



RESEARCH ARTICLE

TRANSLATION STRATEGIES IN ENGLISH – ARABIC TRANSLATION: A CASE STUDY OF *THE OLD MAN AND THE SEA*

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Abstract

This study examines the application of Baker's (2011) translation strategies in the English–Arabic translation of Ernest Hemingway's *The Old Man and the Sea*. The analysed document is Ba'labki's (1992) translation of Hemingway's novel *The Old Man and the Sea*. By adopting a qualitative method, the research analyses selected segments from the source text and their Arabic translation to investigate how specific translation strategies are employed to convey meaning accurately and effectively. The analysis is conducted at the sentence and paragraph levels, allowing for a detailed comparison between the source text and the target text. The study focuses on eight strategies proposed by Baker: translation by a more general word, translation by a less expressive or neutral word, cultural substitution, loan word plus explanation, paraphrase using related words, paraphrase using unrelated words, omission, and illustration. The findings reveal that these strategies play a crucial role in addressing lexical, cultural, and stylistic challenges encountered in literary translation. The translator's choices demonstrate a balance between preserving the original meaning and adapting it to suit the linguistic and cultural expectations of the Arabic readership. Overall, the study highlights the effectiveness of Baker's strategies in enhancing clarity, readability, and communicative impact in novel translation, underscoring their significance in English–Arabic literary translation.

Keywords: Translation Strategies; Literary Translation; Baker's Strategies; The Old Man and the Sea; Cultural Substitution.

Introduction

Many scholars' descriptions of translation reflect the breadth of this field. Chesterman (2004) and Klauudy (2010) described a translated text as a piece of work that tends to be more explicit than its original source. Supporting this view, Vinay and Darbelnet (1958/1995) explained the role of situation and context in shaping lexical features as a stylistic translation technique that contributes to making the translated text more explicit than its often more implicit source text.

The field of linguistics developed strategies for studying and expressing meaning related to conveying the message. These strategies have benefited the field of translation. Numerous approaches were suggested by linguists and classified as translation strategies. Of course, the most prominent translation strategies are those introduced by Mona Baker in 2011, known as Baker's taxonomy. These strategies were presented to solve translation problems and enable translators to overcome the difficulties they face. According to Owji (2013), Baker's strategies represent popular and applicable techniques for translators.

Translating novels between English and Arabic presents obvious challenges arising from profound linguistic differences and cultural disparities. Literary translation, particularly of narrative prose, demands strategies that address stylistic nuance, figurative language, and cultural embeddedness. While Baker's

strategies offer a practical framework, there remains limited research methodically applying it to modern English-Arabic novel translation.

This study investigates the application of Baker's strategies in the English-Arabic translation process, this study investigates the application of Baker's strategies in the English-Arabic translation process of Hemingway's novel *The Old Man and the Sea* (translated by Ba'labki, 1992). Specifically, it addresses the following research question: Does the application of Baker's strategies in translating novels from English into Arabic lead to enhanced explicitation in the target text?

Literature review

Translation strategies

Many scholars have studied translation and consider it a very important field within linguistics. One of the most famous is Eugene A. Nida, known for his translation of the Bible. Nida proposed a significant theory within the field and discussed a definition of translation. Nida and Taber (1969) defined the translation process, clarifying the concept of "the closest natural equivalent".

There is no single, fixed definition of translation. Various scholars have provided numerous definitions. Larson (1998) and Shuttleworth & Cowie (1997) asserted that translation involves changing form to convey the intended meaning. This change can occur at the level of words, phrases, clauses, or sentences. This concept of changing form occurs when the translator changes the form of the source text into that of the target text to achieve equivalence between meanings. Williams (2009) emphasized this aspect of the translation process.

Baker (2011) introduced her own definition of translation, defining it as a process focused on finding equivalents in the target language that convey the source language meaning. Baker (2011) also clarified that a good translator must read the source text multiple times to grasp the core message ('gist'). Only when the translator comprehends the source text thoroughly can they choose appropriate equivalents or strategies to produce the target text.

Translation strategies refer to all the processes involved in translating a source text into a target text. They were first introduced by Vinay and Darbelnet (1958/1995) as 'translation procedures'. They constructed their theory to function as a comprehensive framework concerned with establishing textual equivalence through the comparison of two languages. Newmark (1988, p. 81) highlighted the difference between Vinay and Darbelnet's term ('procedure') and the term 'translation method'. He associated translation methods with whole texts, whereas translation procedures pertained to sentences, phrases, and words. Conversely, Mason (1994) did not distinguish between the terms: translation methods, translation procedures, and translation strategies. He used 'translation procedure' synonymously with translation strategies, stating: "A procedure is a method adopted to achieve a result" - a way of progressing towards completing an activity.

There are studies that focus on the translation manipulation to other non-equivalence in the target language. Sulaibi (2014) analysed the translation names of Harry Potter and the *Philosopher Stone*. The study finds that the translation strategies were rarely employed. Sasaninejad and Delpazy (2015) discussed the non-equivalent translation from English into Arabic. their discussion reveals that the translation process adopted a target-oriented approach. The substitution strategy was mostly applied in the translating process. The researchers assumed that the demonstrative method improved the readability and made the translated text accepted among the target readers.

Zare-Behtash and Firoozkoochi (2009) conducted a study of domestication and foreignization English-Persian translations of *The Old Man and the Sea*. According to their study, domestication was mostly used as cultural translation strategy. Alwafai (2015) investigated two Arabic translations of *The Old Man and the Sea*. He concluded that the best translation would take into consideration the cultural and contextual factors related to the SL and the TL. She mentioned that readability and naturalness should be given priority in the translating

process of literal texts. El-Haddad (1999) analyse the difficulty of translating literal aspects of two Arabic translations of *The Old Man and the Sea*. His work explored the difficulty of translating similes and stylistic aspects.

The present study differs from those, because it aims to investigate the ability of applying translation strategies based on Mona Baker's taxonomy.

Methodology

Given the numerous translation strategies available, this study investigates specific strategies introduced by Baker (2011) and evaluates their applicability to novels. These strategies are examined in the Arabic translation of an English novel. The research conducts a qualitative analysis aimed at identifying both the applicability of Baker's strategies in this context and their role in conveying clear and explicit meaning.

Data collection and sampling

The primary data consists of the novel *The Old Man and the Sea*, written by Hemingway in 1952, and its published Arabic translation by Ba'labki's (1992). The analysis is conducted on a unit basis, where each segment of the source text (e.g., sentences or paragraphs) is compared with its Arabic counterpart. To ensure a representative sample, specific segments were chosen that illustrate various themes, styles, and complexities within the novel. This method helps capture a diverse range of translation strategies in different context. Respectively selected unit was examined through qualitative content analysis, focusing on identifying the translation problem, determining the strategy used, and evaluating its effectiveness in conveying the source text's communicative intent in the target text. This approach allows for a granular examination of the translation strategies employed. The aim of this analysis is to identify the application of Baker's translation strategies within the Arabic text and to evaluate their impact on transferring the message and information into the target text.

Tools for analysis

Baker's (2011) strategies of translation strategies serves as the analytical framework for this study. According to Owji (2013), these strategies are among the most applicable ones used by professional translators. Therefore, they form the basis of the analysis. The eight strategies included are: translation by a more general word (superordinate), translation by a less expressive or neutral word, translation by cultural substitution, translation by using a loan word plus explanation, translation by paraphrase using a related word, translation by paraphrase using unrelated words, translation by omission, and translation by illustration. In this study, each strategy is discussed separately, supported by explanatory examples from the corpus.

Results and Discussion

Translating by Less Expressive Word

Expressive meaning often carries emotional, cultural, or stylistic weight that exceeds the basic denotative sense of a word. In some cases, translators have the option to decrease and reduce that expressive meaning according to certain circumstances to overcome the problem of imbalance the meaning between the two texts (Cambell, 1998). This step encourages manipulating the expressive meaning of the word to make it common through the translating process. As mentioned by House (2008, 2015) and Baker and Saldanha (2009), this is the strategy of narrowing the meaning to make it more specific. The chosen word in the TT has more specific and common meaning compared to its word of the ST. According to Baker (2011), this strategy is clear in the following example:

Just then he saw a man-of-war bird with his long black wings circling in the sky ahead of him. P. 11

وفي تلك اللحظة بالذات بصر نسر بحري ذي جناحين طويلين سوداوين يحوم إمامه في السماء. ص. 32

According to this example, the source phrase "a man-of-war bird" was translated into "بحري نسر." This phrase carries a strong expressive meaning beyond its general meaning. The translator faced challenges in conveying this nuanced meaning while also considering the cultural context and expectations of the target audience. To manage these complexities, the translator opted to narrow the meaning and make it more specific. Thus, "بحري نسر" is a less marked term in the translated text, but this choice may result in a loss of the original expressive richness. A critical examination of this decision reveals how contextual factors, such as the familiarity of the target audience with the source term, influenced the translator's approach, ultimately affecting the depth of the translation's impact.

Translation by Illustration

This strategy can be considered as a method of "explicitness" of "illustrating of something revered in the SLT" (Aixela, 1996). It was referred by Newmark (1988) as a "classifier". In illustrating strategy, the translator use qualifier to simplify the comprehension process of the TT readers. The following illustrate the purpose of this strategy: the word "rum" in "they fed the negro rum and lighted cigarettes for him" (p. 26) was translated into شراب الروم. The translator used "a drink of" to qualify the source word "rum". Similarly, the source words "an old Ford" (p. 47) were translated into سيارة فورد قديمة. The translator used the qualifier "car" to clarify the source word "Ford".

Sometimes it is difficult to choose a proper equivalent for a specific item, especially physical entities. This strategy of translation by illustration, helps the translator to overcome this problem. Therefore, it is useful for resolving ambiguity related to physical entities. This example demonstrates the strategy: translating the entity "skiff". The translator used more than one word to illustrate the equivalent of "skiff". The translator used more than one word to illustrate its equivalent, rendering the source word as "قارب عريض القعر" by describing its physical features.

Translation by Cultural Substitution

Cultural substitution allows the translator to select expressions that resonate naturally with target readers.

He had gone eight-four days now without taking a fish. P1

وكان قد سلخ أربعة وثمانين يوما من غير أن يفوز لسمة واحدة. ص 7

In this example, the translator applied the cultural item that was suitable to explain and specify the concept of fishing task during those days. The word "انسلخ" has a cultural impact in the target society. The translator could have use the target word "قضى" but opted for convey the suffering of fishing during the last days which were characterized with pain and failure. This substitution of a cultural item is applied to clarify the meaning for the target readers, especially in literary works, for conveying the connotative meaning of the used word in the guise of denotative meaning. Every concept should be clearly conveyed and specified by the suitable target words. The Arabic translation is performed applying a lexical element in choosing the translated word. Such techniques are essential for achieving a delicate comprehension of literary works.

Translation Using a Loan Word plus Explanation

This was introduced by translators variously as loan words (Balcer, 2011), transcription (Harrey, 2000), transference (Newmark, 1988) and transliteration (Aixela, 1996). It means expressing a source word in the alphabet of TL and adding expression to make the involved word clear in the case of the context fails to achieve this function.

The shack was made of the thought budshields of the royal palm which are called guano. P.4

وكان الكوخ مبنيا بتلك المادة الصلبة التي يدعونها غوانا والتي لا تعدو أن تكون سعف النخلة الملكية المتراكم. ص 14

This example indicates that there is a foreign word "guano", that is present in the source text and was translated into "غوانا". But added the explanatory phrase "المادة الصلبة... سعف النخلة الملكية المتراكم" (solid material...

accumulated fronds of the royal palm). This explanation to the word "guano" which might be unfamiliar to the Arab reader. The explanation by using an additional word or more than one word is a Lexical feature required for comprehending the target text. In the current example, the loan word was mentioned in Arabic as well as its explanation was used also.

Translation by a More General Words Superordinate

This strategy, in translation, is one of the most common strategies. It is considered successful and being used in most Arabic translations. Baker (2011) and Doherty (2017) discussed this strategy. They argued that applying this strategy helps the translator deal with the specific source words by simplifying them through the use of more general words in the target texts. The translator resorts to producing a broad meaning. Nord (2005) mentioned that the process of producing a broad meaning, called "lexical broadening", is a strategy applied in the translation process by using a more general meaning in the target text than that in the source text, which is more specific. It is a process of generalising of meaning, as Toury (2012) called it. The current strategy, as Baker (2011), is demonstrated in the following example:

How would you like to see me bring one in that dressed out over a thousand pounds? P 4

فماذا تقول لو رأيتني راجعا بسمكة تزن أكثر من ألف رطل، في قاربي ذلك. ص. 15

In the previous example, the relative clause "dressed out over" was translated into "تزن أكثر من", which means that the fish as a whole has that weight. The literal meaning of this clause indicated the weight of the fish without its internal and external organs, such its fins and stomach. It is one of the fishing terms used in this novel. The two clauses "that dressed out" and "over thousand pounds" referred to the fish. The first one - our interest here - refers to the weight of the fish after it has been gutted and trimmed. The involved weight is the weight after removing the internal contents (i.e., its stomach) of the fish, in addition to removing its fins and tail. This is the specific meaning of the clause "that dressed out". The Arabic verb "تزن" is used to convey out the general meaning when a target equivalent for this specific meaning is lacking. Therefore, the translator resorted to a more general word to resolve this problem.

Translation by Paraphrase Using a Related Word

The translators use this strategy when the concept of the source item is rendered in the target text but in a paraphrased form. The Paraphrasing process is done by choosing a word related in meaning to the source item to be used in the target text. That means replacing the word from the source text with a TT, explanatory phrase, as El-Nashar (2016) called it. According to Baker (2011), the following example clarifies the current case:

On the other hand, he had a big blue runner and a yellow jack that had been used before. P.11

أما الخيطان الأخران فكان قد علق بهما سمكة ضخمة زرقاء من النوع المعروف بالعداء، وأخرى صفراء من النوع المعروف بسمك الكراكي وكان قد استعملهما من قبل. ص. 31

In this example, the English words "a big blue runner" and "a yellow jack", are paraphrased in translation into "سمكة ضخمة زرقاء من النوع المعروف بسمك الكراكي" translator used Arabic words that are related in meaning to the meaning conveyed by the source words to clarify the meaning for the Arabic reader.

The phrases "blue runner" and "yellow jack", are fishing terms. They denote replicas used by fishermen. The translator understood the difficulty of conveying the meaning of these terms. Therefore, he resorted to paraphrasing these meanings by using related terms. He literally used "عداء" - the literal meaning of "runner" - and added the word "المعروف", which denotes "well-known" or "called". The translator was aware of the puzzlement caused by these two terms and the difficulty of comprehending them. He rendered two hypernyms, namely "صفراء" for "yellow jack" and "زرقاء" for "blue runner", which may lead to a slight change in the source text (ST).

Translation by Paraphrase Using an Unrelated Word

This strategy is applied when the equivalent of the source word does not reflect a great significant impact in the target text. It suggests that the source word of the ST might be rendered into many target words in the TT to achieve the required impact on the target reader. However, such strategy is not preferred by Baker to be applied frequently. The current example is a case in point:

Others, of the older fishermen looked at him and were sad. P.6

أما الصيادون الشيوخ فنظروا إليه وقد عصر الحزن قلوبهم. ص9

This example shows how the word 'sad' was translated into Arabic as 'عصر الحزن قلوبهم' using additional words that explained the degree of sadness that could be understood from the English text. The translator did not translate 'sad' into 'حزين'. On the contrary, he used the word 'عصر الحزن قلوبهم'. This example is a case of the mentioned strategy applied to make the Arabic text familiar to its reader by showing the valuable expressions of the Arabic language. In this example, the old man was considered an unlucky man.

Translation by Omission

When using this strategy, the translator replaces a cultural source item with no corresponding culture target item. This can be applied in cases where the cultural source item is not important, and there is no harm in deleting it. Dickens (2012) considered the omission strategy as a domesticating procedure. The current strategy is clear in the following example:

What is a bone spur? he asked himself. Un espuela de hueso. We do not have them. (25)

وسأل نفسه: ولكن ما بروز العظام؟ نحن لم نصب به. 69

This strategy was rarely used by the translator in the current study. There were few examples regarding applying omission strategies in Ba'labki's translation. His translation is characterized by applying formal equivalence. So, it can be considered as literal translation. In this example, extracted from Ba'labki's translation, there was a Spanish expression. The translator deletes this expression and make no equivalent in the translation.

Conclusion

The researchers investigated the effect of applying Baker's (2011) translation strategies in translating the source text into the target text. The analysis demonstrates the benefits of these strategies, which are crucial for achieving a comprehensible target text. The findings highlight that the translator employed eight strategies to address lexical and syntactic challenges posed by the target language system. This emphasizes the importance of these strategies in novel translations and their role in facilitating effective communication with the target audience.

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مقالة بحثية

استراتيجيات الترجمة في الترجمة من الإنجليزية إلى العربية: دراسة حالة لرواية الشيخ والبحر

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المُلخَص

تتناول هذه الدراسة تطبيق استراتيجيات الترجمة التي وضعتها بيكر (2011) في الترجمة الإنجليزية-العربية لرواية أرست هيمينغواي "الشيخ والبحر". وقد اعتمدت الدراسة على ترجمة بعلبكي (1992) لرواية هيمينغواي "الشيخ والبحر" من خلال اعتماد منهجية نوعية، تحلل الدراسة مقاطع مختارة من النص الأصلي وترجمتها العربية للتحقق من كيفية استخدام استراتيجيات ترجمة محددة لنقل المعنى بدقة وفعالية. يتم إجراء التحليل على مستوى الجمل والفقرات، مما يسمح بإجراء مقارنة مفصلة بين النص الأصلي والنص المترجم. تركز الدراسة على ثمان استراتيجيات اقترحتها بيكر: الترجمة بكلمة أكثر عمومية، الترجمة بكلمة أقل تعبيراً أو محايدة، الاستبدال الثقافي، الكلمة المستعارة مع الشرح، إعادة الصياغة باستخدام كلمات ذات صلة، إعادة الصياغة باستخدام كلمات غير ذات صلة، الحذف، والتوضيح. تكشف النتائج أن هذه الاستراتيجيات تلعب دوراً حاسماً في معالجة التحديات المعجمية والثقافية والأسلوبية التي تواجه الترجمة الأدبية. تظهر اختيارات المترجم توازناً بين الحفاظ على المعنى الأصلي وتكييفه ليناسب التوقعات اللغوية والثقافية للقراء العرب. بشكل عام، تسلط الدراسة الضوء على فعالية استراتيجيات بيكر في تعزيز الوضوح وسهولة القراءة والتأثير المتواصل في ترجمة الروايات، مؤكدة على أهميتها في الترجمة الأدبية من الإنجليزية إلى العربية.

الكلمات المفتاحية: استراتيجيات الترجمة؛ الترجمة الأدبية؛ استراتيجيات بيكر؛ الشيخ والبحر؛ الاستبدال الثقافي.

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