# Style Shift in Translation

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The phenomenon of style shift in translated texts is ascribed mainly to textual incompatibility in terms of rhetorical asymmetry and divergence at the formality level. Mandatory shifts result from a systematic dissimilarity between the source language and the target language in terms of the underlying system of syntax, semantics and rhetorical patterns. At the textual level, shifts become more frequent in terms of cohesive relations which are manifest in endophoric references, substitution, ellipsis, conjunctions and punctuation. On the other hand, optional shifts are carried out by the translator's personal preferences under the influence of idiolect and level of proficiency in the target language. It is argued that diglossic divergence leads to an increase in the level of formality in translating and subtitling casual dialogues and conversations from English into Arabic. To demonstrate this, samples are taken from a corpus of translated texts to show how various stylistic patterns operate across cultures.

## 1 Introduction

### 1.1  The concept of style

The concept of style can be defined in terms of the distinctive way an individual or a group uses language, or better still the discourse used to perform distinct functions of language aimed at achieving specific purposes. However, this does not entail that style is simply a matter of form since it is the product of other components such as the genre of discourse, its semantics, syntax and phonology. Indeed, in order to analyze a given stylistic variation one needs an extensive checklist that includes lexical and grammatical categories, allusions, figures of speech, cohesion and the pragmatics of context that govern the function of certain items selected from the total linguistic repertoire. Thus linguistic form is not analyzed for its own sake but for the artistic effect it has on the recipient. In the case of translated literature, style can be understood to refer to the recurring typical features of the source text compared to the typical features of the translated text, thereby arriving at the translator's various conscious or unconscious strategies applied in making choices at the micro level of single lexical items to the inter-sentential macro level of the whole text (Pekkanen, 2007:2).

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## 2 Style Shift

### 2.1 The domain of style shift

A number of studies have been made to establish systematic approaches to style shift with recent developments focusing on the linguistic, social, cultural and aesthetic factors that lead to such a phenomenon (cf. Kaufman, 1988; Thomason, 2001; Al-Zoubi and Al-Hassnawi, 2001). Broadly speaking, a shift is a change that takes place in the process of transposing source text meanings into the target language. Toury (1980:89-121) defines shifts as deviations between actual equivalence and a hypothetical maximal norm of adequate translation. However, since the term 'adequacy' escapes objective evaluation, it is more accurate to consider style shift in terms of dissimilarity or divergence between the source text and the target text.

Shifts are more likely to occur between languages that have different stylistic and rhetorical conventions that are reflected in divergent formal carriers, i.e. semantic or syntactic realizations such as sentences, clauses, phrases, words, phonemes or syntactic-stylistic elements in the form of repetition, deletion, rhythm, word order etc. (Pekkanen, 2007:3). The genre of the source text determines the degree of style shift. Thus, for example, advertising, subtitling and children literature are prone to style shift since the emphasis here is on preserving the character and function of the original text in preference to preserving the form However, in other genres like prose, poetry and religious texts where style conveys an aesthetic function, any shift may alter the creative characteristics of the original.

Style shifts can either be mandatory or optional. Mandatory shifts result from a systematic dissimilarity between the source language and the target language in terms of the underlying system of syntax, semantics and cultural patterns (Peckkanen, 2007:3). Optional shifts, on the other hand, are carried out by the translator's personal preferences under the influence of idiolect and level of proficiency in the target language. Through the translator's intervention, some regional variations, colloquial alternatives and idiolectal collocations may find their way into the target text instead of using the traditional standard equivalents. Despite all efforts to remain invisible, a translator's voice leaves its imprints on the style of the target text.

The problem, as Baker (2000:245-246) points out, is in distinguishing the translator's stylistic characteristics from other source text features. If there is a recurrence of the same type of shift in the presence of other alternatives, that can be considered a style feature of that particular translator. A case in point is Fitzgerald's translation of Omar Khayyam's *Ruba'yyat* wherein the hermeneutic approach resulted in a recasting of the original in a better light that gained momentum for its own merit. Likewise, the short stories of the American writer Edgar Allan Poe were well received by French readers thanks to Charles Baudelaire whose translation eliminated much of

the complexities of the original's style. But the classical moot point of transformation springs forth: wouldn't the act of recreating the original work by way of rewriting and renewing the style of the SL author be considered a transgression on the originality of the translated work? Should we admit the stylistic shifts of pseudo-translations as long as the concept of invariance of content (Toury, 1985:73) is maintained? In other words, at the micro level of morphology, syntax and textual texture both the source text (ST) and the target text (TT) may exhibit variations while at the macro level of semantics the message should be preserved intact since it constitutes the core of the translation process. Schaffner (1998:6) contends that in some cases, the refusal to adapt style confines the reader to a world of foreignness and the source text message may not achieve an equivalent effect on the target recipient.

Some optional shifts may occur in response to the commissioner's requirements in order to cater for the target audience needs. Many cases of explicitation, implicitation, omission and substitution are driven by priorities of purposes whereby the commissioner or the translator introduces stylistic modifications to suit the recipients' age, education and cultural background. After all, it is often argued that a successful translation sounds like an original piece of work, which would seem to imply that the translator is expected to intervene actively to ensure that this ideal is achieved (Schaffner 1998:8).

Non-shifts also occur when source elements (e.g. sentence, clause, phrase, word, image or metaphor) are reproduced intact into the target language. This may be labeled as an act of foreignization. Since the list of the components of style is fairly extensive an exhaustive study of shifts at all levels would be beyond the scope of a single project. Therefore, this paper will focus on two salient features of style shift at the macro level between English and Arabic: textual incompatibilities at the cohesive level and the shift in the level of formality owing to the diglossic nature of Arabic.

## 3 Textual Divergences

Languages have different rhetorical orientations expressed by means of different devices. Such rhetorical variations become more accentuated when translating a text across two different cultures. This may entail mandatory syntactic shifts of tense, mood, order in the subject-verb-object (SVO) sequence, changes in the place of an adverb or adverbial phrase and shifts in the order of sentences or clauses which can all be assumed to affect focalization, i.e. the way the source text is interpreted by target recipients (Pekkanen, 2007:15).

Aside from syntactic-semantic changes, an Arabic translation of an English text tends to gain in volume by way of expansion. The latter occurs when anaphoric proforms are replaced by original references, abbreviations

are restored to their full lexical references, substituted or ellipted items are repeated while presupposed references are reinstated in full. This expansive method, which is aimed at evading the possibility of confusing the relation between a given lexical item and its reference in view of the cultural background of the recipients, is bound to make the Arabic translation longer than the SL text. A good example of such a practice is the translation published in *al-Watan* newspaper (4 August, 1985) of an article on the relations between the USSR and Israel, originally published in *The Christian Science Monitor* (27 July-2 August, 1985). The article makes frequent references to an arrangement being made to restore normal relations between the two countries. One paragraph reads,

> "Perhaps even more important, **it** could clear a major obstacle out of the way of a new era in US-Soviet relations."

The translator preferred to repeat the presupposed element, i.e. 'the arrangement made to restore relations'.

> "وربمـا يكـون الأهم مـن ذلك أن يزيـل **هذا الترطيب** عقبـة رئيسية مـن طريـق عصـر جديد في العلاقات الأمريكية السوفيتية."

[Perhaps even more important, this thaw could clear a major obstacle out of the way of a new era in US-Soviet relations.]

The obvious reason for such a repetition is that Arabic has no neutral pronoun that can be used as a translational equivalent to English 'it'. Opting for either the masculine or the feminine third person singular pronoun may result in the reader confusing the exact presupposed element indicated by 'it' with one of either parties involved in creating such an arrangement. The same process is repeated in the translation of a following paragraph which reads,

> "…With implications so important, let us line up the known facts."

> "ونظرا لمدى أهمية معاني التوصل **إلى ترطيب كهذا بين موسكو و تل أبيب** دعونـا نلخص الحقائق المعروفة."

[…With the important implications of such a thaw between Moscow and Tel Aviv, let us line up the known facts.]

Similarly, as a result of the arbitrariness of forming abbreviations in modern Arabic some abbreviations are spelled out owing to the absence of Arabic contracted equivalents.

M.D. (Managing Director) → العضو المنتدب (ع.م*)
MP (Member of Parliament) → عضو برلمان (ع.ب*)
AD (Anno Domini) → بعد الميلاد (ب.م*)
TV (television) → تلفزيون (تي.في*)
HP (horse power) → حصان (ميكانيكي) (ح.م*)
ICU (intensive care unit) → وحدة العناية المركزة (و.ع.م*)

With the use of more words, the translation becomes more expansive, without actually adding any information that is not in the original.

Another source of style shift is variations in textual segmentation by means of punctuation. Punctuation has never been standardized in Arabic and many books still follow the practice of medieval manuscripts in having no visible punctuation apart from occasional full stops and commas. Likewise, capitalization which is used as a marker of initial segmentation is non-existent in Arabic, past or present (Kharma, 1985:14). When punctuation marks are employed, they are usually inserted in so unsystematic a manner as to be of little help in revealing the discoursal functions of textual segments. Ancient Arabic texts show no sign of adherence to punctuation, even less for assigning a new paragraph to introduce a new thought (Lestaric, 2001). The end of a sentence in Arabic can either be marked by a full stop or a comma. In fact, some Arabic texts are composed of long sentences that could reach a paragraph long with one full stop at the end and several commas with coordinate connectors in between.

Even with the absence of explicit cohesive devices, punctuation marks help native speakers of English to recognize the logical relationship between a group of phrases or sentences. An English native speaker, for example, can understand the link of 'consequence' after the semicolon without an overt linkage marker. When rendered into Arabic, the same sentence will be back-translated with an explicit linking device in order to compensate the absence of a functional semicolon in Arabic.

Global warming is melting the polar icecaps; coastal cities will be flooded.

يؤدي الإحتباس الحراري إلى إنصهار الغطاء الجليدي للقطبين **مما** يتسبب في إغراق المدن الساحلية.

[Global warming is melting the polar icecaps and consequently coastal cities will be flooded.]

Most Arabic texts do not adhere to a thematic-based system of paragraph division and a given theme tends to run on across paragraphs.

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Some modern Arabic writings may attempt to follow the English system of paragraphing only at the visual aesthetic level without reflecting a real division of thought or thematic development (Shiyab, 2009). Unfortunately, the concept of paragraphing, introduced mostly under the influence of Western culture, is often misconstrued as the mere chopping up of a lengthy discourse into smaller 'disorganized' chunks, without understanding the real function of such a division (Kharma, 1985:14).

The following excerpts are quoted from a local Arabic newspaper with another edition published in English. The report carried by the two editions concerns the inauguration of a real estate exhibition. While the English excerpt is divided into two paragraphs with a total of six sentences (three are subordinate) punctuated by full stops, the Arabic version consists of one paragraph with a single run-on compound sentence comprising four long sentences intersected by و 'wa' coordinate conjunctions and a sporadic comma.

> The Fourth Egyptian Real Estate and Investment exhibition began on Wednesday at the Movenpick Hotel. The exhibition witnessed tremendous opportunities for property purchasing and investment from the Kuwaiti market. The exhibition, which will end on May 3 and sponsored by Port Ghalib properties at Port Alam in Egypt, was organized and managed by United Marketing and Organizing Exhibitions (UNIEXPO).
> Egyptian Ambassador to Kuwait, Taher Farahat, inaugurated the exhibition. Speaking to the press, he said: "There is a lot of interest from Kuwaiti investors in Egyptian real estate and a proof of that is their constant participation in our exhibitions. What is more important is that the Egyptian companies are aware of that as well and are participating in those exhibitions." (Al-Watan Daily: May 2nd, 2009).

تنظم الشركة المتحدة للتسويق وتنظيم المعارض يوني اكسبو المعرض المصري للعقار والاستثمار الرابع بالتنسيق مع مكتب التمثيل التجاري والاقتصادي المصري بدولة الكويت وتحت اشراف الهيئة العامة لشؤون المعارض والأسواق الدولية بمصر وبالتعاون مع الاتحاد الدولي لرجال الأعمال «عمار يا مصر»، ويقام المعرض برعاية مجموعة الخرافي حيث تشارك بمشروع بورت غالب الذي يعد درة استثمارات المجموعة في مصر وافتتحه السفير المصري طاهر فرحات الأربعاء الماضي بمركز المؤتمرات بفندق موفنبيك المنطقة الحرة بميناء الشويخ ويستمر المعرض حتى غد الأحد الثالث من مايو الجاري بمشاركة أكثر من 35 شركة ومؤسسة استثمارية عقارية تعرض عشرات المشروعات في جميع أنحاء جمهورية مصر العربية.(جريدة الوطن: 2 /5/ 2009)

[United Marketing and Exhibitions Company (UNIEXPO) organizes the Fourth Egyptian Real Estate and Investment

exhibition in coordination with the Egyptian Commercial and Economic bureau in Kuwait and under the supervision of the Public Authority of International Exhibitions and Markets in Egypt and in cooperation with the International Union for Businessman "Amar ya Misr" , and the exhibition is sponsored by AL-Khurafi Group which participates through Port Ghalib project which is considered the jewel of its investments in Egypt and was opened by the Egyptian ambassador Taher Farahat last Wednesday at the Conference Center at the Movenpick Hotel at the Free Trade Zone in Shuwaikh and will run till tomorrow Sunday the third of the current May with the participation of 35 investment and real estate companies and establishments presenting scores of projects throughout the Arab Republic of Egypt.]

Kharma (1985:14) cites a similar pattern of erratic punctuation in a text translated from Arabic:

The dialogue took place between two generations of philosophy professors…Dr. al-Taweel… and Dr. Abdullah… As for Dr. Abdullah is professor of contemporary philosophy, **and** a specialist in economics and law, **and** author of several studies of literature and philosophy, **and** holder of the state prize for his book of verse. **And** he conducts this dialogue with his ex-teacher Dr.Taweel.

Notice the misplacement or the absence of commas and the introduction of (…) instead of full-stops as well as the overuse of 'and', also called the 'wa-wa' method (Yorkey, 1974:17) which is detailed in the following section.

**4 Asymmetry at the Cohesive Level**

One major factor that contributes to the stylistic finesse of a text is the use of what Halliday terms 'the cohesive relations' which are manifest in endophoric references, substitution, ellipsis, conjunctions and punctuation (Halliday 1976:14). In addition to linking the components of a single sentence, cohesive devices contribute to the integration of several sentences into the macro text. These dependent sentences convey information about one another in order to achieve a given discoursal function. While transferring cohesive links into a target language, a translator has to define what he hopes to achieve from suppressing or reproducing cohesive ties in the recipient language. Although, the translator's primary task is to preserve the ideational

content of the original text, the reproduction of rhetorical and cohesive devices should be closely scrutinized lest the target text be foreignized.

According to Kaplan's concept of 'rhetorical devices', English expresses ideas and develops thoughts in a 'direct', linear and cumulative manner according to a Platonic-Aristotelian pattern whereas Semitic languages (including Arabic) are 'indirect' or 'circumlocutionary' (Kaplan: 15). Indeed, unlike English which favours subordination, one of the outstanding rhetorical features of Arabic is its fluidity, redundancy, repetition, lexical hendiadys and the extensive use of parallel coordinate cohesive devices (Othman: 24). This might explain the lack of adherence to punctuation and paragraph division and the frequent use of a number of intersentential coordinate connectives such as و /wa/ 'and', ف /fa/ 'so' , ثم /θumma/ 'then', أو /'aw/ 'or', أَم /'am/ 'or', بل /bal/ and لكن /la:kin/ 'but' to connect words, sentences and paragraphs (Holes, 1995:215). Other subordinate conjunctives such as إذا /'iða/ 'if', منذ /munðu/ 'since' حتى /ma'iða/ 'if', لو /law/ مـاإذا /ma'iða/ /'iða/ لكي /likay/ 'in order to' بالرغم من /birraġmi min/ 'despite' لما /lamma/ 'when' حتى /ħatta:/ 'until' غير أن /ghayra 'anna/ 'however/ although' بيد أن /bayda 'anna/ are less frequent than their coordinate counterparts.

One of the factors that contribute to the expansion of an Arabic translation of an English text is the overuse of Arabic conjunctions. For instance, Arabic, unlike English, uses the conjunction /wa/ or its equivalent between every two adjacent nouns or adjectives within a given sentence. Thus, for example, the English sentence

'racialism is a dangerous doctrine that produces nothing but evil sins, wars, disputes and rivalry'

is translated into Arabic as,

"إن العنصرية مبدأ خطير لاينتج إلا الشرور والآثام والحروب والتخاصم والتنافس"

[racialism is a dangerous …etc., nothing but evil(*and) sins (*and) wars (*and) disputes and rivalry.]

The first three 'and's are redundant if reproduced in English. Instead, English inserts commas between the first two nouns or adjectives while 'and' is positioned only before the last noun or adjective.

At the paragraph level, /wa/ is often added in Arabic to connect as many as ten sentences. Compare, for example, the following quotation from *The Economist* (10-16 August 1985) with its Arabic translation in *al-Watan* newspaper (August 1985),

"Nobody was surprised that Syria…boycotted the Casablanca gathering. Its fellow rejectionest, South Yemen stayed away. So

did Algeria although it has been edging … between rejectionists and would-be constructionists. Libya's Colonel Qaddafi sent only a denunciatory envoy…who did come. Iraq and Jordan were pilloried for being too friendly to Egypt; Djibouti, Somalia and Oman were castigated for joining Egypt in the week-long Bright Star military manouvres…"

ولـم يسـتغرب أحـد أن تقـاطع سـوريا تجمـع الـدار البيضـاء , وغابـت عنهـا زميلتهـا الرافضـة اليمن الجنوبية. وكذلك فعلت الجزائر رغم أنها إنتهت إلى موقف وسط بين الرافضــين والبنــائين المحتملـين. وأرسـل العقـيد القـذافي مبعوثـا ليبيـا للشـجب فقط. وتعرض العراق والأردن للإنتقاد لمغالاتهمـا فـي صـداقة مصـر. وتعرضت جيبـوتي والصـومال وسلطنة عمان للإنتقاد بسبب إنضـمامهما إلى منـاورات النجم السـاطع التـي إمتدت لأسبوع."

Whereas the English original uses no conjunction to connect the sentences apart from 'so' in "so did Algiers…", its Arabic translation employs six 'and's'.

The overuse of conjunctions to comply with the requirements of fluidity is not limited to /wa/. Expressions such as "من جانب آخر" or "علـى صـعيد" 'on the other hand', "كمـا" 'also' or 'further' and " أمـا" 'as for' are frequently added in Arabic translations of foreign texts. For example, a paragraph in an article on the former USSR-USA relations published in *The Christian Science Monitor* (27 July- 2 August 1985) reads,

Trade talks between the two super-powers have gone reasonably well in recent months. So have talks on Air safety (which began after the Korean airliner downing in 1983).

This paragraph was translated in al-Qabas (8 August 1985) as:

**ومن جانب آخر** حققت المحادثات بين القوتين العظميين تحسنا ملحوظا في الشهور الأخيرة. وكذلك الحـال مـع محادثـات السـلامة الجويـة (التـي بدأت فـي أعقـاب إسقاط الطائرة الكورية في عام 1983).

Here, the translator chose to add ومن جانب آخر 'on the other hand' for no obvious reason other than to make his translation read smoothly and uninterrupted. This illustrates the tendency of the translator to explain the original by providing more information not present in the source text.

The frequency of subordinated sentences is higher in English than in Arabic which favours coordination. In general, the use of subordination will immensely help in making one's writing more mature, sophisticated, interesting and effective. On the other hand, the overuse of coordination makes it both boring to read and difficult to focus on the ideas expressed (Othman: 4-4). Although coordination helps to facilitate comprehension, a

compound sentence with an overuse of *and* becomes vague as the specific logical relationship is made murky and protracted.

Translating Arabic coordinate connecters into English, which favours subordinate structures, would result in unavoidable unnaturalness. Therefore, they are either replaced by subordinate conjunctives or are eliminated altogether by the insertion of punctuation marks. This procedure gives a higher probability for the occurrence of shifts when translating between English and Arabic than say between English and Spanish. Such a shift of coordination into subordination and vice versa is sometimes fraught with a shift in the semantic focus and information weight carried by each (Othman: 22). On the other hand, upon translating English texts into Arabic the retention of subordinate conjunctions will result in an avoidable sense of foreignness, a hybrid text or translationese. To adapt the translation to Arabic style, the translator has to replace some subordinate conjunctions with coordinate counterparts at the risk of incurring a shift in the semantic focus as subordinators don't have one-to-one correspondent coordinators (Ibid).

## 5 Diglossic Shifts

Earlier studies by Nida (1964), Catford (1965) and Slobodnik (1970) diagnosed the causes of style shift in translation as both linguistic and cultural. The latter may occur when the translator is required to replace certain components of style in order to readjust his translation to the general framework of the TL culture. For example, it may be culturally desirable to render the informal style of an SL passage by a formal TL style. An English youth, says Catford (1964: 91), may easily address his father in a casual style; an oriental youth, on the other hand, may have to use honorific forms in such a situation.

Owing to its diglossic nature, Arabic has two main varieties, a spoken, 'less prestigious' colloquial(s) which is seldom used in writing or translation and a high 'superior' variety written and spoken in lectures, media, sermons, translation and official settings. Thus when rendering informal SL texts (e.g. dialogues in novels, plays, film scripts, casual articles in magazines... etc.) into Arabic, translators opt for the superdialectal formal variety, which entails an upgrade of tenor in the form of florid and more sophisticated vocabulary, more cohesive ties and well structured sentences. A style shift in the form of elevated formality is thus discernible in the target text and is considered normal and commendable for Arab readers.

Throughout the centuries the attempts to write in the spoken 'degenerate' variety have been condemned by the Arabs as a breach of the purity of Arabic. The drive behind such a shift in the level of formality was partly fueled by the tendency of the 20th century nationalistic intelligentsia to revive classical Arabic as a unifying factor among regional and local colloquials. However, such a revival was often taken to an extreme whereby

infrequent and uncommon expressions were favored to the detriment of everyday albeit standard expressions. For instance, commenting on his translation of Joyce's *Ulysses*, Taha (طه: 87) resorts to an ancient Arabic work 'Maqamat al-Hareeri' to find a classic word شغر to substitute the common word تبول 'pissed' in the following sentence

'he trotted forward and lifting his hind leg, pissed quick, short at an unsmelt rock.'

Even though Taha justifies this change in terms of finding a lesser offensive 'euphemistic' equivalent, the resulting style in Arabic has acquired an elevated tenor, a matter which contradicts with Joyce's intention of using casual language to describe the mundane events of everyday life within the framework of the 'stream of consciousness'.

The informal style of dialogues in English is characterized by a number of features that are either ignored or replaced in translation by more 'standard' equivalents (Aziz, no date: 5-10):

1. Inexplicitness: The participants rely to a great extent on the shared extra-linguistic context to supply what is missing. Thus there is frequent use of anaphoric expressions, ambiguous reference and random shifts of subject matter (Aziz: 8). In Arabic translations, inexplicitness is often replaced by obvious explicitness, a feature which is characteristic of formal style. As a result of this tendency, anaphoric expressions are avoided in favour of lexical repletion of the original items.
e.g. " It's too cold", mother said." He'd better stay in Benjamin.
    " It won't hurt him", Uncle Maury said."
    "لن يؤذيه الخروج." [Literally: Going out won't hurt him].[1]
2. Grammatical and lexical 'nonfluency': Examples of this include loosely coordinated clauses, incomplete (non-finite) constructions, frequent use of subordinate structures, simple verb phrases and contracted forms of auxiliaries (Ibid.). At the lexical level, simple common vocabulary of high frequency and colloquial expressions (including phrasal verbs) are used instead of specialized terms or 'educated' formal expressions. The following Arabic translation 'normalizes' the text by filling in lexico-grammatical gaps to produce complete constructions.
*Another cut o'bread, Uncle Peter?[2]
أتريد قطعة أخرى من الخبز يا عم بيتر؟
[Would you like another cut of bread, Uncle Peter?]
The use of the particles أتريد (would you like) in the interrogative structure rather than mere intonation is another syntactic marker of formality.

"I know it. It's a judgment on me. I sometimes wonder." [3]

"إني لأتساءل أحياناً. أهو حكم الله علي؟"

[I sometimes wonder. Is it (God's) judgment upon me?]

The syntactic reordering of the affirmative into an interrogative structure in line with the semantic function of the word 'wonder' is another formal feature of style. Notice the insertion of 'God' to modify judgement where the translator could have opted for قضاء / القدر 'destiny, fate'.

Finally, a simple phrase such as 'Be braver' is rendered into Arabic by using a highly formal collocational phrase:

تذرعي بمزيد من الشجاعة. [Literally: thou seeketh more courage.] [4]

SL non-fluency in the form of dialectal or slang spelling is often replaced by standard 'i.e. correct spelling' in Arabic,

"Clithero (kissing her): O, sorra fear of her doin' anythin' desperate. I'll talk to her to-morrow when she's sober. A taste o' me mind that shook her into the sensibility of behaving, herself." [5]

"ليس هناك مايدعوك للخوف من أن تقوم بفعل متهور. سأتحدث إليها عندما تكون في وعيها. سأقول رأيي فيها بصراحة تصدمها فتعرف كيف تحسن سلوكها."

In the following example, the loosely connected sentences may be contrasted with the well-connected sentences of the Arabic translation which is again another feature of formality.

"Mind who you're pushin now…I tend my place o' worship, anyhow…not like some o' them that go to neither church, chapel, not meetin' house…If me son was home from th' threnches he'd see me righted." [6]

"إعرف من التي تدفعها الآن، فأنا على أية حال أذهب إلى الكنيسة، ولست كبعضهم ممن لايذهب إلى كنيسة أو معبد صغير أو حتى مكان للإجتماع. لو كان إبني قد عاد من جبهة القتال لأخذ بحقي."

Instances of style shift abound in the several translations of *The old Man and the Sea*. Hemingway's style is simple, clipped and straightforward. He describes the fictional world as if through the eye of a camera, by stating simple facts, not as an involved person focalizor. He does not explain people's intentions as in some translations which tend to be expansive and explicit. The translator's intervention in explicating the implications of the narrative makes the reader see the fictional events in a slightly different light, as it directs the reader's interpretation of what is described. At the macro-

level, the translation makes the neutral camera-eye presentation more emotive, giving laconic expressions a more involved descriptive content, thus reducing the focalizor's distance from the fictional world (Pekkanen: 15). In the few Arabic translations of *The old Man and the Sea*, similar tendencies of style shifting were noted. In the following excerpt, the translator opted for expanding and elevating the style to a higher formality by lexical selection.

He was an old man who fished alone in a skiff in the Gulf Stream and he had gone eighty-four days now without taking a fish. In the first forty days, a boy had been with him.

"كان الرجل قد بلغ من الكبر **عتياً**. ولكنه لا يزال **رابضاً** في زورقه، وحيداً، يطلب الصيد في خليج "جولد ستريم". وقد عبرت به حتى الساعة، أربعة وثمانون يوماً لم **يجد** عليه البحر خلالها بشيء من **الرزق**. في الأيام الأربعين الأولى، كان له **غلام يعينه على أمره**." (زكريا)

[The man has reached quite an old age. But he was still lying down in his boat, alone, seeking to fish in the gulf of Gulf Stream. Up to this hour, forty eight days have passed and the sea has not granted him any blessings. In the first forty days he had a lad who helped him in his affair.]

The bold-faced Arabic equivalents belong to classical lexicon that conflicts with Hemingway's simple style. The word عتياً used to denote old age is actually cited from a Quranic verse. Similarly, the word الرزق 'blessing or boon (of God) 'carries a religious nuance. Even the word غلام 'lad, page, slave' was originally used in the early Islamic era and has low currency nowadays.

This far out, he must be huge in this month, he thought. Eat them, fish. Eat them. Please eat them".

" وفكر **الشيخ**: ما دمتُ في مثل هذا الشهر، وعلى هذا البُعد عن **الساحل**، فليس من ريبٍ في أنَّها **سمكة** ضخمةٌ جداً. **ثم أنشأ يخاطب السمكة قائلاً** : كُلي هذه **الأطعام**، أيّتها السمكة، كليها! أرجوك أن تأكليها." (بعلبكي)

[The old man thought: since I am in this month, and at this distance from the shore, no doubt it is a very huge fish. Then he embarked on addressing the fish saying: eat these baits, o fish, eat them! Please eat them.]

As with the earlier example, the translator inserts explicit references and expands the narrative with additional interpretive words. Such

alterations undermine the instantaneous and brief nature of Hemingway's style.

Subtitles of films and T.V. series are a good example of style shift. Most of the lexical items used in Arabic translations belong to the vocabulary of formal style; they are not what one would expect to find in the language of everyday utterances. The following are but a few examples taken from several movies and series broadcast on local cable networks in Kuwait during the period between 15-30 April, 2009.

"We're going away soon."
لن نلبث ان نشد الرحال.
سنرحل قريبا Instead of

" I'm turning in."
سأخلد للنوم.
Instead of سأنام

"Don't blame yourself."
لاتنحي بالائمة على نفسك.
Instead of لاتلم نفسك

"I'll fix you a drink."
سأهيء لك كأسا من الشراب
Instead of سأحضر لك مشروبا.

"What's the matter?"/ "What's up!"
"مالخطب؟" This word is used in the context of calamities.
Instead of مالأمر؟

"I hate to return empty-handed."
أكره أن أعود خاوي الوفاض. or أكره أن أعود بخفي حنين
Instead of أكره أن أعود خالي اليدين.

I'm fed up with him.
ضقت ذرعا بهم
Instead of مللتهم.

"I feel that."
يخالجني شعور
Instead of أشعر

"Dig in."
**تفضل بالأكل**

Instead of "كل " or the semi-standard expression سم/ مد يدك

"Let's groove"
**لنقضي أوقاتا ممتعة**
Instead of **لنستمتع/لنمرح**

We are cool!
أبلينا بلاء حسنا (MBC Action: Monster Garage, April 27th, 2009)
أنجزنا العمل or نجحنا

Get out of here!
لاتتماحك معي (MBC Action: Monster Garage April 27th, 2009)
لأصدق ماتقول Instead of

Someone wants to kill me.
ينوي أحدهم النيل مني (MBC Action April 3rd, 2009)
يريد أحدهم قتلي Instead of

He was just gonna make a pit stop.
كان على وشك الذهاب لقضاء حاجته. (Disney Channel/ Phil of the Future
April 3rd,2009)
كان ذاهبا للحمام Instead of

Such a lack of style sensitivity in translation undermines the equivalent effect principle. In the above-mentioned examples, the formal style of the Arabic translations sounds forced and ill-fitted for the casual language of conversation in the English originals. However, since this shift in style is inevitable, all that one hopes for is to narrow the gap resulting from such a shift. To achieve this, the translator should aim at a style that incorporates the formality of Standard written Arabic and the informality of the colloquial. For instance, the translator can reflect in his translation such features of informality as inexplicitness, non-fluency, anaphoric expressions, incomplete sentences and lexical items that are frequently used in both the Standard and the colloquial. Thus instead of عمت مساء for 'good evening" one can equally say مساء الخير and ركب الجواد for 'he rode the horse' instead of "إمتطى صهوة الجواد." Similarly, as was mentioned in one of the above examples, instead of the long phrase "لاتنحي بالائمة على نفسك" for 'don't blame yourself" one might easily say "لاتلم نفسك ".

The substitution of SL dialectal, incomplete and non-fluent stretches of expression by formal equivalents in the target text leads to a loss of what Bastin (1998:7) calls 'exoticism' of the original. In other words, rendering a given ST dialect by TL standard runs the risk of losing the special acoustic (or even visual) effects intended in the ST. A case in point is the Flower Girl's Cockney in Shaw's *Pygmalion* with its peculiar form of tagging 'I'm a good

girl, I am', the frequent use of 'ain't' and the hesitation interjections of 'um...ah...' (*Pygmalion*: act I, lines 24, 76, 79, act II, lines 22, 38)

> e.g. The Flower Girl:
> - I'm a good girl, I am.
> - Nah then, Freddy: look wh' y' gowin, deah.
> - Ain't no call to meddle with me, he ain't.
> - Ah-ah-ah-ow-ow-oo!
> - I'm come to have lessons, I am. And to pay for em too: make no mistake

An attempt to render the above lines in standard Arabic would lack the acoustic effects of the Flower Girl's dialectal features and would sound stilted and unbecoming of the character as Show intended it to be.

> (فتاة) بائعة الورد: إنني فتاة طيبة، حقا إنني كذلك.
> كلا، إنتبه ياعزيزي فريدي لخطواتك وأنت تسير.
> ليس له الحق في التدخل بشئوني، ليس له الحق.
> آه... آه...آه... أو... أو...أو!
> لقد أتيت لحضور الدروس، حقا. و بالتأكيد سأدفع له أيضا.

Hatim and Mason (1997:43) suggest establishing a functional equivalence to bring about Eliza Doolittle's socio-linguistic idiosyncrasies by using non-standard grammar and/ or deliberate manipulation of the lexis in the target text to reflect features of hesitation, randomness and sudden shifts of discourse. Although some translators ventured to use the Egyptian dialect as an alternative, their attempts were poorly received by critics and the public alike owing to the absence of a written Arabic colloquial variety accepted across the Arab world.

## 6 Conclusion

The occurrence of 'optional' and 'obligatory' style shifts reflects the translator's understanding of the linguistic and non-linguistic discrepancies between the SL and TL. In other words, shifts can be described as problem-solving strategies adopted consciously to minimize the inevitable loss of meaning when rendering a text from one language into another. As for optional shifts, it would seem that an inclination to translate in a certain manner, i.e. style, in several works by different authors can be ascribed to a translator's profile under the influence of idiolectal interference.

Although the level of textual formality and fluency of the target rendition may depend on the translator's competence and degree of intervention, the phenomenon at large is the result of linguistic and cultural divergences between English and Arabic. Translators may venture to effect an

approximation of the ST and the TT by means of modifying the lexicon and structure in order to preserve some of the features of the original style.

At the cohesive level, English favors subordinate conjunctions while coordinators are more frequent in Arabic. Given the potential shift in the semantic focus of the translated text, it is proposed that English sentences with subordinate conjunctions be rendered into equivalent counterparts in Arabic instead of using the more natural coordinators albeit the likely cause of stylistic shift.

One area that deserves a follow-up study is the revival of standard Arabic 'informal' words that exist in the colloquial but with a modified pronunciation. Another area that may help to solve the problem of variation in textual volume is the promotion of Arabic abbreviated forms and acronyms that have so far maintained low frequency.. Likewise the standardization of punctuation in Arabic could help in reducing the phenomenon of the 'wawa' dependency.

**Notes**

The examples cited in endnotes (1-6) are quoted from Aziz. p. 13-15. with adaptation.

[1] William Faulkner, *The Sound and the Fury*, pp. 12-13,translated by Jabra I. Jabra, Beirut, 1963.

[2] Sean O'Casey, *The Plough and the Stars in Three plays*, Papermacks, 1968, pp. 149-151 (translated by Fawzi al-Atil, Cairo, 1965.)

[3] William Faulkner, *The Sound and the Fury*, pp. 12-13,translated by Jabra I. Jabra, Beirut,1963

[4] From D. H. Lawrence, *The Virgin and the Gipsy*, London, Penguin, 1974, pp. 76-77 (translated by Zaghlul Fahmi, Cairo, 1970).

[5] Sean O,Casey, *The Plough and the Stars*, Papermacs, 1968, pp.71.

[6] op.cit: pp. 149-151.

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