

Translation of Arabic Proverbs Into English: Obstacles and Strategies

Ekrema Shehab

The common assumption among translators of Arabic proverbs into English is that methods of literal translation should be avoided because Arabic and English proverbs are always culture-specific. This paper, however, contends that formal translation methods can be effectively applied because the thematic content of Arabic and English proverbs does not always diverge; in fact, the content converges in many cases. Methodologically, the English translations of observational and truthful Arabic proverbs, which make use of tautology, metaphor, and irony in their phraseologies, were examined. The study samples were drawn from two internationally renowned novels *Zuqaq al-Midaq* (Mahfouz, 1947) and *Awlad Haretna* (Mahfouz, 1959), written by Naguib Mahfouz, a renowned Egyptian novelist and Noble Prize winner. The study also examined Stewart's translation of Mahfouz's *Awlad Haretna* as the *Children of Gebelawi* (Mahfouz, 1959/1981) and Le Gassick's translation of Mahfouz's *Zuqa al-Midaq* as *Midaq Alley* (Mahfouz, 1947/1975). The paper argues that Arabic proverbs that encapsulate shared themes in English and Arabic culture lend themselves to literal translation, whereas those that are culturally specific can be translated through the use of various translation strategies, ranging from those capturing the function to those independently capturing the communicative sense in the text.

Keywords: proverb translation, truthful Arabic proverbs, functional translation

Received: July 7, 2022

Revised: November 18, 2022

Accepted: December 2, 2022

阿拉伯語諺語翻譯成英語：障礙與策略

Ekrema Shehab

一般認為，英譯阿拉伯語諺語時應當排除直譯法，因為這兩種語言的諺語之間一直存在著很大的文化差異。即便如此，這兩種語言諺語的主題內容在許多情況下也會趨同。因而，本研究試圖提出一種形式翻譯法，即透過使用同義反復、隱喻和反諷等修辭手法來驗證和討論阿拉伯語諺語的英文翻譯。研究資料來自埃及著名小說家、諾貝爾獎獲得者納吉布·邁哈福茲（Naguib Mahfouz）的兩部國際知名小說《梅達格胡同》（*Zuqaq Al-Midaq*）（Mahfouz, 1947）和《我們街區的孩子們》（*Awlad Haretna*）（Mahfouz, 1959），以及勒加西（Le Gassick）、斯圖爾特（Stewart）分別對此兩部小說的翻譯版本（Mahfouz, 1947/1975, 1959/1981）。本研究認為，包含英語和阿拉伯語文化中共同主題的阿拉伯語諺語很容易進行字面翻譯，而特定文化的諺語可以使用包括功能達意、交際達意等各種翻譯策略。

關鍵詞：諺語翻譯、真實的阿拉伯語諺語、功能翻譯

收件：2022年7月7日

修改：2022年11月18日

接受：2022年12月2日

Introduction

A proverb is “the horse of conversation, when the conversation droops, a proverb revives it” (Ridout & Witting, 1967, p. 56). That is true as far as the understanding of a proverb is rightly secured among participants in a conversation; otherwise, a proverb will be of no value. This fact highlights the idea of shared knowledge or beliefs, which is quite important to the understanding of proverbial expressions on the part of a proverb user as well as an addressee. Indeed without such shared knowledge, proverbial expressions are hardly understood. Interestingly, the idea of shared beliefs suggests flexibility in the use of proverbial expressions in the sense that a proverb user may allude to a certain proverb by quoting part of it or by introducing minor changes into its form/wording but this slight change of the proverb’s form does not affect the proverb’s contextual meaning (Shehab & Daragmeh, 2014).

What adds to the problem is that most proverbial expressions appear as unconnected utterances in conversation, as an abrupt shift in subject matter (at the literal level) occurs once a proverb is used in a certain context. This feature of proverbs is explained by Seitel (1976) who points out that proverbs may be “provisionally defined as short, traditionally out-of-context statements used to further some social end” (p. 145). Ehineni (2016) asserts that proverbs are deployed for multidimensional purposes in interactions: for illustrating a point, negating or supporting arguments, for instruction, information, and inspiration (p. 83). They are used to facilitate effective communication and interaction. Similarly, AbūṢūfah (2017) points out that Arabic proverbs have their cultural implications as they can reveal and reflect the character of society; they are a mirror that reflects the culture, beliefs, philosophy, ethics, customs and traditions of any nation and they have an educational effect because they intend to teach the listener; they advise, warn, or

threaten him (p. 90). AbūSūfah (2017) gives this definition which summarizes four features of Arabic proverbs: “Yajtame’ fi ’almathāl ’arba’ la tajtame’ fi ghayreh: ejāzun fī al lafth wa esābatunfī al ma’na wa husnu ’altashbeih wa jawdatu alkitaba” (p. 16), (A proverb has four distinguishing features: brevity in words, conciseness of meaning, soundness of likening and soundness of writing).

Based on their themes, proverbs can be duly classified into three main types (Farghal, 1995): truthful proverbs which express general truths, observational proverbs which show generalizations about everyday experience and traditional wisdom, and folklore proverbs which offer classical maxims in various areas. To illustrate these three types, consider the examples below along with their English equivalents:

a. mā fih dukhān bidūn nar

There is no smoke without fire

b. ’il-gird be’ein’ummu ghazāl

Beauty is in the eye of the beholder

c. ’itghada w-itmadda w-it’asha w-itmasha

After dinner rest a while, after supper walk a mile. (Farghal, 1995, p. 197)

Another important point about observational and truthful Arabic proverbs is that they may have the potential to mean more than one thing when they are used in their immediate context of use. Proverbs, Kirshenblatt-Gimblett (1973) argues, operate at two levels of meaning: the performance and base. The proverb’s performance meaning arises from the integration of proverbial (base meaning) and situational meaning (participant evaluation of meaning) (p. 821). Kirshenblatt-Gimblett (1973) goes on to contrast this performance meaning with a proverb’s base meaning which, according to him, provides the investigator with a foundation for examining the understanding that emerges when base meanings are socially situated. In other words, the performance meaning is the effect of a proverb on its receiver; it teaches, warns,

threatens or advises him. Accordingly, it is the proverb's base meaning which is held constant and the proverb's performance meaning which keeps changing in light of the context of situation. This feature of multiple meanings and usages of proverbs forces translators to evaluate situations in more than one way. Alternative proverbs and alternative ways of using one proverb provide options for evaluating and responding to a situation. The choice of which alternative to use is based on a combination of (a) the participants' perception of the situation; (b) the repertoire of proverbs available to the participants and their perception of the meaning and usage possibilities of them; and (c) what it is they want to accomplish in the situation (p. 823).

In the literature, several methods are proposed to translate proverbs from Arabic into English and vice versa. Baker (2011) treats proverbs like idioms and fixed expressions and proposes "total equivalence" (finding a correspondent target language [TL] proverb that matches the source language [SL] proverb in meaning and form), "partial equivalence" (looking for a TL proverb of similar meaning but dissimilar form), translation by paraphrasing, translation by omission, and translation by compensation (p. 130). In the same manner, Ghazala (2014) offers three methods: "Absolute equivalence," which is the easiest since translators need to find a ready-made proverb in the TL with the same meaning and the same form (p. 143). If the translator fails, she/he can resort to "similar equivalence" by offering a proverb in the TL with a similar meaning and a similar form, and the "different equivalence" by giving a TL proverb with a similar meaning but a different form. Similarly, Gorjian's (2008) model for proverb translation suggests "exact equivalence," which is similar to Baker's total equivalence and Ghazala's absolute equivalence, "near-equivalents," which is the same as Baker's partial equivalence and Ghazala's similar equivalence, and "literal translation," which corresponds to Baker's paraphrasing strategy and Ghazala's different equivalence.

It can be concluded from the above exposition that the translation of proverbs is

either form-based, content-based or both. Optimal translation is obtained when a SL proverb matches its TL counterpart in form and meaning. If that match is not possible, translators are inclined to use form-based or content-based methods. Form-oriented translation would succeed as long as the SL proverb encapsulates a universal thematic content, and content-oriented translation is apparently used when SL proverbs are culture-specific. Form-based methods could include literal translation or formal equivalence while content-based methods involve communicative translation, functional or ideational equivalence. Briefly, formal equivalence “attempts to reproduce as literally and meaningfully as possible the form and content of the original” (Nida, 1964, p. 159). Functional equivalence, however, is “the closest natural equivalent to the source-language message” (Nida, 1964, p. 166). To the dichotomy of formal versus functional equivalence, Farghal (1994) adds “ideational equivalence,” which captures the idea independently of formal and functional constraints and stresses the communicative sense of an utterance rather than its formal and/or functional correspondence in the TL (p. 57). While analyzing our data below, if formal translation methods fail, we will consider functional translation methods and vice versa. However, I argue in this article that translators can opt for other options before they paraphrase the meaning/content of a SL proverb and give a plain prose translation when they fail to find a comparable TL proverb with a similar meaning and form. First, they can make use of available proverbs in the TL by introducing some changes into their wording. Second, translators have the option of inventing new proverbs in the TL by using literal translation provided that the SL proverb captures a universally relevant concept that resonates with both Arabic and English cultures, thus encouraging proverbial borrowing between the two cultures. Finally, translators can paraphrase the meaning of the SL proverb but they should do so in a proverbial manner to avoid prose translation and keep the proverb’s proverbial status. To illustrate, I examine a number of observational and truthful Arabic proverbs

whose phraseologies use tautology, irony and metaphor in their immediate context of use to show how the (social) context along with other discoursal factors may affect the proverb's meaning and translation. More specifically, I will address three main questions: (a) Where does the problem of translating Arabic observational and truthful proverbs lie? (b) How should translators of Arabic proverbs into English handle such problems, and (c) What choices do translators have to translate Arabic proverbs into English while preserving their contextual meaning and proverbial significance/status?

Finally, this study's significance arises from the limited research available in the realm of translating cultural expressions from one language to another. It stands as one of the pioneering investigations that delve into the translation of proverbial expressions within their social and cultural contexts. The purpose of this study extends beyond proposing model translations for ten proverbial expressions; we also provide strategies that translators can employ to deal with the challenge of translating Arabic proverbs into English. These ten examples serve as a representative sample, guiding translators in understanding the core issue at hand. It is unnecessary to present additional examples as they may render any further discussion redundant.

For a better presentation, this article is structured in this way: In the introduction, an explanation of the nature of proverbs, their definition, review of main translation strategies and methods and the importance of the study have been given. In the following section, the problem of the study is fully described and readers are urged to consider other choices if they fail to find a straightforward TL equivalent for a SL proverb. A brief information showing the importance of the two novels used in the study is also given. In the analysis section, the data of the study are fully analyzed and discussed and some solutions to the problem of translating proverbs are suggested; the article concludes with practical steps translators should follow to be able to translate Arabic proverbs into English in a competent manner.

The Present Study

In this article, I focus on strategies translators of Arabic proverbs into English can use to avoid prose translation as much as they can when they fail to find a direct ready-made TL proverb for a SL proverb. To illustrate, consider the following example:

'adhuniki tufaḍlīna rājulan mutaqaḍim fīssin
lam tadri 'al'ukhra bimādhā tujīb lam takun taṭmaḥ fī 'alzawaj min shāb
wala kāna 'alshāb bizzawj 'aladhi yunasibuhā wa lākinaha lam tartah 'ila
“mutaqaḍim fīssin” hadhehi wa kana tadaruj 'alḥadīth qad khalatahā bi umm
ḥamida fa'ānasat 'ilayhā wastatā'at an taqūl wa hiya taḍhak litudāri 'irtibākuhā
'assūm wa 'aftir 'ala baṣali. (Mahfouz, 1947, p. 25)

I think you prefer a man stricken in years

The other woman did not know what to say,

She never thought of getting married to a young man,

And a young husband wasn't appropriate for her.

But she felt uneasy about the expression “stricken in years.”

The progress of talk made her complain to Um Hamida, and she said while she was laughing to hide her confusion:

“What break a fast by eating an onion.” (Mahfouz, 1947/1975, p. 30)

The difficulty of translating the Arabic observational proverb above stems from the metaphorical meaning aroused by the word “ṣāwm” (lit. fasting), which is not easily understood by an English/TL reader. The fasting and onion-eating metaphors used in the proverb imply “waiting for a long time and getting nothing in the end.” In Ramadan, the holy month of fasting, Muslims usually break their fasting by eating a balanced, fatty meal that may include items from all food groups such as fruits and vegetables, nuts, beans/meat, grains and dairy. So breaking a fast

by eating an onion connotes bad things. Referring to the context, the woman in question is old but she is unhappy with the idea of marrying a “stricken in years” man and she expresses her resentment by uttering the proverb above. Her life without marriage is likened to “fasting” and her accepting to marry an old man after being unmarried for a long time is likened to “breaking her fasting by eating an onion” (i.e., she waited for a long time without marriage and in the end she is proposed to marry a man who is stricken in years).

Translationwise, literal translation would falter because the proverb is culture-specific and peculiar to Arabic culture. Usually, translators of proverbs would be satisfied if they could find a parallel equivalent in the TL. If they do not find a straightforward TL correspondence, they rush to translate the proverb’s intended meaning and they sacrifice its proverbial status. This is a long translational tradition practised by translators of Arabic proverbs into English (Shehab & Daragmeh, 2014). Since we are dealing with cultural and subtle issues like proverbs, translators should learn that there are other possible choices for them to consider before they translate the proverb’s communicative meaning. Translators can, first, make use of already available proverbs in the TL by introducing some changes into the TL proverb’s wording. By way of illustration, the existing English proverb: (The longer the wait the better the reward) is the opposite in meaning of the Arabic proverb. To translate the Arabic proverb about fasting, translators can modify this ready-made TL proverb in a way that makes it reflect the meaning of the Arabic proverb like in the following translation: “The longer the wait the worse the reward.” By changing the wording of the existing TL English proverb (better into worse) to accommodate the intended meaning of the SL proverb, translators can keep its proverbial status and at the same time convey its meaning in a proverbial manner.

Prior to sacrificing the form of the proverb and conveying its meaning in English, translators have an alternative option: They can endeavor to create their own

proverb in the TL. That is, they can come up with a new proverb in the TL that was never used before or does not even exist in the TL. This practice encourages proverbial borrowing between cultures and enriches TL proverbs. However, it should be noted that such a practice of inventing new TL proverbs would succeed as long as we consider proverbs with similar thematic content whose themes are shared by most cultures. By way of illustration, see the Arabic truthful proverb: “’almawt kān dāyir ’ala kul’alnās” (lit. death is a glass circulating among all people).

In this proverb, the fact that everyone will ultimately experience death is likened to a glass (of water) circulating among all people. Given the proverb’s underlying universal theme, specifically centered around death, it is reasonable to assume that it lends itself well to literal translation. It can be argued that the more universally relevant the thematic content of a proverb, the easier it becomes to translate. Therefore, the aforementioned proverb can be appropriately rendered as “death is a glass circulating among all people” through a literal translation. Despite the complexity involved in this invented translation, I assert that it can be comprehensible to readers of the target language as it encapsulates a universally resonant theme: the inevitability of death for all living beings. The introduction of this proverb into the TL would enrich its repertoire of proverbs and promote cross-cultural and cross-linguistic proverbial borrowing. However, its functional equivalent in the TL could be “Death is a great leveller.”

If all possible available means of translating proverbs in a proverbial manner are exhausted, translators can resort to translating the communicative meaning of the proverb but they should first attempt to do so while preserving the proverb’s proverbial status. So, instead of translating the proverb’s meaning about fasting above into plain prose, “you wait for a long time and then you get nothing,” they can do so by maintaining its proverbial status like in this translation: “long you wait little you get.”

In the same manner, ample examples derived from Mahfouz's (1947, 1959) *Zuqaq al-Midaq* and *Awlad Haretna* will be analyzed and discussed below to give translators insights into how to deal with the translation of Arabic proverbs into English. The examples are taken from these two novels in particular because they are Mahfouz's best masterpieces and they duly make use of Arabic proverbs in their social and cultural context of use. In his *Midaq Alley* (Mahfouz, 1947/1975), the Nobel Prize-winning author predicted how Western imperialism affected Egypt. Mahfouz is well renowned for exposing the shame culture that permeates many facets of Egyptian society and is not afraid to make direct and harsh societal criticism. *Midaq Alley* (Mahfouz, 1947/1975) is one of his most widely praised works that depicts the lives of several characters and how they respond to the ongoing war in a remote, dreary, little alley in Cairo during World War II. The story is set in the 1940s and depicts Cairo and the rest of Egypt as the nation is entering the modern era. Two houses with three flats each and a number of shops make up the alley. The Arabic culture, with all of its peculiarities, is reflected in the street. On the other hand, *Awlad Haretna* is Mahfouz's most controversial novel which was banned from publication in Egypt for 20 years until 1981. It allegorically depicts the interconnected histories of the three monotheistic Abrahamic religions—Judaism, Christianity, and Islam—against the backdrop of an imagined Cairo alley from the 19th century. The “futuwwat” (strongmen), who rule the alley and demand protection money from people, are central to the plot. The heroes of each generation overthrow the strongmen of their era, but in the succeeding one, new strongmen arise and the situation remains dire.

Research Methodology

The data of the study consists of ten proverbial expressions in their immediate context of use. They were selected from two well-known novels: *Zuqaq al-Midaq*

(Mahfouz, 1947) and *Awlad Haretna* (Mahfouz, 1959), by the late Egyptian Novelist and Noble Prize Winner Naguib Mahfouz. The two novels were translated by two professional translators: Le Gassick as *Midaq Alley* (Mahfouz, 1947/1975) and Stewart as *Children of Gebelawi* (Mahfouz, 1959/1981).

The selected data were identified as featuring difficulties to translators of Arabic texts into English. A few of these proverbial expressions were colloquial and others were standard. This diversity was done on purpose to benefit translators and scholars in the field. It should be noted that the purpose of this study is not only to propose model translations for ten Arabic proverbs; the author believes that addressing the problem as a whole would be of more theoretical and practical value. Thus, the ten chosen proverbs would serve as a representative sample, largely used to explain the difficulties and challenges involved in translating Arabic proverbs into English. The study takes into account the readers' response and their comprehensibility of the reproduced text when searching for the best translation since these are the ultimate goals that serve as the rationale behind translation. For this purpose, the translation of the proverbial expressions in their original context by Le Gassick and by Stewart are carefully analyzed and discussed. The proverb, first, is given in its context in Arabic and boldtyped for ease of reference; then, the whole English translation of the extract by Stewart or Le Gassick is given and the proverb's translation is also highlighted in bold. In some cases, where Le Gassick's and Stewart's translations falter, I suggest my own translation in light of the proverb's social context. For convenience's sake, the data of the study is classified into two main categories: observational and truthful proverbs.

Analysis of Data and Discussion

In what follows, the data of the study which are grouped under two main categories are examined alongside their renderings as given by the aforementioned

translators (Le Gassick, and Stewart). Each proverb from each category is explained and analyzed in its context and their meanings are then compared with the translations as given by those professional translators. The wider Arabic context of each proverb is given followed by its English translation as suggested by the professional translators. For ease of reference, each proverb and its rendering are bold typed in both the Arabic and English versions.

Observational Proverbs

Observational proverbs, in essence, encompass generalizations derived from everyday experiences and serve as instructive guides for human behavior. These proverbs often employ metaphorical imagery, which can pose a significant challenge for translators who may struggle to decipher the underlying meaning of the metaphors embedded within the phraseology of the proverb. To illustrate this point, let us consider the following proverbial expression:

1. wa lam takun murtāḥa liziyārati biṭabī‘at al ḥal li’ana ziyāratān ṭaqūmu biha ṣaḥibat ’al mulk ’amrun qad tasū’u ‘awāqibuhu wa qad yundhiru bilkhaṭar. Wa lā kinaha **waṭānat al nafs ‘ala ’an talbisa likuli ḥālīn lubūsaha ’in khāyran fakhayr wa ’in sharran fashar.** (Mahfouz, 1947, p. 16)

She was, of course, not at all pleased with the visit, as any visit from the landlady could have unfortunate consequences and might even spell real trouble. However, **she had accustomed herself to be ready at all times for any eventuality, whether good or bad.** (Mahfouz, 1947/1975, p. 14)

The difficulty of translating the above saying lies in the use of the metaphoric images in its wording. Taken literally (lit. she prepared the soul to wear an attire for each circumstance), the proverb seems odd since it contradicts our factual background information as one might ask how a soul can wear an attire. Considering its context, the intended metaphorical meaning is that the woman in question (Mrs. Afify) is so

experienced that she can cope with every circumstance. The metaphoric implicature stems from the fact that the speaker does not tell the truth and she is being uninformative; it is not true that the soul can wear attire and the speaker could have been more informative by saying that the concerned woman has wide experience and she can easily adapt to new situations.

It is of great importance to point out that the translation of metaphorical images depends on the job the image does in the text; that is, whether the image is creatively used (an essential part of the text) or decoratively (just to add to the beauty of the text) (Broeck, 1981). Thus if the image is creatively used as is often the case in a work of art, a formal/literal translation is required though it sometimes renders the image less natural to the target language readers. As for Le Gassick, he apparently attempted to convey the proverb's intended meaning by paraphrasing its metaphorical images and converting them into sense. Since we are dealing with a literary work where images are usually used creatively, our translation should preserve the metaphorical image which is found in the proverbial expression. Thus, I suggest a more appropriate rendering of the above saying into: "She accustomed herself to wearing attire for every circumstance."

Some observational proverbs are used to show people's bad habits and at the same time alert or warn them against enemies who appear to be friends and lovable. By way of clarification, consider the following proverb:

2. wa dabbat alḥyāt maratan ukhra fī al sheikh darwīsh fa 'adara ra'sahu naḥwa 'aljeḥa 'alati 'ikhtafa fīha aldhāhiban. wa qad jalasa 'ilā maktabehi murakizan 'intibāhahu kuluhu fī kalāmi simsār yahūdi mustajmi'an yaqadhatuhu, mustaḥḍerān ḥadharahu, y'ajabu liriqati muḥadithihi wa luṭfihi, ḥata liyaḥsabuhu 'aljāhīlu ṣadīqan wadūdan, wahuwa fī 'alḥaqīqa nimrun yatawathab, **yatamāskan wa yatamāskan ḥata yatamākan.** (Mahfouz, 1947, p. 58)

Life stirred once again in Sheikh Darwish and he turned his head towards the direction in which they had disappeared. He could, for example, be seated at his desk giving his entire attention to a Jewish broker, so that a stranger would have thought Alwan a close friend of the man. He was, in fact, a veritable crouching tiger, **willing to cringe and fawn until he mastered his adversary**. (Mahfouz, 1947/1975, p. 57)

In this proverb, a habit of some brokers is displayed, mainly that they seem to be hypocrite and they usually try to show others the bright side of them. In its context, the above proverb warns people against those who appear too friendly to others. It gives them the message that they should not be deceived by mere politeness, as some people are often polite to those they intend to harm.

The challenge in translating this proverb lies in its linguistic rhythm, a characteristic that surpasses the boundaries and possibilities of translation. This linguistic tone is obtained through a functional repetition of “yatamāskan” (pretend to be naive) and “yatamākan” (defeat one’s enemies). This tautology which is present in the wording of the Arabic proverb is problematic to translators. In simple words, tautology is “the saying of the same thing again in a seemingly redundant, uninformative way” (Shehab, 2016, p. 26). In Brown and Levinson’s (1987) terms, a tautology is looking for the informative out of the uninformative. In our example above, the repetition of “yatamāskan wa yatamākan” in the proverb above seems a needless repetition, but, deeply, it is used to convey a significant communicative meaning that people usually show intimacy and friendliness towards those whom they wish to harm and therefore we should beware of such people. In fact, proverbial expressions which employ such tautologies pose a challenge to translators since they convey meanings which are not readily transparent from their literal meanings. Wierzbicka (1987) notes that certain tautological utterances that are possible in English are simply not available in other languages and those that are available are used with

different communicative meanings. This very fact complicates the task of translators when they embark on translating proverbial expressions which make use of tautology.

Le Gassick's rendering is inadequate communicative translation as he fails to convey the proverb's implied meaning, namely that the person in question behaves too humbly towards Mr. Alwan, who is more powerful and he tries to win his approval in an obsequious manner. Moreover, Le Gassick's rendering does not maintain the proverbial status of the original Arabic proverb as he only offers an explanation of the proverb's meaning. In order to convey more or less the same function and at the same time to preserve the proverbial meaning of the original proverb, the above saying can be best translated into the following: "Many kiss the hand they wish to cut off." I should, however, mention that this suggested translation does not convey the linguistic rhythm of the original proverb which is shown by the use of the tautological words. This is because such linguistic features are sometimes hard to relay in translation.

To shed more light on the difficulty of translating proverbial expressions which make use of tautology and display linguistic rhythm, let us consider the following example:

3. thuma tadaraja 'alhadīth 'ilā'abās alhīlu, fa'athnat 'alayhi qā'ilatan:
 'an 'im behi min shāben ṭayīb sayaftaḥ allāh 'alayhi wa yarzuqhu, wa yumakin mintahyia'at 'alhayāt 'alsaeeda li'arūsihi 'alati tasta'hil kul khayr wa-btasamat umm hamida 'inda thak wa qālat:
'alshāy'u bishāy'I yuthkar 'i'lami 'ani ḥāḍira 'alyawm li'akḥṭubiki yā'rūs. (Mahfouz, 1947, p. 58)

Then she drew the conversation around to Abbas and praised him highly: he really is a nice young man. I am sure God will be good to him and allow him to provide a happy life for his bride who is worthy of nothing but the best. Umm Hamida smiled at this and replied:

First things first! I have come to see you today to tell you of your engagement, my bride! (Mahfouz, 1947/1975, p. 116)

In the literature, scholars have discussed three distinct approaches that aim to explain the interpretation of tautological utterances. These approaches are the radical pragmatic approach, the radical semantic approach, and the non-radical approach (Wierzbicka, 1987). According to the radical pragmatic approach, the interpretation of tautological expressions is governed by universally applicable conversational principles. In this view, such expressions are considered devoid of independent informative content, but acquire meaning within specific contextual situations (Okamoto, 1993, p. 434). Conversely, the second approach posits that the meaning of tautological utterances cannot be entirely predicted through the application of universal pragmatic representations (p. 435). On the other hand, the non-radical approach serves as a compromise, arguing that the interpretation of tautological utterances involves a combination of both pragmatic and semantic factors. For instance, the second example cited above falls under the second type, as it possesses semantic informativeness and it can be comprehended without reliance on context. In contrast, the third example aligns with the first type, the radical pragmatic approach, as it lacks inherent informativeness but acquires meaning through its contextual usage. It is uninformative in the sense that one cannot infer the intended meaning unless a context is used; context in this particular example is crucial to show what kind of an earlier (mentioned) subject draws another subject to be talked about. We have seen in the context above that the mentioning of the subject of marriage by the first speaker (called Saniya) brought the same subject to the mind of the second speaker (called Umm Hamida). The use of the tautological words “’alshāy’u bishāy’i” (lit. the thing by the thing) makes it difficult to translate.

Apparently, Le Gassick fails to figure out the meaning of the tautology in the above proverb which is peculiar to the Arabic culture. He tries to convey the

linguistic rhythm which is present in the original by repeating the word “first” twice, but his translation does not reflect the proverb’s intended meaning. “First things first” indicates that important matters should be dealt with before other things, while the Arabic proverb means that an earlier mentioned topic could invoke the talk about another similar topic. The proverb thus can be translated into: “A subject drives/invokes another subject.” This is a translation of the proverb’s communicative meaning and to a certain extent it preserves its tautology by repeating the word “subject” twice in a proverbial manner.

Now let us consider ironical proverbs in their context of use. There is no doubt that translators should pay special attention to context when they attempt to translate proverbial expressions which are used ironically. To shed more light on ironical proverbial expressions, see the following example:

4. Waqtarib fi ‘ishfaq min rūwād al maqāhi thuma qif fi ḥaya’ wa muda yadaka duna ’an tanbisa bikalimatīn wa takalam bi’aynika ’ala t’arif lughatal’ayun? Satuhadiq feeka ’al ’uyun bidahsha wa sayaqūlūn ’azeezu qāwmin thāl. Wa yaqūlūn muḥala ’an yakūna thālīka min ’ulāeka al shaḥdhein al muḥtarefīn. ’afahimta mā ’urīd? satarbaḥ biwaqāraq ’adā’f ma yarbahu al ’ākharūn. (Mahfouz, 1947, p. 106)

Casually approach people in coffeehouses and stand aside humbly. Extend your palm without saying a word. Speak only with your eyes. Don’t you know the language of the eyes? People will look at you in amazement. They will say that surely you are someone **from a noble family who has fallen on hard times**. They say it’s impossible for this to be from those professional beggars. Do you understand now what I want? You will earn with your dignity multiples of what others earn. (Mahfouz, 1947/1975, p. 109)

The irony in the above Arabic proverb works in this way: What the speaker (called Zeita who is good at deforming people) says is the opposite of what he

really means. After a thorough investigation of the context, we can realize that the speaker is mocking the addressee (a beggar) and is teaching him how to be a skillful beggar. He also gives him some pieces of advice on how to invoke people's sympathy and then be able to collect a good amount of money from begging or entreating people. The use of the proverbial expression “*azeezu qāwmin thāl*” (lit. a noble man is humiliated) by the speaker is unrealistic and highly sarcastic. In Arabic, the proverb is uttered to refer to noble (rich) people who fall on hardships throughout their life and as a result they lose their wealth or fortune and they are forced to continue their life in poverty. They are humiliated as a result of that and people around them feel sorry for their unlucky new, bad situation or life. A close look at the context reveals that the addressee who is originally a beggar is never of a noble family. So, the speaker (Zeita) is mocking the addressee in a hidden way and he is being impolite in a seemingly polite way (Leech, 1983).

When we translate this proverb, we should convey this ironical meaning in our translation. In ironical usages “what the speaker means is not identical with what the sentence means” (Searle, 1979, p. 77). Hence, the translator is usually faced with a double interpretation (the literal and the ironic), and he/she has to choose between these two interpretations depending on three parameters which collectively activate the ironic situation: namely, speaker, addressee and the broader context. Norrick (1985) notes that “irony requires that the recipient reject the literal meaning and infer something like its negation” (p. 411).

When translators encounter difficulty in locating a suitable proverbial equivalent in the TL that effectively conveys both the formal and functional aspects, they are compelled to convey it in a manner that accurately reflects its intended meaning. Better still if translators use inverted commas to enclose their translation or an exclamation mark to alert the readership that an ironic meaning is intended by the speaker of the proverb. Le Gassick realizes what is meant by the

use of this proverb and he paraphrases it. The problem with his translation is that it does not signal the ironic meaning which is present in the original proverb and it strips the SL proverb of its proverbial status. A possible translation of the above proverb which keeps its ironical meaning in a proverbial manner could be: “A man of noble birth knocked off his perch!”

Some Arabic observational proverbs exhibit optimal correspondence between Arabic and English cultures. Their form and function coincide between proverbs in the SL and TL. This means that both languages employ the same phraseology or image to carry out an identical function. To illustrate this point, let us consider the following proverb:

5. Kana yanzur 'la zālām allayl al kathīf lākina ra'sahu al masghūl lam yastajib lahu fa qāl: lā fāeda turja min al 'ihtimam lākina 'akhaka al nadim yasa'luka alrahma. Yajib 'an tuhasina a'lāqatika bi 'khwatika. taradtani 'ikrāman li'aḥqar man 'anjabt 'ar'ayta kayfa kāna sulūkahu naḥwuka hā 'anta tarmīhi binafsika 'ilā alturāb **'uqābun bi-'uqāb wal bādi 'adhlam.** (Mahfouz, 1959, p. 361)

He gazed at the thick darkness of the night, but his preoccupied mind did not respond to it. He said, “There is no benefit to be gained from indifference, but your regretful brother asks for mercy. You must improve your relationship with your brothers. For the sake of your most despicable child you threw me out and you see how he treated you? And now you have thrown him out. **Tit for tat! And the one who started it is the loser.** This is so that you know that Idris can't be beaten. Now you can stay alone with your useless, spineless sons. (Mahfouz, 1959/1981, p. 232)

First, it should be noted that the Arabic proverb has undergone drastic changes in its original form. The original proverb in Arabic reads as: 'al'aynu bil'ayn wa-ssinu

bissin walbādi 'adhlām (lit. an eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth and the one who started it is the oppressor). In the above context, the first part of the original proverb which reads as “al'aynu bil'ayn wa-ssinu bissin” (lit. an eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth) is replaced by “'uqābun bi'uqāb” (lit. punishment is for punishment) to suit the context and accommodate the speaker's meaning. In English, an equivalent proverb in both form and meaning reads as “an eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth.” It is true that “an eye for an eye” is a good translation but it does not correspond to the proverb in its specific context and it does not take into account the intentional change of form of the original SL proverb by the speaker. The proverb in Arabic is said when we want to deter people from doing injustice to other people. It warns them that they will be punished the same way they punish others. Stewart offers an optimal translation “Tit for tat and the one who started is the loser.” His translation captures the meaning of the original and partially maintains the form. In fact his translation bears witness to the fact that translation is a matter of what may be called “equivalence emphasis.” That is, in the translation of the proverb, Stewart (Mahfouz, 1959/1981) uses a functional translation (Tit for tat) for the first part of the SL proverb “'uqābun bi'uqāb” and a semantic translation (the one who started is the loser) for its second part “wal bādi 'adhlām.” However, I may assume that Stewart's rendition is functional because it is emphasizing communicative over semantic translation. In any translation segment (i.e., a unit of discourse to be translated), we may exercise more than one translation type at the same time, but we usually assume that a translation segment is communicatively or semantically rendered depending on emphasis. In other words, if semantic translation is prevailing in the translation of a text, we say that this text is rendered semantically but this by no means excludes the use of communicative translation in the same text. Based on Stewart's (Mahfouz, 1959/1981) rendition, another suggested translation of the above proverb might be: “Tit for tat! And the beginner is the loser.”

I argue that literal translation strategies work when a proverb's thematic content is shared by both the English and Arabic cultures and they falter in the translation of culture-specific observational proverbial expressions as in the following example:

6. wa qaṭaba qāsim ghaḍbān wa qāl:

ya m'alim 'weis **'anta fī wād wa naḥnu fī wād** 'ana la 'arumu musāwama wa la naṣīban fī 'alray' wa lakinī 'aqaddtu 'al'azma 'ala taḥqīq 'irādat jaduna kama 'ablaghtuha. wa ḍaqa di'bis bita'dub Hamdan fa qāl: naḥnu 'usratan wāḥida. jmīa'n 'abnā' adham wa 'umayma. Fa qāla al a'fandi bimti'ād. Dhālika ta'rīkhun maḍa wa raḥima allah 'imri'un a'rafa qadra nafsehi. (Mahfouz, 1959, p. 616)

Kassem scowled:

Mr. Owayss, **you are in another world from us**. I don't want any bargain or any share of the revenue. I have set my heart on carrying out our ancestor's wishes as I told them. Daabas was annoyed by Hamdan's politeness and said: We are one family, were are all children of Adham and Omayma. Effendi said angrily: That's ancient history. Thank God some people know their proper place. (Mahfouz, 1959/1981, p. 232)

This proverb is an example where the utterance meaning and the sentence meaning are at variance. The difficulty of translating this proverbial expression is due to the use of the metaphor "wād" (lit. valley) which stands for an image or meaning that cannot be easily understood by English readers. In Arabic, the proverb is usually said to a person who thinks about something different from the subject matter under discussion. To convey this metaphorical meaning in Arabic, we use "wād" but we cannot use the word "valley" to reflect a similar image or meaning in English. Moreover, the proverb above exhibits a neat linguistic tone which can be easily noticed from the repetition of the word "wād." Such usage

adds to the emotiveness of the proverb and makes it more proverbial. The intended implicature which can be derived from the repetition of *wād* is that the addressee is not following the progress of talk and he is thinking of a completely different topic and direction.

It could be appropriate to just render the meaning of the proverb without worrying about preserving its proverbial quality or its linguistic rhythm as it is suggested by Stewart, but since we are dealing with a literary piece of work where subtle use of words makes a difference, it is recommended to make every possible effort to provide a translation which keeps the emotiveness of the original proverb. Stewart gives a reasonable translation and uses the word “world” as an equivalent to “*wād*.” In English the word “world” in the above context could convey a similar function which is present in the Arabic original proverb. Thus, Stewart’s rendition above “you are in another world” may be acceptable. With the lack of a parallel equivalence in English since the Arabic proverb is culture-specific, some observational proverbial expressions may lend themselves to translating communicatively. While the renderings of such proverbs may not be found in English, they nevertheless make a lot of sense and can be readily interpreted. Such renderings have also the advantage of transferring culture alongside sense, thus promoting inter-cultural understanding and, in the long run, encouraging languages to borrow proverbial expressions of general interest from one another. Accordingly, the proverb above can be translated into: “You are in one world and we are in another.”

We have seen in this section that the adequate translation of Arabic proverbs into English depends on whether the proverb is culture-specific or encapsulates a universal thematic content. The former can be translated by the use of communicative translation methods, while the latter can be simply translated by using formal translation strategies.

Truthful Proverbial Expressions

Truthful proverbs play a significant role in conveying profound and timeless truths. These proverbs encapsulate distilled wisdom gained from collective human experiences, observations, and reflections, serving as concise and memorable expressions of universal truths. By way of clarification, consider the following proverb:

7. fa shada hātha al kalām ‘ala watar ḥasās fī qalb alfata wa qāla bitabarum: sadaqt ya sīdi ma ‘akthar ‘al‘amilīn ‘almathlumīn fī hāthehi ‘aldunya **‘alṣabr muftāḥ ‘alfaraj** mā ‘akthar ‘almathlumīn. ‘ajal mā ‘akthar ‘almathlumīn. Wa ma’na hātha fi al ḥarf al wāḥid mā ‘akthar athalemīn. wa lākin min luṭf allah ‘anna al dunya la takhlu min ruḥamā’ kathā lik . fatasā’ala alfata ‘ayna hāulā’ alruḥamā’? wa kāda yujībuhu “hā a’natha wāḥid minhum wa lākinahu ‘amsaka ‘an thālik.” (Mahfouz, 1947, p. 47)

This statement struck a responsive chord in the boy and with conviction he agreed. You are right, Sir. What a lot of exploited workers there are in this world. **Patience is the key to joy.** Indeed, how numerous are the oppressed. Yet, by God’s grace, the world is not devoid of the compassionate as well. So, the young man wondered, ‘Where are these compassionate souls?’ “And he was about to answer, here I am, one of them,” but he refrained from doing so. (Mahfouz, 1947/1975, p. 42)

This proverb is said in Arabic to encourage people to be patient whatever misfortune befalls them, for relief will ultimately come to them and they will achieve satisfying results in the end. In Arabic culture, patience is a crucial feature described in the Holy Quran and Muslims believe that those who are patient with God’s decree will be rewarded. This theme of interest (the result of patience is relief and joy) seems to be universal and shared by several cultures. “Everything comes to him who waits” is a parallel proverb in English and it can serve as an

optimal translation of the proverb in Arabic although it does not preserve its form. Since the Arabic proverb's theme is universal and shared by both the Arabic and English cultures, translators can consider other available choices for them. Literal translation can work well in this particular context and hence other translations of the proverb can be suggested: "Patience is the key to joy" (Le Gassick's rendering), "Patience is the key to relief" (My translation). These invented proverbial expressions which do not exist in English are transparent to TL readers since their thematic content is familiar to them and they enrich TL proverbs.

Some truthful proverbial expressions touch upon themes of general interest and refer to common human principles and values. To clarify, let us consider the following proverb:

8. fa qāla bireqa:

'anta 'ibn nās ṭayibīn kamā yabdu lī **'al'inā' 'alṭayib yandah mā'an ṭayiban** wa yanbaghi 'an tar'ah mustaqbalak bi'ayn al 'ihtimām eth la yajoz 'an tabqā madā 'al 'umur 'amilan basīṭan fī dukān...

falāha 'al 'ihtimām wa alṭumūh fī 'alwajh 'aljamīl wa tasā'ala 'alshāb fī khubth:

wa hal lemithli 'an yaṭm'a fī 'akthar min hātha?! (Mahfouz, 1947, p. 54)

8. Kirsha commented politely:

You seem to come from a good family. I can tell. **A good jug pours forth good water.** You must take great care to look after your future. You must not remain a shop salesman all your life.

A look of anxiety crossed the boy's handsome face as he asked:

Can someone like me hope for anything better? (Mahfouz, 1947/1975, p. 43)

The Arabic proverbial expression above is a different version of the original Arabic proverb which reads as: "kulu 'inā'in bima fihi yandah" (lit. each vessel pours

forth what liquid it has). It seems that the original proverb's form has undergone some changes to suit its context. The proverb is mainly said to refer to people who come from good origin and the way they behave reflects upon their family and surrounding social environment; it also tells a lot about their qualities and values. This theme or meaning can be understood from the image exhibited in the use of the proverb: A jug pours forth what it has inside it whether good or bad. This image is compared to a human being who spells out what he/she has inside himself/herself. The metaphor in this example works in this way: The good jug is compared to the boy and as the jug pours out good water, the boy spells out good things.

Considering the proverb's larger context, we can realize that the speaker (Kirsha) has changed the proverb's wording on purpose. He describes the word "al'inā" (lit. jug) with the word "al'tāyib" (lit. good and kind-hearted), thus acknowledging that the addressee (a handsome boy) is a good person and of a good origin. The proverb user (Kirsha) is homosexual and he tries to get to know the boy in depth to tempt and drive him into a sexual relation; he is lying to the boy to win his friendship and he is being ironic i.e., what Kirsha says to the boy is polite but not true and what he really means is impolite and true. So, the implied meaning conveyed by the aforementioned proverbial expression suggests that, within Arabic culture where homosexuality is religiously and socially condemned, the addressee is regarded as lacking virtuous character, a respectable background and adherence to moral principles. The problem for translators is how to maintain the ironic meaning in their translation when there seems to be two conflicting images in both cultures as homosexuality is apparently a kind of a personal liberty in the West.

Le Gassick offers a literal translation which does not seem to fit in the context because it does not account for the proverb's ironic meaning. The proverb's image is peculiar to Arabic culture and rendering it literally could sound awkward. In this case, translators are urged to look for a functional correspondent translation in the TL that

is transparent to TL readers. Another source of difficulty for translators here is maintaining the proverb's ironic meaning. It is important for translators to know that, in ironic usages, the intended meaning is quite opposite to what is literally said. Gibbs and O'Brien (1991) maintain that "people can really detect ironic meaning by assuming the opposite of an utterance's literal meaning once the literal meaning is seen as being contextually inappropriate" (p. 524). The interpretation of proverbial expressions with ironic meaning is greatly dependent on context as well as on various assumptions shared by the speaker and addressee. Mateo (1995) argues that ironical interpretation "depends on context since it springs from the relationships of a word, expression or action with the whole text or situation" (p. 172). Notice the following functional proverb which is from a French origin. It is the French for "birth compels it," which means noble birth imposes the obligation of noble actions: "Noblesse oblige?!" A final point to be mentioned is that this suggested translation is enclosed in inverted commas and a question and an exclamation mark are used to alert TL readers that an ironic meaning is intended by the use of the proverb.

Another truthful proverbial expression that presents some difficulties to translators is:

9. fatathāhara Zeiṭa bi'adam almubālāt wa qāla mutathāhīran bilmalal fī mithli hāthehi 'alsā'a ya duktor ?!

fawada'a 'al duktor yadahu 'ala katfīhi wa qala lahu :

'alāyl satār wa-rabna 'amar bisetir. fa qāla zeīta wa huwa yanfukh wa lākeni mut'ab 'alān. fa qāla albūshi biraja' lāradadta lī yadan. warāḥa alrajulāni yaḍra'āni wa yad'uwani lahu. (Mahfouz, 1947, p. 52)

Zaita, feigning boredom and complete disinterest, replied:

At a time like this, doctor?

The doctor placed his hand on Zaita's shoulder and said:

The night is a veil, and our Lord ordained the veil! So, Zeita said

while sighing, “But I am tired now.” Then Al-Bushi pleaded, “Please, fix my hand.” The two men lowered themselves and started praying for him earnestly. (Mahfouz, 1947/1975, p. 50)

The above Arabic proverbial expression can be said as a caution against backbiting and an invitation to the fear of God through keeping a secret. It is an indirect polite expression in the sense that the proverb user indirectly tells the addressee (Zeita) to work on deforming the man’s body at late night to qualify him for begging. He wants Zeita to do the illegal job late night so that no one would see them or probably report that to the police. To convey that meaning, the speaker utters “alāyl satār” (lit. night is a veil). He also uses the second part of the proverb “rabna ’amar bisetir” (lit. God ordained a veil) to imply an ironic meaning simply because Allah (God) does ordain a veil but not for doing illegal acts. The speaker apparently uses the expression as a caution against revealing one’s shortcomings and/or misdeeds. According to Arabic culture and Islam, people should avoid backbiting because it could lead to bad consequences. This same (religious) theme does not exist in the same way in the target language culture since the practice of backbiting or revealing one’s faults may not be condemned in Western culture because of religion, but rather because of social values or principles. I adopt Le Gassick’s literal translation above which makes sense to TL readers since the proverb’s theme “night is a veil” is common in both cultures.

To shed more light on such types of proverbs, let us consider the following proverbial expression:

10. Fa natharat ’ilayha bitahadin wa qālat bighayz:

bal rafaḍtu shābān wakhtārtu shaykhā. faḍahikat Umm Hamida ḍihkatan mujāljlilah wa tamtamat: **“’aldihn fi ’al ’atāqi.”** watarba’at ‘ala alkanaba fi surūr wa qad tanāsāt mu’āraḍatiha alkāthiba wa stakhrajāt sijaratan min ‘ulbat sajjā’iriha wa ’ash’alatha wa rāḥat

tudakhin bilathatin lam tash‘ur biha min qabl. Fanatharat Hamida ‘ilayha bighayz wa qālat: tallāhi laqad farihtu bil‘arūs aljadīd ‘aḍāf surūri. (Mahfouz, 1947, p. 123)

She looked at her defiantly and said with irritation: On the contrary, I have refused a young man and chosen an old one. **There is plenty of fat on an old rooster!** Roared her foster mother. And she settled comfortably on the couch in delight, having forgotten her false opposition. She took a cigarette from her cigarette case, lit it, and began to smoke with pleasure, saying, By God, I have rejoiced in the new bride’s happiness twice as much as my own joy. (Mahfouz, 1947/1975, p. 140)

The above proverbial expression is said of a very old man who is, contrary to what people believe, is still in good health, powerful and has real strength. In Arabic, when people think about an old man whose health is deteriorating, they may utter this proverb to ironically convey the opposite. More often than not, the proverb in its context refers to a girl (called Umm Hamida) who prefers a rich old man to a young one as a husband. Her teasing foster mother uses the proverb ironically to relay the meaning that the old man in question is physically strong and consequently seems to have the sexual ability needed for a successful marriage. It is clear from the context that her foster mother is being impolite in a seemingly polite manner. This is what Leech (1983) calls being offensive in an apparently friendly way, i.e., being ironic. The intended meaning derived from the above example works as follows: What the speaker says to the addressee (her prospective old man husband is still in good health and strong) is polite but is not true; thus, what the speaker really means (her prospective husband’s health is deteriorating) is impolite but true.

The above proverb is hard to render into English as its message or image (an old hen’s fat is likened to an old man’s strength) is opaque to TL readers. In Arabic culture, the word “‘al’atāqi” literally implies an old hen which usually preserves its

“fat.” The image is that the word “al’atāqi” figuratively refers to a very old man, and the preservation of “fat” metaphorically refers to the man’s strength and good health which may ensure successful sexual activity. In terms of translation, Le Gassick’s literal translation does not seem successful and may not be understood by TL readers. In English, the proverb “old is gold” can be accepted as a functional equivalence although it does not connote the ability to perform sex by the prospective old husband which is ironically referred to in the SL proverb. If we choose to translate the proverb communicatively, we may suggest this translation: “Old man’s skills hides incredible strength.”

Conclusion

This study has analyzed the translation into English of ten observational and truthful Arabic proverbs which make use of tautology, irony and metaphor in their phraseologies. The study has shown that the professional translators (Stewart and Le Gassick) often use literal translation methods when they face a difficulty in translating culture-specific proverbs. By doing so, they are inclined to preserve the propositional content of the proverb regardless of its pragmatic import, thus offering TL readers opaque and, mostly, confusing translations. In some other cases, those translators opt for paraphrasing the intended meaning of the proverb, thus sacrificing its proverbial quality. While handling a culture-specific proverb’s implied meaning through paraphrasing may appear a practical solution when compared to literal translation, it seriously impairs the expression’s proverbial status.

The study has also revealed that some proverbial expressions are used ironically in their context and others make use of tautological words. In dealing with ironical proverbs, translators should know that in the case of ironic usages, the speaker’s implied meaning and the proverb’s surface meaning are at variance. Translators may

render ironical proverbs with similar thematic content using literal translation, provided that they use inverted commas and/or exclamation marks in order to alert the reader for the proverb's ironic meaning. With regard to proverbs which make use of tautology, translators should know that Arabic proverbs tolerate the use of tautology more than their English counterparts. As for metaphorical proverbial expressions, they are doubly problematic in translation: While keeping their proverbial status, translators should convey their metaphoric meaning in translation.

References

- AbūSūfah, M. (2017). *al-Amthāl al-'Arabīyah wa-maṣādiruhā fī al-turāth* [Arabic proverbs and their sources in heritage]. Maktabat al-Aqṣá.
- Baker, M. (2011). *In other words: A coursebook on translation* (2nd ed.). Routledge.
- Broeck, V. D. (1981). The limits of translating exemplified by metaphor translation. *Poetics Today*, 2(4), 73-87.
- Brown, P., & Levinson, S. (1987). *Politeness: Some universals in language usage*. Cambridge University.
- Ehineni, T. O. (2016). A discourse-structural analysis of Yorùbá proverbs in interaction. *Colombian Applied Linguistics Journal*, 18(1), 71-83. <https://doi.org/10.14483/calj.v18n1.9660>
- Farghal, M. (1994). Ideational equivalence in translation. In R. de Beaugrande, A. Shunnaq, & M. Heliel (Eds.), *Language, discourse and translation in the West and Middle East* (pp. 55-63). John Benjamins. <https://doi.org/10.1075/btl.7.10far>
- Farghal, M. (1995). Jordanian proverbs: An ethnographic and translational perspective. *Sendebār: Revista de la Facultad de Traducción e Interpretación*, 6, 197-208.
- Ghazala, H. (2014). *Translation as problems and solutions: A textbook for university students and trainee translators* (10th ed.). KonoozAl-Marifa.
- Gibbs, R., & O'Brien, J. (1991). Psychological aspects of irony understanding. *Journal of Pragmatics*, 16(6), 523-530. [https://doi.org/10.1016/0378-2166\(91\)90101-3](https://doi.org/10.1016/0378-2166(91)90101-3)
- Gorjian, B. (2008). *Translating English proverbs into Persian: A case of comparative linguistics*. Semantic Scholar. <http://www.lancaster.ac.uk/fass/projects/corpus/UCCTS2008Proceedings/papers/Gorjian.pdf>
- Kirshenblatt-Gimblett, B. (1973). Toward a theory of proverb meaning. *Proverbium*, 22, 821-827.

- Leech, G. (1983). *The principles of pragmatics*. Longman.
- Mahfouz, N. (1947). *Zuqaq al-Midaq* [Midaq Alley]. The Library of Egypt.
- Mahfouz, N. (1959). *Awlad Haretna* [Children of Gebelawi]. Dar Al-Adaad.
- Mahfouz, N. (1975). *Midaq Alley* (T. Le Gassick, Trans.). Heinemann. (Original work published 1947)
- Mahfouz, N. (1981). *Children of Gebelawi* (P. Stewart, Trans.). Heinemann. (Original work published 1959)
- Mateo, M. (1995). The translation of irony. *Meta*, 40(1), 171-178. <https://doi.org/10.7202/003595ar>
- Nida, E. (1964). *Toward a science of translation: With special reference to principles and procedures involved in Bible translating*. Brill.
- Norrick, N. (1985). *How proverbs mean: Semantic studies in English proverbs*. Gruyter.
- Okamoto, S. (1993). Nominal repetitive constructions in Japanese: The tautology controversy revisited. *Journal of Pragmatics*, 20(5), 433-466. [https://doi.org/10.1016/0378-2166\(93\)90039-R](https://doi.org/10.1016/0378-2166(93)90039-R)
- Ridout, R., & Witting, C. (1967). *English proverbs explained*. Heinemann.
- Searle, J. (1979). *Expression and meaning: Studies in the theory of speech acts*. Cambridge University. <https://doi.org/10.1017/CBO9780511609213>
- Seitel, P. (1976). Proverbs: A social use of metaphor. *Proverbium*, 76, 143-161.
- Shehab, E. (2016). Pragmatic failure in translating Arabic implicatures into English. *Babel*, 62(1), 21-38. <https://doi.org/10.1075/babel.62.1.02she>
- Shehab, E., & Daragmeh, A. (2014). A Context-based approach to proverb translation: The case of Arabic into English translation. *Translation Review*, 90(1), 51-68. <https://doi.org/10.1080/07374836.2014.986779>
- Wierzbicka, A. (1987). Boys will be boys: Radical semantics vs. radical pragmatics. *Language*, 63(1), 95-114. <https://doi.org/10.2307/415385>

Appendix A

UNGEGN/Transliteration Table

Appendix A

ب = b	ط = ṭ
ت = t	ظ = ḏ
ث = th	ع = ʿ
ج = j	غ = gh
ح = ḥ	ف = f
خ = kh	ق = q
د = d	ك = k
ذ = dh	ل = l
ر = r	م = m
ز = z	ن = n
س = s	ه = h
ش = sh	و = w
ص = ṣ	ي = y
ض = ḏ	
ء =	
long vowel a	ā
long vowel i	ī
long vowel u	ū
