



A Gender-Based Analysis of Grammatical Errors in Online English Language Instructors Performance

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Abstract

The translation of literature demands more than simple word substitution because it requires both cultural adaptation and interpretive efforts. This paper investigates the translation of Arabic cultural elements into English by applying Anthony Pym's (2007) binary model of direct (or unidirectional) and natural (or bidirectional) equivalence. The study evaluates translation approaches for cultural references as well as idioms and context-specific meanings by examining excerpts from the Algerian author Musteghanemi's novel Dhākirat Al-Jasad (The Bridges of Constantine), which is considered one of the best-selling novels in the Arab world since its release in 1993. Through a comparative textual analysis, cultural references with their translation are identified, focusing exclusively on specific textual excerpts with meaningful cultural content. The study categorizes translation choices based on Pym's theoretical framework to expose the translator's approach to maintaining source text faithfulness and reliability while making the target text more readable. Findings show how precisely unidirectional equivalence or bidirectional equivalence affects accuracy, together with the effectiveness of cultural translation procedures. The contributions to the field of translation studies include documenting multifaceted aspects of literary translation from Arabic into English, especially in texts of profound historical and cultural value.

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التكافؤ أحادي الاتجاه مقابل التكافؤ ثنائي الاتجاه في ترجمة ذاكرة الجسد (جسور قسنطينية) لمستغانمي الى الانجليزية: تحليل نصي مقارن

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المستخلص

تتطلب ترجمة الأدب أكثر من مجرد استبدال الكلمات، إذ تستلزم تكيفا ثقافيا وجهدا تأويليا لفهم ونقل المعاني بعمق. تبحث هذه الورقة في ترجمة العناصر الثقافية العربية إلى اللغة الإنجليزية من خلال تطبيق نموذج Anthony Pym (2007) حول التكافؤ المباشر (أو أحادي الاتجاه) والتكافؤ الطبيعي (أو ثنائي الاتجاه). وتقيم الدراسة أساليب الترجمة الخاصة بالإشارات الثقافية والتعبير الاصطلاحي والمعاني

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المرتبطة بالسياق، من خلال تحليل مقتطفات من رواية الكاتبة الجزائرية أحلام مستغانمي "ذاكرة الجسد"، التي تُعد من أكثر الروايات مبيعا في العالم العربي منذ صدورها عام 1993. ومن خلال تحليل نصي مقارن، تم تحديد الإشارات الثقافية وترجماتها، مع التركيز الحصري على مقاطع نصية تحمل مضامين ثقافية ذات دلالة. وتصنّف الدراسة اختيارات الترجمة استنادا إلى إطار Pym النظري للكشف عن نهج المترجم في تحقيق الوفاء للنص المصدر، مع السعي لجعل النص الهدف أكثر سلاسة وقابلية للفهم. وتُظهر النتائج كيف يؤثر كل من التكافؤ أحادي الاتجاه والتكافؤ ثنائي الاتجاه على دقة الترجمة وفعالية نقل المضمون الثقافي. تتمثل اسهامات هذه الدراسة في مجال دراسات الترجمة في توثيق الجوانب المتعددة لترجمة الأدب من العربية إلى الإنجليزية، لاسيما في النصوص ذات القيمة التاريخية والثقافية المتأصلة.

الكلمات المفتاحية: التكافؤ الطبيعي، التكافؤ المباشر، التكافؤ أحادي الاتجاه، التكافؤ ثنائي الاتجاه، المعنى السياقي، التكيف الثقافي.

Introduction

Generally, translation can be considered an important subject within different fields, such as linguistics, literature, and philosophy. However, it is not science or art, but rather, it is a mix of both. Particularly, literary translation is a magical mixture of science, art, and talent. According to that, it can be somehow difficult because it brings together two different languages (Arabic and English), worlds, cultures, traditions and habits. This makes it a hard mission for an English translator, for example, to translate a literary work written in Arabic. The translator should consider the tradition, the aesthetic values, the style, and the cultural and social terms and expressions when he/she translates into the target language.

The translation process aims to build cultural bridges between various communities, enabling communication across linguistic boundaries. In this regard, literary translation faces many challenges, as it requires going beyond formal literal correspondence to preserve the cultural and historical context, as well as the social implications found in the original texts (Hasan, 2013; Al Ali & Al-Ali, 2020; Hmaidan, 2024).

Translation from Arabic into English requires significant effort, such as dealing with linguistic structures and cultural references, along with idiomatic expressions, which make it difficult to preserve the original meaning of the source text. The main challenge in translation is thus determining the degree of equivalence of the resulting text to the source text while maintaining easy understanding in the target language. Therefore, Pym's (2007) paradigm of unidirectional and bidirectional equivalence could provide a valuable framework for analyzing the strategies used in literary translation in this study.

This work addresses the translation challenges posed by cultural differences, using Algerian Mosteghanemi's *Dhākirat al-Jasad* (*The Bridges of Constantine*). The research examines whether Pym's equivalency, whether unidirectional or bidirectional, better preserves descriptions of culture. It studies English translation techniques for translating terminology, historical references, social customs, and norms. Through a comparative textual analysis, this study aims to shed light on the translator's decision-making processes and the implications of his choices for cross-cultural communication.

Literature Review

To cover the methodological background of the study, this literature review is divided into two main subsections. The first is dedicated to examining the translation of culture-specific items and the challenges of cultural authenticity, the issue of untranslatability, and the tension between the source and target cultural norms. In this subsection, most of the importance placed on cultural embeddedness in a work of literature requires more than literal transfer as an interpretive strategy. The second gives an overview of the different equivalence models that have been presented by important scholars, including Nida, Catford, Koller,

Newmark, and Pym. This is done with the purpose of contextualizing the study within the larger academic discourse on how meaning is maintained, adapted or bargained during the process of translation.

Culturally Translational Challenges

The main challenge in translation, specifically literary translation, lies in preserving cultural authenticity while ensuring that the literary content remains comprehensible to readers with different linguistic backgrounds. Nida (1964) states that dynamic equivalence, which creates similar reader effects between the translation and the source text, is a vital requirement for successful cultural transfer. According to Bassnett (2013), translation goes beyond the mere conversion of words; it requires interpreting the cultural context between nations. Venuti (1995) explains that literary translators require a strong knowledge of linguistic elements and cultural details, as they shape the reader's perception of a foreign work and build cross-cultural connections.

The background of several Arabic novels can be traced back to colonial events and political events alongside identity formation despite Western readers being unfamiliar with these topics (Said 2003). The mistaken understanding or inefficient adaptation of essential details in these elements leads to modifications that change the intended meaning of the author. Baker (2018) describes how translators between Arabic and English need to determine if they will preserve the original cultural elements through foreignization or domesticate the text for better understanding by the target readers. The translation of Arabic literature into English involves more than language adaptation because it constitutes a dual cultural and ideological undertaking. Translators carry out cultural and linguistic mediation between two systems by maintaining authentic content with ease of comprehension for worldwide readers (Sultan & Al-Ali, 2024).

Literary translation between Arabic and English requires specific solutions for language disparities and cultural differences, as well as style considerations. As a Semitic language, Arabic shows major structural dissimilarities to English regarding syntax, together with morphology and rhetorical construction (Baker, 2018). The connection between Arabic literature and historical contexts, as well as religious elements and sociopolitical factors, remains difficult to translate into English language equivalents. The translation of literature from Arabic to English requires more than linguistic skills since it involves active cultural interpretation (Ghazala, 2012). The main translation challenge stems from transforming expressions that involve cultural terminology, including idioms and proverbs, together with religious content. The translation of numerous Islamic phrases as well as Arabic proverbs remains challenging because their original meanings possess complex historical depth beyond what can be conveyed to readers who are not Arabic speakers (Almanna, 2016). To resolve such decisions, translators choose between preserving original wording as Direct Equivalence and implementing Natural Equivalence through culturally appropriate language adaptation (Pym, 2007).

The translation barrier stems from variations in artistic formalism maintained between Arabic and English literature. Most Arabic literary works feature excessive poetic language together with elaborate metaphors and complex rhetorical embellishments when translated into English (Elimam, 2019). A major difference between Arabic storytelling and English literature reveals its non-linear structure and abundant digressive approach, while English storytelling uses a linear structure with purposeful narrative flow (Venuti, 1995). The striking difference in writing styles requires translators to determine appropriate ways

that uphold the original text content while achieving readability in the target language. All Arabic texts need specific consideration regarding their sociopolitical elements along with historical components.

Equivalence in Translation

The concept of equivalence has been a foundational issue in translation studies, with scholars proposing different approaches to define and categorise it. The notion of 'equivalence', according to the large amount of existing literature, is referred to in multiple ways by translation theorists depending on their respective understanding of the controversial term in focus. According to Pym " the term roughly assumes that, on some level, a source text and a translation can share the same value ("equi-valence" means "equal value"), and that this assumes sameness is what distinguishes translations from all other kinds of equivalence." (2010:7). Eugene Nida (1964) introduced two key types of equivalence: formal equivalence and dynamic equivalence. Formal equivalence focuses on a word-for-word translation, preserving the structure and meaning of the source text, while dynamic equivalence prioritizes sense-for-sense translation, ensuring that the translated text evokes the same response in the target audience as it does in the source audience. Nida's approach was particularly influential in biblical translation, where conveying meaning in an accessible and culturally appropriate manner was essential. His dynamic equivalence concept later influenced discussions on adaptation and naturalization in translation.

Pym (2007) examines translators' decisions that combine unidirectional and bidirectional equivalence, discussing their commitment to the source text's content versus the target language's readability. Accordingly, linguistic challenges are inevitable as translators move from Arabic to English texts due to the dominance of historical, religious, social, and political backgrounds inherited in the original Arabic works. Baker (2018) states that translation serves as a dual mechanism for preserving cultural roots while reshaping their interpretation, which determines readers' experience of diverse literary traditions worldwide.

The linguistic perspective on equivalence was developed by J.C. Catford (1965), who created two essential categories of formal correspondence and textual equivalence. The linguistic structure of any two texts requires formal correspondence, while textual equivalence exists when translators pick target-language expressions to accurately convey the source text's meaning. While Nida's approach focused on prioritizing reader response, Catford's approach focused on linguistic categories, particularly phonology, morphology, and syntax, highlighting the challenges of translation between the two dissimilar languages, Arabic and English. Criticism of his theory stemmed, in this regard, from its strict linguistic foundation, which ignored cultural influences in translation contexts. Werner Koller (1979) established five categories of equivalence, namely denotative, connotative, text-normative, pragmatic, and formal equivalence. The model established by Koller expanded the classification system by distinguishing between linguistic and cultural along with contextual translation aspects.

Peter Newmark (1988) proposed two types of equivalence in translation: semantic equivalence and communicative equivalence. Semantic equivalence emphasizes an exact translation of text meaning by keeping structural integrity and stylistic elements, just as Nida did with formal equivalence. Communicative equivalence places the effectiveness of target language messages first since it strives for natural target language delivery that enables easy audience comprehension, like Nida's dynamic equivalence approach. Semantic equivalence works better with literary and philosophical texts, but practical or instructional texts benefit from communicative equivalence. Lawrence Venuti (1995) developed an ideological framework

which included the translation concepts of foreignization and domestication. According to his theory, translation acts as an intervention which maintains the foreign traits of the source material (foreignization) or conforms it to the target language and cultural standards (domestication). Venuti's approaches address strong relations in translation by pointing out how dominant languages abolish cultural distinctions through translations of texts from minor or non-Western languages.

While earlier scholars approached equivalence from linguistic, functional, or ideological perspectives, Anthony Pym (2007) redefined equivalence by focusing on the process of translation rather than fixed categories. Unlike Nida's dynamic equivalence, which aimed at achieving a natural response in the target audience, Pym introduced the idea of Natural Equivalence, which is bidirectional and reversible, meaning that if a term is translated from Language A to Language B, it should be able to be translated back without significant loss of meaning. This aligns with Koller's denotative and formal equivalence, which emphasize maintaining referential accuracy. However, when no direct equivalent exists, Pym's Unidirectional Equivalence comes into play, aligning with Venuti's concept of domestication, where translation choices are adapted to suit the target audience. Pym's unidirectional equivalence selects the most suitable target-language expressions to replace formal linguistic structures, thus aligning with Catford's concept of textual equivalence. Pym's paradigm serves as an expanded framework of Venuti's foreignization and domestication because natural equivalence maintains semantic consistency like foreignization, yet directional equivalence typically needs editorial modifications like domestication. Pym extends previous translation models with a method that promotes flexibility and process-based translation practices, which prove valuable when cultural divergence exists, such as during Arabic-English literary translation (Tian, 2014; Maitland, 2016; Bazani, 2023).

Unidirectional and Bidirectional Equivalence

The concept of translation equivalence stands as the core focus in translation studies to explore meaning transfer mechanisms across languages. Pym (2007) established two distinct equivalence categories: Unidirectional Equivalence and Bidirectional Equivalence. Through his approach, Pym examines how equivalence direction affects translation decision-making for professionals. He establishes a method through which translators must process their decisions to effectively deliver content between different linguistic environments. The translator's position between unidirectional equivalence and bidirectional equivalence depends on contextual, cultural and linguistic factors. The concept of bidirectional equivalence applies to instances when pre-established equivalent expressions and terminology connect both source and target language contexts. This model of equivalence works better since translation proves simple when concepts and structures prove interconnected or simply compatible between languages. Unidirectional equivalence serves translation when no equivalent exists between source and target languages, and thus, the translator must generate natural-sounding texts for the target language that go in one direction: the target text. Effectively delivering the message becomes possible through adaptation and cultural modification as well as reformulation processes. Pym's framework establishes that translation requires more than direct word replacement since it demands translators to choose balanced approaches between original text fidelity and target language readability (Pym, 2010; Kudějová, 2013; Elnaili, 2014; Kolev, 2016; Kazakova & Algina, 2018).

Based on the aforementioned literature, we can summarize Pym's equivalence categories as follows:

1. Direct Equivalence (Irreversible, Unidirectional)

When an SL term has no exact match to a TL term, the translator could find a corresponding match that can go only one way, i.e., one specific direction. The reverse translation from the target language to the source language might not deliver equivalent meaning or functional value.

2. Natural Equivalence (Reversible, Bidirectional)

A pattern of natural equivalence happens when particular words or phrases in one language correspond directly to terms across another language, so both directions yield appropriate translations. The translation between source and target languages creates no change, i.e., it can be translated back and forth without altering its meaning. Below are examples of both types:

SL	TT	Equivalence Type	Possibility of Reversible or Unidirectional
Break a leg	حظا موقفا	Unidirectional	No
Science is a double-edged sword	العلم سلاح ذو حدين	Bidirectional	Yes
تتحول من ورق الى ايام	It turns from paper into glory	Unidirectional	No
كانت الجدران مغطاة بالغبار	The walls were covered in dust	Bidirectional	Yes

1. The Author, Novel, and Translations

Some basic information about the Arabic novel, its English translation, and the author can be shed light on as follows:

Title of the novel in Arabic (Original version)	ذاكرة الجسد (<i>Dhākirat Al-Jasad</i>)
Author's Name	Ahlem Mosteghanemi
Place of Publication	Beirut
Publisher	Dar Al-Adaab
Publication year	2000 (5 th edition) (originally published in 1993)

Title of the novel in English (Translated Version)	<i>The Bridges of Constantine</i>
Translator's Name	Raphael Cohen
Place of Publication	London
Publisher	Bloomsbury
Publication year	2013

Mosteghanemi's *Dhākirat Al-Jasad* was originally published in 1993 and is considered the best-seller novel in the Arab world, with more than 3 million copies sold through 2017. In addition, it was turned into a TV series with the same Arabic title. It also awarded several Prizes, like Naguib Mahfouz Medal for

Literature in 1998. This novel was also translated into French in 2003, and other languages like Italian, Chinese, and Kurdish. The critics see this novel as a great work full of romanticism, narrations, historical facts, and a mix of reality and literary imagination. *Dhākirat Al-Jasad* has three translated versions into English. The first translation was done by Baria Ahmar Sreih. This version was published by the American University in Cairo Press in 2000 and came with a title that gave the same meaning as the original *Memory in the Flesh*. It seems that this translation was flawed and, in one way or another, did a disservice to the original novel, even the writer was not satisfied with it as it did not reflect the literary sensitivity of the work (Baaqil, 2015). Here came the second revised version, done by Peter Clark in 2003. In 2013, Raphael Cohen translated this novel into English, but it came with a new title, which is *The Bridges of Constantine*. In this paper, *The Bridges of Constantine* will be investigated by focusing on Pym's binary of unidirectional and bidirectional equivalence (Tamimi, 2021; Alamri & Alamri, 2024; Douah & Boudjelal, 2024; Ajjoul & El Yousfi, 2025).

Raphael Cohen is originally from the UK and based in Cairo. He has a BA in Oriental Studies from Oxford University and an MA in Semitics from the University of Chicago. His translations of novels from Arabic to English include *So You May See* by Mona Prince (2011), *Status Emo* by Eslam Mosbah (2013), and *Butterfly Wings: An Egyptian Novel* by Mohamed Salmawy (2014). So, he is familiar with the structure, difficulties, cultural differences and style of Arabic literary work, especially Ahlem Musteghanemi's novels, since he translated one novel which is *The Art of Forgetting* (2011), before *The Bridges of Constantine* (2013), then translated *Chaos of the Senses* (2014). The new English version of *The Bridges of Constantine* was reviewed by *The Times* and the *Daily Mail* and received positive reviews through praising the efforts of Cohen. Peter Clark, one of the reviewers in *Banipal*, an online magazine of Modern Arab Literature, refers to Cohen's translation as "the whole production of the book is excellent". The title of the first and second translations reflects the psychological aspects of the novel; they give a natural equivalence to the original title *Memory in the Flesh*, while the title of the new translation *The Bridges of Constantine* indicates the unidirectionality, focusing on the importance and significance of the city of Constantine in which the events of the novel take place (Stampfl, 2010; Clark, 2014; Youssef, 2018; Tamimi, 2021).

Research Methodology

This study adopts a comparative textual analysis methodology to examine how equivalence is applied in the translation of Musteghanemi's *Dhākirat Al-Jasad* from Arabic to English. The research involves selecting key excerpts from the novel that contain culturally embedded expressions, idioms, metaphors, and religious references, which often present translation challenges. The original Arabic text will be systematically compared with its English translation to determine which kind of directionality the translator opted for. The analysis categorizes instances based on Pym's (2007) binary model and assesses the impact of translation choices on meaning retention, readability, and cultural representation. This qualitative approach allows for a deeper understanding of the translator's decision-making process, highlighting patterns in equivalence application and their effect on cross-cultural communication.

Natural equivalence, or bidirectionality, is very common in translation practice, as it constitutes the basic rule for transferring meaning between two languages, especially when there are stable and agreed-upon linguistic and lexical equivalents between the source and target languages. This type of translation relies on the presence of easily referential correspondences, making it reversible without distorting the meaning or deviating from the semantic structure of the original text. Therefore, many examples in translated texts,

especially in general or non-culturally or rhetorically laden areas, fall within this framework of bidirectional equivalence.

However, this research focuses on unidirectionality as it represents the greatest challenge in literary and cultural translation, where ready-made equivalents are not available, and the translator is forced to generate linguistic or stylistic alternatives that fit the new context without the possibility of retranslating back into the original language with the same meaning.

Translation Analysis

In the analysis section, the present study concentrates on investigating a number of examples of Ahlem Mosteghanemi's *Dhākirat al-Jasad* and their English translations by Raphael Cohen, in a way to assess the representation of Arabic cultural and stylistic specifics into English according to the equivalence framework suggested by Anthony Pym (2007). The selected examples, however, demonstrate how the translator relied on unidirectionality, i.e., direct equivalence, as this aspect is important in showing how the translator negotiated meaning accuracy and cultural comprehensibility of the text as per the demands of the receiving culture without sacrificing the message content. By labeling each example as an instance of unidirectionality, the discussion will illuminate the decision-making process which the translator had to make when facing the need to prioritize semantic fidelity and cultural intelligibility of the textual reconstruction process without the loss of the message essence. Particular care is taken over expressions of cultural, idiomatic or emotional coloring, where translation must often be interpretive, and cannot be based on literal correspondences. Through this comparison, the section shows how the need to preserve the integrity of the source text and to improve the understanding of the target reader is upheld or sacrificed in each instance.

The analysis includes presenting each excerpt in three consecutive patterns to enhance the clarity and accuracy of the comparison: First, the original Arabic text is included as it appears in the original novel, followed by Cohen's English translation of the same text, which represents the published literary translation. Next, a back translation is presented, with the aim of clarifying the literal meaning and structure of the original for the non-Arabic-speaking reader. This structure allows for a deeper analysis of Cohen's translation choices and the extent to which they deviate from or approach the original text, enabling the application of Anthony Pym's model of detecting unidirectional translation that may arise during literary translation.

According to Pym (2010:26), unidirectional equivalence deals with the relation where the creation of an equivalent through translating one way does not imply that the same equivalence will also be created when translating the other way. In Cohen's translation, *Bridges of Constantine*, the unidirectionality appears as follows:

Ahlem's: مرش لماء الزهر (p.8)

Cohen's: a phial of roses (p.2)

Back Translation: قارورة من الزهور

A "phial of roses" is a unidirectional equivalence because there is no bidirectional equivalence to this concept in English. In our culture, we use a "phial of roses" in different situations and occasions, whether for happy or sad events. Here, 'Phial' gives the sense that it is a container made of glass or metal. Phials are used in wedding parties to spread the fragrance water of roses everywhere, especially on the heads of the visitors as a habit. We still use it for special events.

Ahlem's: عليها ابريق، وفناجين، وسكرية (p.8)

Cohen's: a coffee pot, cups, a sugar bowl (p.2)

Back Translation: ابريق قهوة، أكواب، وعاء سكر

The English culture is not familiar with the term "فنجان", which is a special type of cup, small, with no handle, and only used to serve Arabic coffee. The translator translates this term as "cups", so, if translated back to Arabic, it would be "أكواب"; "cup" is not the same as "Finjan", which represents a unidirectional equivalent.

Ahlem's: وصحن للحلويات (p.8)

Cohen's: a plate of small cakes (p.2)

Back Translation: طبق من الكعك الصغير

The Arabic culture is known for the variety of desserts and sweets that are not found in English culture, or are not familiar with, such as Baklava, Kunafa, Basbosa, Borma, Saraya, etc. It is a tradition in our culture to serve coffee with desserts or sweets, not small cakes. The translator gives the general translation "small cakes", which is not precise in this context.

Ahlem's: "" تتحول من ورق الى ايام" (p. 8)

Cohen's: "turn them from papers into glory" (p.2)

Back Translation: تتحول من ورق الى مجد

In this context, with "ايام" being translated into "glory", the writer wants to convey the sense of giving life to the silent words that are written on pages to be alive as a victory or glory through being read by people.

Ahlem's: ينتقلون بين امرأتين دون كلفة (p.10)

Cohen's: moving untroubled between two mistresses (p.3)

Back translation: التنقل بين عشيقتين دون كلفة

The translator, in this example, reproduces in the receptor language the closest equivalent of the source language message. If he gives the natural meaning or bidirectional equivalence, which is 'women', it will not give the same effect that the readership of the source language experienced.

Bidirectional equivalence, as Pym (2010:7) states, is the relation of "equal value" between a source text segment and a target text segment. In other words, bidirectional equivalence is presumed to exist between

the two languages or cultures before the act of translating. So, translating “مآذن” into “minarets” is an example of natural equivalence, bidirectionality:

Ahlem's: مع صوت المآذن نفسه (p.11)

Cohen's: along with the familiar call from the minarets. (p.4)

Back Translation: جنباً إلى جنب مع النداء المؤلف من المآذن

Minaret is a bidirectional equivalent of ‘منذنة’. It is a tall, thin tower in a mosque from which Muslims are called to prayer. It is worth mentioning that ‘minaret’ itself is a loan word from Arabic *manara*.

Ahlem's: هل التغزل بالفواكه ظاهرة عربية؟ (p 11)

Cohen's: is the singing of love songs to a fruit a peculiarly Arab thing? (p.4)

Back translation: هل غناء أغاني الحب للفاكهة أمر عربي خاص؟

The part that precedes this sentence refers to a song used in flirting apples ‘apple, apple, tell me do/why people fancy you’, Cohen did not want to cut the stream of ideas about the next part that is relevant to the song itself. He tries to connect the two ideas: the song and singing love songs instead of the song and flirting, because the term ‘flirting’ is used in English with human beings only, not fruits or animals. He also modulates ‘phenomenon’ into ‘a peculiar thing’; otherwise, the English readership would think that this is a big issue because the word 'phenomenon' always refers to an extraordinary occurrence or circumstance.

Cohen used unidirectionality in translating ‘تفاح’ into ‘forbidden fruit’:

Ahlem's: أكثر من طريقة عصرية لأكل التفاح (p.12)

Cohen's: more than one –contemporary– way to taste forbidden fruit. (p.4)

Back translation: أكثر من طريقة عصرية لتذوق الفاكهة المحرمة.

According to Pym, unidirectionality is used whenever the context referred to in the original text does not exist in the culture of the target text, so it needs some re-creation. Cohen tries to employ this procedure to achieve an equivalence of situations whenever there is a cultural mismatch. Cohen conveys exactly what the writer means in this context because giving the direct translation ‘apple’ would weaken the meaning.

Ahlem's: كان كل واحد منهم شهيدا (p.26)

Cohen's: Each one of them was a shahid (p.14)

Back translation: وكان كل واحد منهم شهيدا

Why did Cohen use unidirectionality instead of bidirectionality to translate it as "shahid" and not "martyr," which is the bidirectional equivalent? The issue concerns the emphasis on the manifestation of the other culture. Here, the reader must be transferred to the writer, which is his primary choice in foreignizing the culture. It is well known that foreignization can never be expressed in the terms of the recipient, but only in terms of the target language readers, and is therefore always constant (Venuti, 1995: 20). So, the translator's task is to convey the cultural norms of the source language, preserving their meaning, or even their strangeness, relative to the target language.

Ahlem's: حيناً بسيدي المبروك (p.27)

Cohen's: our neighborhood in SidiMabrook (p.15)

And

Ahlem's: كان (سى طاهر) يعرف متى يبتسم (p.29)

Cohen's: SiTaher knew when to smile (p. 17)

Cohen follows the unidirectionality procedure to give the possible equivalence of the examples above. Instead of using "Mr." for "سي," the author chose to write "Si Taher," which keeps this particular cultural style. Though the language of the sentence is clear, the translator prefers to transliterate "Si" from the Arabic original, underlining the foreign character of the title. While this convention strengthens the sense of the character being real, those unfamiliar with the term tend not to recognize what 'Sidi' means, making it easy to recognize only one way.

Ahlem's: تسلم هذا المبلغ الى (اما) (p.36)

Cohen's: give the money to Amma (p.22)

The translation also demonstrates the idea of unidirectionality. The word "أما" means Mom or mother. Even though the action is easily understood by the reader, using أما without adding context is a point where English readers may find the text culturally unknown. For this reason, the translator keeps the personal feeling and cultural background, but can lose some clarity, showing that the equivalence can only go in one direction. English language has no natural equivalent for the terms 'Si', 'Sidi', and 'Amma'. Those terms are used in Algeria as titles to persons like Mr. and Mrs. to show respect, while 'Amma' refers to mother or mom. Cohen follows unidirectionality to give the possible equivalence of the examples above.

Ahlem's: من يناقش نيرون يوم احرق روما حبا لها، وعشقا لشهوة اللهب (p. 19)

Cohen's: Did they argue with Nero the day he burned Rome out of pyromaniac love for her? (p.33)

Back Translation: هل تجادلوا مع نيرون في اليوم الذي أحرق فيه روما بسبب حبه الموهوس بإشعال الحرائق لها؟

Considering Pym's (2007) binary, Cohen's translation relies on unidirectional equivalence, whereby the translator reshapes the meaning in a way that suits English culture and style without adhering literally to the original text. The phrase "pyromaniac love for her" is a culturally and emotionally charged paraphrase that captures the essence of the Arabic text, but it cannot be accurately reversed into Arabic without losing the intended rhetorical shift. The use of "Did they argue with Nero" instead of "من يناقش نيرون" reconstructs the image discursively closer to the style of contemporary English discourse, reinforcing the unidirectionality of the translation, where the equivalence did not exist beforehand but was generated contextually.

Ahlem's: وانت، اما كنتي مثله، امرأة تحترف العشق والحرائق بالتساوي؟ (p. 19)

Cohen's: Weren't you just like him, as skilled in arson as in love? (p.33)

Back Translation: ألم تكوني مثله تماما، ماهرة في الحرق العمد كما في الحب؟

According to Pym's framework, Cohen's translation perfectly shows Unidirectional Equivalence. The translator tries to transfer the emotional and poetic parts of Arabic to English in a meaningful way instead of simply copying English equivalents. There is a lovely lyrical contrast between the two words "العشق"

and “الحرائق” in Arabic, which introduces rich emotional and poetic meanings common in Arabic literature. Cohen manages to portray the unusual mix of emotions, creating it in English with the help of revised sentence structure and poetic pictures. Although it remains true to the original meaning, the outcome cannot be reversed without losing details, affirming its unidirectional equivalence.

Ahlem's: أقول وأنا اضع عليه حزمة منا لأوراق التي سودتها في لحظة هذيان (p.21)

Cohen's: I put a pile of drafts written at moments of delirium (p.35)

Back Translation: أضع كومة من المسودات المكتوبة في لحظات الهذيان

In Cohen's translation, unidirectional equivalence is shown. The expression “سودتها في لحظة هذيان” is translated back into plain English, de-metaphorized (from “blackened” pages). While the precise meaning is secured, the rendering is not a reversal, certainly in making it a context-dependent, one-way translation.

Ahlem's: (p.29) فالذاكرة في مناسبات كهذه لا تأتي بالتقسيط، وإنما تهجم عليك شللاً يجرفك الى حيث لا تدري من المنحدرات

Cohen's: On such occasions, memory doesn't come in instalments, but overwhelms me in torrents, sending me tumbling down unknown slopes (p.43)

Back Translation: في مثل هذه المناسبات لا تأتي الذاكرة على دفعات، بل تغمرني بالسيول، فتجعلني أسقط على منحدرات مجهولة

The translation by Cohen is an example of unidirectionality. While the image of memory as a storm is preserved, the change from “عليك” to “me” and a different set of images indicate an attempt to adapt the narrative to English. While the emotions are kept, the overall construction and outlook are changed so that they cannot be translated back directly, showing the one-way nature of the relationship between languages.

Ahlem's: (p. 45) مات (سي طاهر) طاهراً على عتبات الاستقلال

Cohen's: Si Taher died taher at the threshold of independence Immaculate (p. 59)

Back Translation: مات سي طاهر على عتبة الاستقلال طاهراً

Cohen's rendering is a good example of unidirectionality, especially in the way he handles the puns and repetition seen in the original Arabic material. The word "طاهر" includes the proper name "Taher" and at the same time indicates moral purity as an adjective "pure". In English, retaining the repeated pronunciation of the line requires appending “Immaculate” to make sure readers of other cultures get the meaning. It conserves the sense of the text, but it does so by making unalterable changes, which coincide with unidirectional translation.

Ahlem's: (p. 53) تلك ((الخلاخل)) التي لم يكن يخلو منها في الماضي جهاز عروس

Cohen's: One of those heavy bands that in the past were always part of a bride's trousseau (p. 67)

Back Translation: واحدة من تلك الاساور الثقيلة التي كانت في الماضي دائماً جزء من جهاز العروس

Cohen's translation is an example of unidirectionality. The more precise Arabic "الخلاخل" for decorative ankle bracelets is instead described as "heavy bands" in English, which offers a rough translation of its meaning. This way, the translation values clarity over accurate representation of each culture, and once the main text is changed, its meaning cannot often be restored fully in the reverse translation.

Ahlem's: (p. 66) تكاد ترتعش ذراعي الوحيدة وهي تقاوم رغبة جامحة لاحتضانك، وسؤالك بلهجة قسنطينية افتقدتها: واشك..؟

Cohen's: *My one arm was almost shaking in an effort to resist the unruly desire to embrace you and ask in the Constantine accent that I so missed, 'Washik? How are you? (p. 80)*

Back Translation: تكاد ذراعي الوحيدة ترتجف في محاولة لمقاومة الرغبة الجامحة في احتضانك والسؤال بلهجة قسنطينية التي افتقدتها كثيرا: "واشك" كيف حالك؟

The translation by Cohen effectively shows unidirectionality. The text continues to include the cultural reference "Washik?" The original form is preserved to keep its local flavour, with the extra note "How are you?" to make understanding better. This shows that adapting is common for good unidirectional equivalence: the meaning and mood of the phrase are kept the same in English; however, its exact register and style aren't always possible to return to the original form.

Ahlem's: (p. 85) كم يلزمني اذن لتغفر لي؟

Cohen's: How much do I owe to be excused? (p. 99)

Back Translation: بكم انا مدينة لك لتعذرنى؟

Cohen translates this using unidirectional equivalence. The sentence in Arabic speaks directly about seeking forgiveness, with an almost spiritual feeling, yet the English version becomes more about debts. Even though the primary meaning of asking for forgiveness is unaffected, the cultural and rhetorical style is revised, so the translation can only go one way and will not sound quite the same in the original language.

Ahlem's: (p. 85) عندك كأس ماء.. يعيشك؟

Cohen's: Do you have any water, please? (p. 99)

Back Translation: هل لديك ماء من فضلك؟

Cohen's translation reflects unidirectionality by greatly simplifying the unique cultural and idiomatic aspects of the original. This Algerian expression, "يعيشك" (which means may you live or bless you), carries a tone of warmth and social politeness deeply embedded in local speech. Instead of keeping the symbolic meaning, the translator picks "please" to make the phrase understandable to English speakers. The selection means that the translation can be read by everyone, though it isn't possible to translate similar sentences back to the original text.

Ahlem's: (p. 105) ولكن الكتابة شيء اخر لم يمن بها أحد علي

Cohen's: But writing is something else. Nobody gave me that (p. 119)

Back Translation: لكن الكتابة شيء آخر. لم يمنحني أحد ذلك

Giving in Arabic, as implied by “يَمَنّ”, involves doing it with pride, condescension, or a sense of superiority, which adds feelings of resistance and worth to the original meaning. The Arabic language communicates a feeling of independence and rejects being treated with patronizing favour. If the English statement “Nobody gave me that” is used, it does not convey the emotions and weight that the Arabic word holds. Although the sentence corresponds with Bidirectional Equivalence, it exhibits more characteristics of unidirectional equivalence due to the unique features of the original that can’t be fully translated. To keep all the richness of the Arabic, the Bible had to be translated with interpretations or expansions.

Based on the aforementioned examples, the translation decisions made by Cohen can be regarded as a strategic compromise between the considerations of maintaining the cultural authenticity of the novel and the need to make the novel accessible to English-speaking audiences. Employing unidirectional equivalence in idiomatic and metaphorical expressions shows the difficulties of cultural transference. These results highlight how the framework offered by Pym can serve as a helpful tool when considering the decision-making process when translating literature, especially when the texts in question are those that aim at connecting two or more linguistically and/or culturally distant publics.

Conclusion

This paper investigated the application of bidirectional equivalence and unidirectional equivalence as described by Pym (2007) in the translation of Musteghanemi's *Dhākirat al-Jasad (The Bridges of Constantine)* from Arabic into the English language. The discussion of the excerpts has shown that bidirectional equivalence is applied when there is already an existing linguistic counterpart between the two languages, making translation reversible. Unidirectional equivalence, conversely, is used when cultural and linguistic dissimilarities demand that the translator establish an equivalent that functions in a single direction only, where readability and cultural adaptation are of foremost importance. However, there are some cases in which the translator opted for unidirectionality, although there is an existing equivalent/bidirectionality in the target language (like *Taher* and *Shahid* instead of *Pure* and *Martyr*). This means that the translator may give priority to unidirectional over bidirectional equivalence for one reason or another. The results point to the problems encountered when rendering idioms, religious terms, and cult-specific items, in which the translator needs to balance between remaining faithful to the original and making the text usable to the target reader. This paper demonstrates that literary translation cannot be reduced to a simple linguistic transfer; rather, it is a process of cultural negotiation, where translators are expected to strike a balance between preserving the foreignness of the original text and ensuring its familiarity with the target audience. Through Pym's framework, this research highlights the role of translation choices in preserving meaning, stylistic accuracy, and cultural representation. Future studies could compare and contrast different translations of the same text or examine the role of these equivalence strategies in other literary genres besides literary texts. Finally, this study reaffirms the role of theoretical frameworks in conceptualizing translation as a multifaceted, context-specific process that defines intercultural communication

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