His eldest brother drifts into a world of

crime and unlawful wealth and when he is found out, he commits suicide. The whole family is forced to move out of the alley to the cemetery.

In his exile, Ashur contemplates his predicament and that of the alley. He also thinks hard about why the golden age created by his great ancestor had suffered so many setbacks after his disappearance and never been restored. After his meditations in the desert and his night-time vigils by the *takiyya*, he sees in his sleep someone he believes is Ashur al-Nagi.

After a long absence, Ashur visits the market next to the alley. He begins to convince the *ḥarafish* and prepare them for the day of confrontation. He teaches them that they should trust nobody else, only themselves. Ashur realises that his great ancestor, Ashur al-Nagi, was a strong man with a great heart who put his strength in the service of the *ḥarafish* and achieved justice in the alley.

At the right moment, Ashur ends his exile and leads the *ḥarafish* into battle. It was an incident unprecedented in the history of the alley: the *ḥarafish* achieved victory by their own efforts. Ashur does not, however, lose sight of his prime objective: that of making the *ḥarafish* masters of their own destiny. He tells them of his objective and transforms them into the greatest clan chiefs the alley has known. He quickly puts the nobles and the *ḥarafish* on an equal footing and imposes heavy taxes on the rich. Ashur orders the *ḥarafish*: to train their sons in the virtues of the head of clan chief in order to maintain their power and prevent it from falling into the hands of bullies and to earn their living by a trade or a job which he procures for them with the money from taxes. Soon begins an epoch which is distinguished for its prosperity and integrity.

Ashur rehabilitates the mosque, the drinking fountain, the animal trough and the Qur'ān school just as Ashur al-Nagi did. Then he does what no one before him has dared to do; he demolishes the minaret without a mosque. On the day of demolition of this evil monstrosity, the alley celebrates excitedly until the night. After midnight,

Ashur makes his way to the *takiyya* square where he has an inner vision. Ashur returns to the real world and jumps to his feet assuring that one day the gate may be opened to welcome those who get hold of life courageously.

2.5 CONCLUDING REMARKS

It can be concluded that the relation between translation and culture is resilient; in which translation is a fundamental resource whereby people can get access to the culture of other nations. Hence, it concerns transferring concepts that pertain to one culture and which are communicated by the linguistic system of that culture.

The semiotic approach to translation, on the one hand, could be summarised as: (1) it allows room for the study of both representation in cultures and individual processes of interpretation; (2) the semiosis process has the advantage of treating the sign as part of the interpretation process; (3) it also provides a tool to measure the validity of a translation both on the linguistic and the functional levels; and (4) it quests for a sign that adheres to the most important characteristic of the source sign, as opposed to the quest for ideal sign-norm.

On the other hand, pragmatic and communicative approach to translation is appealing in many ways: (1) it takes the transference of the communicative value of the message as its focal point; (2) it deals with translation from a broad perspective; it also takes into consideration both the internal and the external world of the text; (3) it enables translators to decompose the ST, and create a new text which fits the linguistic and cultural norms of the target culture; and (4) it accounts for the viewpoint of target readers.

Furthermore, translatability is the process by which an equivalent TLT exists for a particular SLT. In particular, Arab cultural signs are considered translatable provided that translators are able to offer an equivalent TL translation. As a result, competent

translators through using their skills and experiences can translate the untranslatable and creatively offer, to some extent, meaningful TL version.

In general, translation is not impossible, provided that translation is a human activity, where translators ought to overcome the language barriers practiced between different languages of the world. Translators have all the time encounter complicated difficulties and problems whilst carrying out their task, which requires them talents and capabilities.