

Cultural Problems in Literary Translation from English into Arabic

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Abstract Translation is a process of cultural transfer that involves more than simple search for a semantic equivalent. Sapir (Culture, language and personality. University of California Press, Los Angeles, 1956) states that “no two languages are ever sufficiently similar to be considered as representing the same social reality. The worlds in which different societies live are distinct worlds, not merely the same world with different labels attached” (p. 69). Translators, therefore, have to take the sociolinguistic aspects of language such as politeness, terms of address as well as aspects related to discourse into consideration being aware of how these concepts are manifested in each culture. Since literature is usually viewed as a cultural portrait of nations and communities, it poses a great challenge to the translator who is sometimes torn between the aesthetics and cultural component of the source text and the culture of the target text reader. The present study investigates the cultural problems involved in literary translation from English into Arabic. It analyzes university students’ translations of English literary texts in an attempt to identify the basic problems Jordanian translation students encounter, strategies and processes students follow to account for these problems. The study revealed that poetry was the most difficult genre for students who relied basically on paraphrase as a translation strategy. Different strategies were employed in translating narrative texts such as literal translation, substitution, omission and free translation.

Keywords Literary translation · Translation strategies · Cultural differences

1 Introduction

Translators do not simply translate words since translation is mediation between two cultures not only two languages. The good translator is that one who can help the target text reader understand the source text culture. Venuti (1995) states that

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A translated text, whether prose or poetry, fiction or nonfiction, is judged acceptable by most publishers, reviewers and readers when it reads fluently, when the absence of any linguistics or stylistic peculiarities makes it seem transparent, giving the appearance that it reflects the foreign writer's personality or intention or the essential meaning of the foreign text. (p. 1)

This view of translation as a process of cultural transfer is adopted by Ashcroft, Griffins, and Tiffin (1995), Gentzler (2001), Venuti (2000). Such a process demands sufficient knowledge of both the source and the target cultures. Nida (2001) states that “[f] or truly successful translation, biculturalism is even more important than bilingualism” (p. 82). Literature is considered as manifestation of nations' cultures, beliefs and values. It is the vehicle via which human experience is encapsulated. Literary translation provides a means via which different cultures are introduced to each other. It is defined as “a kind of aesthetically-oriented mediated bilingual communication, which aims at producing a target text intended to communicate its own form, correspondent with the source text, and accordant with contemporary literary and translational norms of the receptor culture” (Burkhanov, 2003, p. 139). For Wechsler (1998) it is as an art:

What makes it so odd an art is that physically a translator does exactly the same thing as a writer. The translator's problem is that he is a performer without a stage, a performer who, when all his work is done, has something that looks just like the original, just like a play or a song or a composition, nothing but ink on a page. (p. 4)

Goethe called literary translation “one of the most important and dignified enterprises in the general commerce of the world” (cited in Lefevere, 1992, p. 25).

According to Newmark (2004), literary translation is different from non-literary translation in being allegorical and aesthetic while the other is factual and traditionally functional. Each has different cultural backgrounds, occasionally referred to as ‘the two cultures’, which are detrimentally opposed to each other. Moreover, Newmark (2004) states that while “literary [translation] is viewed as traditional, old-fashioned, academic, ivory-tower, out of touch, the non-literary is philistine, market-led, coal in the bath [and] uncivilized” (p. 11).

In *The Task of the Translator*, Benjamin (cited in Venuti, 2000) draws attention to the existence of cultural differences among languages referring to them as ‘symbolizations’ that are not context free maintaining that “though concealed and fragmentary, it [something that cannot be communicated] is an active force in life as the symbolized thing itself, whereas it inhabits linguistic creations only in symbolized form” (pp. 21–22).

2 Cultural Issues in Literary Translation

The translators encounter the complexities of differences between cultures; the subject of ‘cultural difference’ is very problematic and Benjamin (1968) has described it as “the irresolution, or liminality, of ‘translation’, the element of

resistance in the process of transformation, that element in a translation which does not lend itself to translation” (p. 75). Ginter (2002) investigated cultural problems in literary translation in selected English and Polish materials and their Russian, Polish and English translations. Her study revealed that all translated texts are hybrids since each of them can be viewed as a transplant of the source text into an alien, target culture environment. Al-Hasnawi (2007) investigated the ‘untranslatability’ of some Arabic metaphors into English. His study revealed that most metaphors are shaped by the socio-cultural beliefs and attitudes of a specific culture. ‘Cognitive equivalence’ was suggested as the best way to translate metaphors.

Several terms were coined to refer to culture bound terms. Baker (1992) used the term ‘culture-specific’ concepts while Newmark (1988a) used the term ‘cultural words’. The term ‘realia’ was used by Robinson (1997) and Schäffner and Wiesmann (2001). Fernández-Guerra (2012) tackled translation problems students faced when translating literary texts from English into Spanish and vice versa. The study focused on the analysis of culture bound terms. It revealed that students’ strategies were borrowings, descriptions and adaptations. Al-Masri (2009) investigated cultural inequivalences in the translation of Arabic literary texts basing her study on a corpus based on a collection of Arabic short stories written by Youssef Idris. Figurative language (metaphors, idiomatic expressions, proverbs) in two texts: Arabic (the source text) and English (the target text) were analyzed. The study revealed that cultural bound terms were not rendered successfully.

Al-Safi (1994) states that literary translation should be dynamic translation that has the following features:

1. Be dynamic rather than static;
2. Be creative and aesthetically informative/communicative;
3. Comply with the target linguistic system;
4. Be appropriate, i.e. fit the context of the message;
5. Be natural and free from translations;
6. Be acceptable to the target audience or literary readership and;
7. Aspire to occupy a position in target literature as any other original works of art.

Translated contexts could be considered as hybrid texts, which are the outcomes of the translation process. They entail

features that somehow seem out of place/strange/unusual for the receiving culture, i.e. the target culture. These features, however, are not the result of a lack of translational competence or examples of ‘translations’, but they are evidence of conscious and deliberate decisions by the translator. Although the text is not yet fully established in the target culture (because it does not conform to established norms and conventions), a hybrid text is accepted in its target culture because it fulfills its intended purpose in the communicative situation (at least for a certain time). (Schäffner & Adab, 1997, p. 325)

3 Strategies of Translating Literary Texts

Literary texts include three basic genres: poetry, fiction and drama. They are imaginative, thus they can have several interpretations that might vary from a reader to another. Different translation strategies have been proposed to account for the aesthetics of literary texts. Table 1 provides an overview of these strategies.

Venuti (cited in Schäffner & Kelly-Holmes, 1995, p. 4) proposes two strategies for translating literary texts, namely foreignizing and domesticating. While domestication aims at making foreign culture familiar to the reader in the target culture, foreignization, on the other hand, focuses on the foreign culture and (cultural and linguistic) differences. Venuti (1995) defines domestication as “an ethnocentric reduction of the foreign text to target-language cultural values, bringing the author back home, while foreignization is defined as an ethnodeviant pressure on those (cultural) values to register the linguistic and cultural difference of the foreign text, sending the reader abroad” (p. 20). According to Venuti (1995), domestication involves translating in a way that minimizes the foreignness of the translated text. He believed that a translator should leave the reader in peace, as much as possible, and he should move the author toward him.

Graedler (2010) proposed four translation strategies: (i) making up a new word, (ii) explaining the meaning of the source language (SL) expression in lieu of translating it, (iii) preserving the SL term intact, and (iv) replacing it using any term in the target language (TL) that has the same ‘relevance’. Newmark (1981) distinguishes between two types of translation, “communicative translation addresses

Table 1 Translation strategies

Author/s	Classification	Distinction/Focus
Venuti (cited in Schäffner & Kelly-Holmes, 1995)	Foreignizing	Foreign culture
	Domesticating	Target culture
Graedler (2010)	Four strategies	
Newmark (1988b)	Communicative translation	Target text reader
	Semantic translation	Preserves the source text culture
Hervey & Higgins (1992)	Exoticism	Adaptation of cultural features
	Cultural transplantation	Naturalization of foreign culture
Baker (1992)	Seven strategies	
Weston (1991)	Functional equivalence	Source culture
	Formal equivalence or linguistic equivalence	‘Word-for-word’ translation
	Transcription or borrowing	Transliterating the original term
	Descriptive or self-explanatory translation	Uses generic terms

itself solely to the second reader, who does not anticipate difficulties or obscurities, and would expect a generous transfer of foreign elements into his own culture as well as his language where necessary”; while semantic translation “remains within the original culture and assists the reader only in its connotations if they constitute the essential human message of the text” (p. 39).

Hervey and Higgins (1992) propose five types of cultural transposition: calque, communicative translation, cultural borrowing, cultural transplantation, and exoticism. According to them, cultural transposition involves “the various degrees of departure from literal translation that one may resort to in the process of transferring the contents of a ST into the context of a target culture” (p. 28). They distinguish between *exoticism* (a minimal adaptation of linguistic and cultural features) and *cultural transplantation* (a complete ‘naturalisation’ of the foreign culture). The term *cultural transposition* is used for the main types and degrees of departure from literal translation that one may resort to in the process of transferring the content of a source text (ST) from one culture to another: “Any degree of cultural transposition involves the choice of features indigenous to the TL and the target culture in preference to features with their roots in the source culture” (ibid., p. 33).

Baker (1992, pp. 21–42) provides ten types of non-equivalence and eight kinds of translation strategies (or methods) commonly adopted by professional translators. The eight kinds of strategies are (1) translation by a more general word; (2) translation by a more neutral/less expressive word; (3) translation by cultural substitution; (4) translation using a loan word or loan word plus explanation; (5) translation by paraphrase using related words; (6) translation by paraphrase using unrelated words; (7) translation by omission; and (8) translation by illustration.

Newmark (1988b, pp. 82–114) provides the following translation strategies:

- Transference involves transferring an SL word to a TL text: it includes transliteration.
- Naturalization: it adapts the SL word first to the normal pronunciation, then to the normal morphology of the TL.
- Cultural equivalent: replaces a cultural word in the SL with a TL one.
- Functional equivalent: the use of a culture-neutral word.
- Descriptive equivalent: the cultural bound term is translated into several words.
- Componential analysis: comparing an SL word with a TL word.
- Synonymy: near TL equivalent *through-translation* that involves literal translation of common collocations, names of organizations and components of compounds. It can also be called calque or loan translation.
- Shifts or transpositions: it involves a change in the grammar from SL to TL.
- Modulation: it involves reproducing the message of the original text in the TL text in accordance with the current norms of the TL.
- Recognized translation: involves use of the official or the generally accepted translation of any institutional term.
- Compensation: the translator compensates for the loss of meaning in one part of a sentence in another part.

- Paraphrase: the meaning of the cultural bound terms is explained in much more details than that of *descriptive equivalent*.
- Couplets: it occurs when the translator combines two different procedures.

Weston (1991, pp. 19–34) provides four strategies to deal with cultural bound terms that include: *functional equivalence* that involves using a referent in the target culture that has a similar function in the source culture [it is considered by Weston (1991) as “the ideal method of translation” (p. 23)]; *formal equivalence* or *linguistic equivalence*, which is a word-for-word translation; *transcription* or *borrowing*, i.e. reproducing or, where necessary, transliterating the original term; and *descriptive* or *self-explanatory* translation, which uses generic terms rather than cultural bound terms to convey the meaning.

4 Method and Discussion

The present study investigated the cultural problems involved in literary translation from English into Arabic. It analyzed translations made by university students enrolled in the literary translation course from English into Arabic. The questions tackled could be specifically stated as follows:

1. What are the basic problems Jordanian translation students encounter when dealing with the cultural component in translating literary texts from English into Arabic?
2. What strategies and processes do students follow to account for these problems?
3. Which literary genre is the most difficult for students?

Translation assignments and final exams were analyzed with emphasis on the cultural component and the way students dealt with it. Since the study was basically descriptive, no statistical analysis was involved as it was basically diagnostic, aiming at identifying the cultural problems and accounting for them. The three basic literary genres covered in the exams and assignments were investigated including students’ translations of English poems, stories, novels and plays. The following sections present basic cultural problems encountered in these three genres.

4.1 Fiction

Since fiction relies heavily on narration, the translator has to make a decision regarding being source-language-oriented or target-language-oriented. When translating from English into Arabic, the translator’s job is even more demanding since these two languages belong to two different language families and have different syntactic, phonological and lexical systems.

The following extract from Lawrence's (1913) *Sons and Lovers* constituted a cultural problem for the students. The mother here refers to her daughter-in-law as someone who is taking her son away not allowing her to have her share in him. Paul's obsession with his mother is interpreted by many critics in the light of Freudian theory. The following translated samples avoided such interpretation totally. This could be due to students' inability to relate the extract to Freudian theory or their preference not to get involved in a cultural dispute. The mother in the Arabic Islamic culture is given a high status that is emphasized in the Holy Quran as well as Prophet Mohammad's Hadith (Sayings) as shown below:

Heaven lies under the feet of your mother.

'She exults—she exults as she carries him off from me,' Mrs. Morel cried in her heart when Paul had gone. 'She's not like an ordinary woman, who can leave me my share in him. She wants to absorb him. She wants to draw him out and absorb him till there is nothing left of him, even for himself. He will never be a man on his own feet—she will suck him up.' So the mother sat, and battled and brooded bitterly.

"تقفز فرحا... تقفز فرحا وقد خطفته مني"
 اعتصر قلب السيدة مورل ألما عند رحيل بول، "هي ليست امرأة كباقي النساء التي من الممكن أن تسمح لي بأن أحظى بوجوده في حياتي. فهي تود ابتلاعه، تود لو أن تسحبه من نفسه وتبتلعه حتى لا يبقى منه لنفسه شيئا، ولن يستطيع الوقوف على قدميه مجددا فهي سوف تمتصه". ثم جلست الأم مهزومة وأكملت التطريز بمرارة.

She is not like other women who could allow me to have him in my life.

The student translated the situation in the light of the common view of a mother in the Arabic culture where the mother considers her daughter-in-law as someone who will come and steal her son from her. Such a view is clear in the following proverb where a mother says:

ربي يا خايبة للغايبة

Literally, you loser bring up your son for the absentee. The absentee here is the future daughter-in-law who will come and the loser is the mother who wastes her time in being attentive and caring for her son who eventually goes to the absentee, his wife.

Another cultural issue that students might face could be directly related to religious beliefs and could sometimes constitute a challenge as in the following examples where the idea of dying and becoming something entire is totally lost. The idea of death in Arabic Islamic culture is associated with either becoming part of the past or of the other unknown world, not becoming part of something entire.

Perhaps we feel like that when we die and become a part of something entire, whether it is sun and air, or goodness and knowledge.

عندما نموت ونعود للجزء الذي بدأ على الرغم من ذلك انه ليس الشمس والهواء.

When we die and go to the part that started although it is not sun or air.

ربما نشعر بذلك عندما نموت ويأتينا جزء من السعادة القادمة من الشمس والهواء.

We might feel it when we die and have some happiness coming from sun and air.

ربما نشعر بذلك عندما نموت ونصبح جزء من الماضي.

We might feel it when we die and become part of the past

ربما نشعر بذلك عندما نموت ونصبح جزءا من العالم الاخر.

We might feel it when we die and become part of the hereafter.

Another cultural issue was related to the use of figurative language which is challenging in one's native language, let alone translation. Different strategies were employed by the students to translate metaphors as shown by the following examples.

4.1.1 Avoidance/Omission

Some students avoided to translate the metaphor as shown in the following extract:

A vague feeling of impending misfortune impressed me.

.. شعور غريب غمرني

Back translation: *A weird feeling overwhelmed me.*

شعور غامض اثر في بعمق

A mysterious feeling deeply affected me.

'Impeding misfortune' was not translated.

4.1.2 Substitution

Students used a lexical item as a literal substitute for the metaphor as in the following examples. 'A weird feeling of a coming calamity was accompanying me,' was translated as:

انها ليلة متعبة

It was a wild night

انها ليلة مرعبة

It is an exhausting night.

لقد كانت ليلة مرعبة حقا

It is a terrifying night.

It was really a terrifying night.

ظهرت صرخة قوية .

It was a stormy night.

4.1.3 Paraphrase

Students used longer descriptions in Arabic as shown by the following examples:

There burst forth the wild scream of a terrified woman.

كان هناك صوت حاد من امرأة مرتبكة .

There was a sharp voice of a confused woman.

سمعت صوت لامرأة تصرخ بشدة

I heard a voice of a woman screaming strongly.

ظهرت صرخة قوية .

A strong scream appeared.

And my eyes seemed as if they had beheld the fount of fruition, and borrowed beams from the lustrous ripple.

The metaphor 'fount of fruition' was not rendered successfully as it was translated as:

وبدت عيناى كأنهما شاهدتا ينبوع الشباب واستعادت بريقها من الاشعة المنكسرة عليه .

Youth fountain

وبدت عيناى كأنهما تحملان مرح الحياة.

Joy of life

وبدت عيناى كأنهما تريان ينبوع الطبيعة وتستعيرها من الجمال الرائع.

Fountain of nature

وبدت عيناى كأنهما رأت شباب مزهر.

Prosperous youth.

وكان عيناى نيران وكان عيناى شباب متجدد.

Fires of renewed youth

عيناى مبتهجتان وكان وقت قطف الثمار واغصان تتمايل بتموج لامع.

It was time to pick fruits

وبدت عيناى مليئة بالطموح والسعادة وتستعير الايماءات من كل ما هو جميل وزاه.

Happiness and ambition

وبدت عيناى وكأنهما قد اخذتا شيئا من الامل واستعادت لمعان قوس قزح.

My eyes were as if they took some hope and regained the shining of a rainbow.

4.1.4 Collocation

Another problem was related to collocation as shown by the following example where the equivalent to charming in Arabic is not usually used to modify a chair. Most students used adjectives that are usually used to describe a chair namely, جميل 'beautiful' and مذهش 'amazing' while only one student used ساحر 'charming'

What a charming chair.
 ما هذا المقعد الحزين؟
What is this sad chair?
 ما اجمله من كرسي؟
What a beautiful chair
 ما هذا الكرسي المدهش؟
What an amazing chair
 يا له من مقعد ساحر
What a charming chair

4.1.5 Literal Translation

Literal translation was used as the last resort as shown by the following examples where the different examples of Arabic translation for the same quote are presented.

And in the end, of course, a true war story is never about war. It's about sunlight.

وفي النهاية بالتأكيد انها قصة الحرب الصحيحة . غير متعلقة بالحرب وانما عن الأمل
 في النهاية بالطبع ، انها كانت قصة مشرقة.
 وفي النهاية طبعاً ، قصة الحرب تكون عن ضوء الشمس.
 وفي النهاية وطبعاً لم تكن قصة الحرب قصة حقيقية بل كانت عن شروق الشمس

It is about the special way dawn spreads out on a river when you know you must cross the river.

انها عن طريق مميزة ينتشر فيها الفجر على النهر
 كان القصد منها هو الطريقة الخاصة التي تذهب روحك الى نهر وتعرف ان عليك عبوره.

Once upon the time, and a very good time it was.

كان يا ما كان عندما حان الزمان

Once upon the time when it was the time.

كان يا ما كان في قديم الزمان عندما كان الزمان زمان

Once upon the time when the time was time.

كان يا ما كان في زمن الازدهار والعنان

Once upon the time when there was prosperity.

كان يا ما كان في يوم جميل من الايام

Once upon a time in a beautiful day.

كان يا ما كان في اجمل الاوقات

Once upon a time in the most beautiful times.

كان يا ما كان في اوقات سعيدة

Once upon a time in happy times.

كان يا ما كان في وقت بهي الالوان.

Once upon a time in a light coloured times.

Another cultural issue has to do with collocation of colours. The adjective 'fresh' is not used in Arabic to describe the way people get dressed. Fresh collocates with

food, flowers, personality but hardly with appearance. Students used substitution and description to account for this problem as shown by the following example:

Arthur Ashmore was a fresh-coloured thick-necked English gentleman.

كان السيد ارثر اشمور ناصع البياض وذو رقبة عريضة.

Arthur Ashmore was very shining white and had a wide neck.

بدى السيد السيد ارثر اشمور يرتدي الوانا زاهية.

Mr. Arthur Ashmore appeared wearing light colours.

كان السيد ارثر اشمور بالوان زاهية متفانلا ذو الرقبة العريضة.

Mr. Arthur Ashmore was in light colours optimistic and with wide neck.

السيد ارثر اشمور كان مفعما بالالوان.

Mr. Arthur Ashmore was full of colours

كان السيد ارثر اشمور ثخين الرقبة وكانت الوانه منعشة.

Mr. Arthur Ashmore had a thick neck and his colours were fresh.

4.1.6 Idioms

Idioms have always been problematic for Arab learners of English especially the cultural bound idioms. Avoidance, literal translation and substitution were used as shown by the following examples:

She had built herself a new life and he had traded away what remained of his old life.

بنت لنفسها بيئا جديدا وهو تاجر بعيدا عن اي شيء.

She built herself a new house and he worked in trade away from anything.

وقد باع ما تبقى من حياة .

And he sold what was left of life.

وقد ضحى بما تبقى .

And he sacrificed what was left.

وقد تاجر بعيدا.

And he worked in trade far away.

قدبادلها الطريق

He exchanged the road with her.

وكان قد قايض ما تبقى من حياته السابقة

And he had exchanged all left from his previous life.

4.2 Drama

This genre was easier for students since it basically depends on dialogue. Students, however, faced problems on deciding which strategy to adopt and which variety of language to use. While some preferred domestications, others preferred foreignization. Both groups, however, encountered problems in implementing both strategies.

As far as adaptation is concerned, students could not decide which variety of language to use, standard or colloquial. While some used substitution as a strategy, others opted for domestication as shown in the following examples:

Do you mean to say that you would sell your daughter for 50£?

انت بتقصد انك تحكي بذك تببيع بنتك ب 50 يورو

50 Euro

اتقصد ان تقول انك ستبيع ابنتك مقابل 50 دولار

50 dollars

Adaptation to Jordanian culture.

انت قصدك تقول بذك تببيع بنتك ب 50 دينار.

50 dinars.

هل قصدك تقول انك سوف تببيع ابنتك بخمسين فرنكا؟

50Franc

But if Liza is going to have a bit out of this, why not me too!

لكن طالما ان ليزا تستطيع الحصول على النقود من خلاله لماذا لا افعل ذلك انا ايضا .

Standard Arabic

بس اذا ليزا رح تستفيد ولو شوي من هالشئ فليش انا لا يعني؟

Colloquial Arabic

Have you no morals man?

ولك انت ما عندك اخلاق؟

Colloquial Jordanian Arabic.

Another cultural problem had to do with taboos describing women for which avoidance strategy was used most of the time while few students used transliteration either to avoid using the term or because they could not get the intended meaning as illustrated by the following example:

Snake: Madam, by this time Lady Brittle is the Talk of half the Town—and I doubt not in a week the Men will toast her as a Demirep.

سنة: سيدتي ستكون السيدة برتال خلال هذا الوقت قد نشرت الخبر لنصف المدينة ولن يكون هناك شك ان معظم الرجال سيشرّبون نخبها كما حصل مع (ديمريب).

Another problem was related to collocation as shown by the following example. 'Way' and 'road' are confused because they are rendered by the word طريق in Arabic.

Not in a general way.

ليس في الطريق العام

4.3 Poetry

Poetry is a literary genre that has its distinctive and challenging features due to its aesthetic nature. In the following extract, students were unable to translate the title probably because they were not familiar with its cultural context.

The Waste Land (Eliot, 1962)
 THE BURIAL OF THE DEAD
 April is the cruellest month, breeding
 Lilacs out of the dead land, mixing
 Memory and desire, stirring
 Dull roots with spring rain
 الأرض المفقودة
 The lost land
 دفن الموتى
 Burying the dead
 نيسان اكثر الشهور قساوة
 ينبت ازهار الليلك من ارض جرداء
 يمزج الذكريات مع الرغبات
 و يبعثر الجذور الشاحبة بمطر الربيع
 الأرض الجرداء
 The barren land

دفن الموتى، نيسان هو أفسى الشهور، يزهر فيه الليلي من الأرض الميتة، فهو يمزج بين الذاكرة والرغبة، وإثارة الجذور الجافة بمطر الربيع

The title *The Waste Land* is a basic symbol that dates back to 1922. It stands for devastated land bringing to mind all the associations of landscape blighted by drought and famine, human starvation, misery and death. The four translations failed to capture the real meaning of the word 'cruelst' as used by Eliot which is related to the status of human sexuality at that time referring to it negatively.

Another cultural problem is related to social customs. Since drinking is prohibited in Islam, the verb يشرب (drink) is sometimes followed by الكحول (wine) to distinguish it from other drinks as shown in the following example. The word 'Sprite' is translated as غازيا مشروبا (soft drinks).

*I went to a birthday party
 But I remembered what you said
 You told me not to drink at all
 So I had a Sprite instead.*
 لحفلة عيد ميلاد ذهبت
 اخبرني ان لا اشرب الكحول بعناد
 فشربت مشروبا غازيا بلا ميعاد

In the following example, the student gives priority to rhyme transliterating the SL word 'Sprite' to rhyme with a word that does not exist in the SL.

فشربت سبرايت
 So I drank Sprite
 وشعرت بسعادة لساعات
 And I felt happy for hours.

The word 'Sprite' is confused with spirits:

He told me not to drink everything

اذ برني ان لا اشرب كل شي

But I have spirits.

ولكن لدي مشروبات روحية

اخبرني ان لا اشرب الكحول

He told me not to drink alcohol

ولذلك بعض الصودا احتسيت

So I had some soda

In the following example, the student adapted the translation to Islamic culture, which considers drinking as the basic source of all sins.

اخبرني ان لا اقرب شربا

He told me not to approach drinks

فشرب الخمر يصطنع البلاء

Since drinking wine causes misfortune

حذرتني من المشروبات الروحية

فاستبدلتها بواحدة غازية

She warned me against spirit drinks

So I replaced them with soft drinks

I got into my own car

Sure to get home in one piece.

متأكد اني سأعود للمنزل قطعة واحدة

I am sure I will go home one piece.

جميعهم غابوا عن الوعي الا انا

قدت سيارتي لاعدود للمنزل بهنا

They all fainted except me

I drove my car to go home happily

Gender issues are clear in the following translation where the female translator added the feminine suffix to the adjective (ثملة) drunk.

فعلمت اني قد جعلت لصحبتني معنى

So I knew I had made my company meaningful

بعدم القيادة وانا ثملة

By not driving when drunk

لأصل سليمة الى بيتي

To reach my home safe

Metaphor was also another problematic issue in translating poetry from English into Arabic. In the following example, the source of the problem was related to the polysemous aspect of the words 'poor' and 'player'. Students could not choose the most appropriate equivalent.

Life's but a walking shadow, a poor player.

الحياة مشية مظلمة، لاعب ضعيف.

Life is a dark walk, a weak player.

الحياة لا تبقى سوى ظل يمشي.

What remains of life is a walking shadow.
 حياة لكن الظل يمشي، ممثّل ضعيف
Life but the shadow walks, a weak actor.

In Arabic the word *ضعيف* could be used to describe both physical and mental states. The word ‘poor’ should have been translated as *فقير* not *مسكين* ‘with no money’.

5 Conclusions

The present study tackled the problems some Jordanian translation students faced when translating English literary texts into Arabic with sole emphasis on the cultural aspects. Students’ translations were analyzed and problems were classified in the three literary genres that the translation assignments covered. Since literary texts are demanding for both native and non-native speakers due to their aesthetic features and dense cultural components, rendering the intended meaning conveyed in literary texts was found to be highly problematic for university translation students. The most difficult genre for students was poetry and the easiest was drama. Students implemented many strategies in dealing with the cultural components of the literary texts. These strategies were avoidance, substitution, paraphrase, transliteration, adaptation and literal translation. Further research is recommended on a detailed study of each genre as well as the problems involved in translating Arabic literary texts into English.

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