Dealing with Dialects in Literary Translation: Problems and Strategies

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Abstract

In reviewing the literature on dialect translation, we have noticed that there is a serious lack of translation studies in this important aspect of language variety. Translating dialects in literary genres is important for various reasons. The major one, among others, is that translating a dialect, from a language into another one, is crucial in reflecting a character's social personality, his/her educational background as well as the actual speech. In fact, playwrights attempt to describe certain geographical or regional features that are important in portraying life and characters of actors as should be in a literary work. The aim of the present study is to discuss some problems facing translators in translating dialects between English and Arabic. The proposed study also offers some suggestions to deal with such problems. Various types of English-Arabic and Arabic-English data will be used for illustration and for proposing some types of strategies to deal with dialect translation. The study expands on few previous studies related to dialect translation such as Hatim and Mason (1990 & 1997), Aziz (2002), Asfour (2007), and Farghal (2019). It also discusses the nature of dialect translation controversy between the proponents and opponents of the spoken and written forms of Arabic.

Keywords: Dramatic Dialogue, Literary Genres, Dialect Translation, Translation Strategies.

Introduction

Newmark (1988) asserts that literary genres, which suffer some loss of meaning in translation, are: poetry, sonorous prose, texts with a large proportion of word play or cultural content, and dialect. Dialect translation, according to him, is sometimes set as the ultimate impossibility. The problem is even more complicated when texts are translated from foreign literature into a language such as Arabic in which spoken dialect varieties cause different conflicting attitudes towards using them in written communication. Historically, the conflict has been acute between the proponents of Classical Arabic (CA) and those of spoken or dialect forms, i.e., Arabic dialects (AD). Classicists and purists claim that colloquial Arabic is relatively underdeveloped and should thus be avoided in writing. They also oppose dialect studies on the premise that this will negatively affect the use of a standard language among individuals. On the other hand, proponents of dialect usage argue that it is the mother language of Arabic...
speakers as it is acquired natively and naturally, and those native speakers must not, therefore, be denied using as well as studying it for different purposes. In fact, there are other factors which contributed to the promotion of CA, which are beyond the scope of the present study to elaborate on since our main concern here is to investigate the role of Arabic dialects in translation, an area of research which has been neglected and ignored in translation studies.

In reviewing the literature on dialect translation, it has been observed that there is a serious lack of translation studies in this important aspect of language variety. An informative single study though by AL-Rubai and AL-Ani (2004) was done on translating English drama into Arabic. The paucity of research in translating dramatic dialogs in contrast with translating poetry and fiction, which received more attention in translation, could be attributed to different reasons. Culpeper et al. (1998, 3-4) explain that:

*Part of the problem may lie in the fact that spoken conversation has for many centuries been commonly seen as a debased and unstable form of language, and thus, plays, with all their affinities with speech, were liable to be undervalued. Another reason could be due to the observation that translating a spoken form of a language could be more complex, demanding and challenging than a written form of a language, especially if the translator is required to translate for theater performance rather than for reading purpose.*

According to Bassnett (1998, 90), “Less has been written on the problems of translating theater texts than on translating any other type”. Therefore, all genres of literature, prose, drama and poetry, in fact, must be included in literary translation no matter what reason is given. Including a dialectal speech part of a story or a novel in prose translation is particularly essential to consider or else the translation can be both incomplete and ineffective. Newmark (1998, 64-65) stresses the role of dramatic translation types and genres in theatre: “The spectator/receptor's role is more important in drama than in any other form of art.”

A translator, therefore, is like a playwright who is expected to translate as if he is writing for actors. Dramatic translation, in fact, poses special difficulties which are compounded, particularly when the source text is bidialectal or diglossic such as in the case of Arabic translation, among other problems that we will discuss in the next section of the present study.

**Problems in Translating Dialects**

Let us look at the following two examples to illustrate some problems a translator may encounter in translating English nonstandard dialects into Arabic. The first one is an exchange between a mother and a flower girl on a street in London. It is based on Pygmalion (Shaw, Act 1, translated by AL-Tumaimy (2002, 20-21), and the second one is based on an exchange between two cowboys in an American film entitled "Blood River", with Arabic subtitling:

"The Mother: How do you know that my son's name is Freddy, pray?"
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The Flower Girl: Ow, eeze, ye-oo a san, is e'wai, feud dan y' de-ooty bawmz a mather should, eed now betteren to spawl a pore gel's flahrzn then ran away at hat pyin. Will ye-oo py me f’ them?

Arabic:

بائعة الزهور: هو ابنك، أليس كذلك؟ كان من الأفضل أن يعيد زهور فتاة مسكينة إلى حالتها الطبيعية بدلاً من أن يهرب. هل ستعوضني عن تلك الزهور.

Another example:

Culler (Cowboy's name): You ain't nothin’ but a boy.
You ain't gonna shoot me, are ya?
Look around. There’s thirty of them? They got guns pointed right at ya. Make one move; we'll take the top of your head off.

Arabic:

أنت لست سوى صبي. لا تطلق النار علي، أنظر فيما حولك. هنالك ثلاثون منهم لديهم بنادق مصوبية نحووك.

In the examples above, a short dialogue takes place between the mother and the flower girl: the mother using Standard English in her question, whereas the flower girl using a nonstandard dialect, which is not easily comprehended. The translator used standard Arabic in rendering the two dialects without any attempt to give the reader any clue about the socioeconomic status of each speaker through the dialect used, thus ignoring what the author intended to convey to the reader, i.e., the fact that the flower girl is uneducated. This is clear from the way she uses a broken English dialect. A similar situation can also be observed in the other example above in the cowboy dialogue, in which a standard Arabic dialect was used in the film subtitling, and thus also ignoring the clear type of the nonstandard dialect used by the cowboy. Therefore, the translation in both examples was based on standard Arabic. This is, unfortunately, one of the major options followed by many Arab translators. However, Hatem and Mason (1997, 99) suggest that translators may resort to the classical variety throughout, as it is the case in these two examples, secondly, they may also opt for one of the vernaculars throughout, and finally, to use in their translation one of the vernaculars for less formal speech, and the classical Arabic for more formal speech (a combination of a standard and nonstandard variety for rendering the formal and informal parts of the text). Nonetheless, these options may create different types of problems: If the first option is adopted in translation, as in the case of the examples above, i.e., using standard Arabic in translating a nonstandard English variety, then the result is obviously to ignore the dialect variety chosen by the text author in the target translated text. The justification, we can understand, is that spoken dialects in Arabic are difficult to be represented in writing since Arabic has a strict style, not allowing a correspondence to the expression of nonstandard dialects. Another result of this option is that the translation will not tell the target readers anything about the social status or the lack of education as reflected in using nonstandard dialects such as the deviant features of lexis, syntax and phonology clearly shown through the dialect of the characters. In other words, using a standard language in translating a nonstandard variety eliminates the function of this
variety, and therefore, does not help target readers to understand the intention of the source text in the portrayal of the nonstandard dialect employed by the characters within a literary work.

Regarding the second option, i.e., using one of the vernaculars in translation, the translator will have to deal with the difficulty of choosing an equivalent Arabic dialect in his/her translation. If, for instance, a translator must deal with the nonstandard dialects of the flower girl and the cowboys in the examples above, he might choose the Egyptian dialect or any other Arabic dialect. The Arab speakers who use such dialects will be stereotyped as being "uneducated", and possibly "impolite". Hatem and Mason (1990, 40) mention a similar problem when the Scottish accent was used to represent the speech of Russian peasants in a foreign play. This kind of low status representation created a controversy in Scotland due to the social implications of dialect choice as it brought about a prejudiced attitude towards the Scots. However, it would be wrong to think that all languages have dialects with negative stereotypes, and by the same token, not all readers will necessarily get negative impressions about the choice of a dialect if the intention is to reflect a socioeconomical aspect of a character. The Scottish accent, as we know, has some negative reactions if compared to the standard British dialect.

As for the third option, which combines one of the vernaculars for less formal speech and the classical for more formal speech may still be unsatisfactory from a sociolinguistic point of view. We agree with Asfour (2007) when he says that dialogue language in modern Arabic literature can create a problem for translators dealing with dialects because classical Arabic does not have clearly demarcated lines or levels between formal and informal styles. For example, it will be difficult to find different levels of formality in classical Arabic in order to represent forms of speech used in a dialogue by a worker, a child, a cultured individual, an employee or a teenager. Hatem and Mason (1990, 99) also support this statement by saying:

*In the context of Arabic, to borrow the scale of formality from English and use it uncritically would inevitably entail the erroneous assumption that categories such as classical/vernacular always correlate with standard/non-standard English, on the one hand, and with formal/informal speech, on the other.*

Therefore, most Arab translators cling to the safe system of using standard Arabic in translation as we have demonstrated in the examples above despite the need to translate dialect or language variations. It is clearly observed that subtitles of the film may have reflected the meaning of the dialogue, but unfortunately, not the nuances and register of the dialect used.

Finally, the fourth problem that may face dialect translation is unfamiliarity with the dialect to be translated such as the nonstandard Cockney dialect used by the flower girl in the previous example. Any Arabic-speaking translator, or a specialist in English language, will have problems in deciphering this kind of speech form. A question like: ow, eez, ye-ooa san, is e? (Oh, he is your son, is he?) asked by the flower girl is not easy to comprehend, and translators must rely on other sources for understanding such utterances. Similarly, let us look at the following example from Wuthering Heights, by Emily Brontë, together with its translation into both standard and nonstandard Arabic:
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Wuthering Heights (348-349)
Aw mun hev my wage, and Aw mun goa! Aw hed aimd tuh dee, wheare Aw’d served fur sixty years; un’ Aw thowt Aw’d lug my books up intuh t’garret, un all my bits uh stuff, un’ they sud hev t’kitchen tuh theirseln; fur t’ sake uh quietness.

Standard Arabic Translation:
أريد أجراي وأنا مستعد للمغادرة. لقد كنت على استعداد للموت هنا حيث عملت 60 عاماً وفكرت أن أضع كتبى وكل مقتنياتي في السدة لأنترك لهم الطابع واتجنب المشاكل.

Nonstandard Arabic Translation:
بدي معاشى وبروح. كنت ناوي أموت محاول تمت الابتكار 60 سنة كنت مفكر أخط كتبى في السدة وكل أغراضي عيان أخلي لهم الطابع وأخلص وراتح.

An attempt was made to translate the above example, the use of Yorkshire dialect first into standard Arabic, and then into Jordanian Arabic as shown above. It was quite difficult for the translator, who is a French language colleague, to understand most of the English vocabulary used in this speech. There was no access to find an equivalent translation in general English, and the translator had to resort to non-standard French translation of this text first in order to translate it into both standard and nonstandard Arabic. As we can see, the standard Arabic translation failed to give the proper rendition since the English source text is in a nonstandard form.

Sanchez (2007, 128) says that there are forty published translations of Wuthering Heights in Spanish, but not one of them has attempted to translate any form of non-standard language due to the difficulty of rendering an equivalent Spanish variant with the same connotations in the target language. In fact, a translator may not always have sufficient knowledge of even dialectal variations in his own language, something which complicates matters more in his delicate task.

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We have so far discussed four types of problems facing translators dealing with dialect translation: 1) The elimination of a dialect function in the source text by replacing it with a standard/formal style. 2) The difficulty involved in making a choice for an equivalent regional dialect in the target text. 3) The sensitive/prejudiced attitudes towards speakers if their regional dialect is used in the target text. 4) The translator's unfamiliarity with both the source and target dialect regional variations as well (See As-Safi, 2016; Waly, 2020 on this point). The question to ask now is: should these problems prevent Arab translators from making any attempt to translate dialects in a literary work? To answer this question, there should be some justifications to explain why dialect variability plays an important role in a translation theory.

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Let us now look at the following examples of how translators resorted to two major strategies: colloquialization and standardization before we discuss different types of translation strategies. Below is an illustration from Pygmalion (Shaw 1957, Act, II, 23), first in Egyptian Arabic, and then in standard Arabic for the sake of comparison.

The Flower Girl: Well, if you was a gentleman, you might ask me to sit down, I think. Don't I tell you I'm bringing you business?
Higgins: Pickering, shall we ask this baggage to sit down, or shall we throw her out of the window?

The Flower Girl (running away in terror to the piano, where she turns at bay): I wont be called a baggage when Ive offered to pay like any lady.

Motionless, the two men stare at her from the other side of the room, amazed.

Pickering (Gently): But what is it you want?

The Flower Girl: I want to be a lady in a flower shop stead of selling at the corner of Tottenham Court Road. But they won't take me unless I can talk more genteel. He said he could teach me. Well, here I am ready to pay him—not asking any favor–and he treats me zif I was dirt.

Translation into Egyptian Arabic:

Tumaimy (2008, 67-68) in order to evaluate both of them:

Translation into Standard Arabic
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When looking at the two types of Arabic translation in the example above, we notice that Al-Rashidi followed what we may call a "colloquialization" strategy when he opted for employing the Egyptian dialect, whereas Al-Tumaimy followed a "standardization" strategy when he chose standard Arabic. AL-Rashidi also used standard Arabic for the other characters in the play to show how their dialect is different from Cockney, used by the flower girl. This contrast between the two language varieties reflects a difference between a colloquial variety representing a low social rank and a standard variety representing speakers having a higher social position. AL-Rashidi, who is an Egyptian himself, did not necessarily mean to show a low social esteem to the choice of using the Egyptian dialect although this language variety could also be used by educated Egyptians in informal conversations. To our knowledge, no serious reaction was caused in Egypt against using this dialect unlike the controversy in Scotland over the use of Scottish accent which was employed to represent the Russian peasants on TV dramatization as we have pointed out earlier (Hatem and Mason 1990, 40). However, we may have expected a negative reaction in Egypt if AL-Rashidi had opted to use the Saeedi dialect, a marked Egyptian dialect used in the southern part of the country. In fact, we recall the strong opposition expressed by the Saeedi speakers in Egypt some years ago over the comedy film "A Saeedi Peasant at the American University of Cairo", which clearly portrayed negatively the main Saeedi character and his dialect in the film. It seems, therefore, that a dramatization of a local or a foreign play could always cause problems when it is intended to be performed rather than to be read, a thorny issue which is not possible to discuss within the scope of this study.

As for the other version of the translation in standard Arabic, AL-Tumaimy used this language variety throughout his translation of the play, without showing any kind of demarcation between speakers of both standard and non-standard dialects. Standard Arabic, as we have already pointed out in the introduction of this study, is not confined to any geographical area in the Arab world and is not socially marked. Moreover, standard Arabic is associated with a good degree of education and with the written language. It is, therefore, superior to all other dialects. The translation obviously does not reflect the language of Liza, the flower girl as it does not place her on a social scale. Liza, in this exchange of the example above, is both uneducated and unrefined, and is therefore misrepresented in the Arabic translation of the play. The standard Arabic wrongly used by Liza gives her another personality different from what Bernard Shaw, the original writer, really intended. From a sociolinguistic point of view, her dialect in the play violates all the conventions of proper usage. Such features were intended to manifest the socio-economic and educational level of the character in the source text, but an opposite impression is given to the reader in the target text, i.e. Liza is shown in the translation as a speaker of the High variety, with a high social rank, and a good educational level especially if the play was translated to be read. Our criticism here is not directed at the quality of the translation as it is quite efficient indeed. The translator
performed a good task, but the linguistic choices available to him are limited due to the constraints found in standard Arabic, which do not allow for a style shift within the standard language itself as we have already discussed earlier in this study. However, nobody can deny the fact that mismatches between the source and target texts exist in this type of standardization strategy.

At this point, should competent translators be considerably bound by the written language norms when they are expected to preserve the function of a social dialect in dramatic dialogues? According to Trudgill (1983, 14), there are two aspects of language which are very important from a social point of view: "first, the function of language in establishing social relations, and second, the role played by language in conveying information about the speaker". Translation theorists always stress the need for taking these aspects into consideration, and translators are expected also to make their translations an adequate reproduction of the source texts as much as possible. This means that stylistic differentiation between different characters as they are shaped in the source plays must be reflected in translating drama. It also means that translators are not expected to cling to the safe system of employing a standardization strategy despite the difficult linguistic challenges facing them in this respect.

Sanchez (2007, 123-124) explaining the value of sociolinguistics in translation rightly affirms that "the language varieties individuals use and the words they choose when they communicate, as well as the way in which they express themselves, can reflect their social, regional and ethnic origin, including sometimes even the gender". This confirms the fact that, it is essential to preserve the social as well as the cultural features of a translated text, and consequently to try to find a corresponding equivalent in the target language. Moreover, the construction of character development in dramatic language is usually achieved through what the characters say. Van Peer (1989, 9) maintains in this connection that "a character, it can be hardly denied, is what readers infer from words, sentences, paragraphs, and textual composition depicting, describing or suggesting actions, thoughts, utterances or feelings of the protagonists". The linguistic organization of a text will predetermine to a certain degree the kind of 'picture' one may compose of a protagonist.

Therefore, if a marked dialect variety is used intentionally by a text producer, it must then communicate a certain message or try to achieve a specific sociolinguistic effect, something which requires employing systematic translation strategies in order to maintain the intended function of the dialect. In fact, in modern Arabic fiction, the two translation strategies used above, i.e., standardization and colloquialization are often employed by Arab writers to represent speech in written Arabic. The Arab writers resort to both standard and non-standard Arabic in their composition of fiction as text producers to convey to their readers the functions of different language varieties used by their characters. Why should we then blame translators from English into Arabic for doing the same in their translation when two dialect varieties are originally used in foreign texts? In fact, Yousef Idris sometimes made a combination of both, standard and non-standard dialect use even in one sentence, as the following example shows:

English Translation: So, he made a triple oath to divorce me unless he broke my arm.

(Farhat's Republic). In other examples, only nonstandard Arabic is used by one of the characters:
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English Translation: Not this clowning and belly dancing which is good for nothing. (Farhat's Republic).

The late Sudanese writer, Al-Tayeb Saleh also resorted to both colloquial (Sudanese dialect), and standard Arabic also in some of his short stories such as in "Ors Ezein", or "The Wedding of Ezein". He regularly represented the actual speech of his characters through Sudanese Arabic as the following example shows. The setting is at a school in the early morning when a student comes late to class). The principal reprimands him.

Arabic Text:

النااظر: يا ولد يا حمار.ايه أخرك ؟

الولد: يا افندى سمعت الخبر؟

النااظر: الخبر بتاع ايه يا ولد يا بهيم؟

الولد: الزيين ماش يغدوه لبعد باكر.

English Translation:

Principal: You, donkey boy, what is it that made you come late?

Student: Sir, have you heard the news?

Principal: What sort of news, you dumb animal boy?

Student: They're gonna perform marriage contract (wedding) the day after tomorrow.

The above examples, among many others in modern fiction, clearly show the importance of representing dialectal speech in written Arabic, thus combining both colloquial and standard Arabic language varieties by a good number of Arab writers.

From the discussion above, we have observed how a discourse and register analysis (characterization of speech) puts together various ideas from both pragmatics and sociolinguistics that may contribute a lot to translation. We have chosen to focus on Hatem and Mason's approach in this area because it is more relevant to our study which considers the way social and power relations are communicated when translating dialects in dramatic dialogues especially for tackling the linguistic structure and meaning of texts. In fact, an analysis of the lexicogrammar and discourse semantics of the characters' speech in dramatic dialogues can help us understand the features of their sociolects. For instance, the character's aggressive sociolect of Culler, the cowboy in the film, Blood River discussed earlier, clearly reflects his sociocultural environment. The linguistic forms of his non-standard dialect, such as when using contracted structures” ain't, nothin’, gonna, ya…” will be difficult to ignore in translation if we need to illustrate the moral assumptions associated with this language variety, i.e. to portray the picture of a character being both uneducated and vulgar. A competent translator in this case faces a linguistic challenge posed by such a dialect. He is, moreover, challenged by the attempt to break through the stiff linguistic model of the written form of language (standard styles) in order to draw close to the spoken form (low levels). Such low or deviated levels of language demand systematic translation strategies in
order to preserve the function played by low dialects in the shaping of characterization. A discussion of translation strategies will be dealt with below to offer some solutions to problems of translating dialects.

**Dialect Translation Strategies**

It is important, to begin with, to explain what is meant by the concept of strategies, and to try to distinguish it from other related terms such as tactics, plans, rules, methods...etc. Lorscher (1991, 67-81) defines a translation strategy as "a potentially conscious procedure for the solution of a problem which an individual is faced with when translating a text segment from one language to another". He further analyzes the concept of a strategy into four constituents (1) procedures carried out by an individual; (2) planning; (3) goals; and (4) a sequence of actions for reaching a goal. In other words, we think that translators, especially those with a limited experience, first need to identify a translation problem to solve it by considering strategies available to them. To determine on a strategy and to evaluate the result, a translator may need to consult a teacher, an editor, a publisher, or potential readers of the target text. However, professional translators with a long experience may have attained strategies which are already available at their disposal. Competent translators, moreover, may use the strategies they have acquired over the years in a fast and unconscious way in spite of the fact that their developed skills may not always result in optimal solutions to satisfy all target readers.

In this section, we are going to use data from English-Arabic translation in to suggest some solutions to deal with dialect translation problems by offering different types of strategies for the problems. To begin with, the masterpiece classic novel, Moby-Dick, by Herman Melville, published in 1972 along with its translation into Arabic by Ihsan Abbas (1998) will be used for illustrating some strategies. Melville, the author, and Abbas, the translator, are both well-known in English and Arabic literatures. An analysis of some selected examples from the source text will be compared with the Arabic translation to identify the strategies adopted by the translator in dealing with dialect translation. Other examples will also be selected to suggest both additional and alternative strategies not employed by the translator for the sake of illustration.

Chapter 64 of the novel describes the sailing life aboard a whaling ship, where an old black character by the name of "Fleece" works as a cook. His boss, Stubb, talks to him about food, giving him some instructions about how to make good whale-steak, and to talk to sharks over the side of the ship in order to keep quiet and stop the noise they make.

Addressing the black cook, Stubb says: "Away, cook, and deliver my message...goes and preach to 'em"(1972, 400). The following dialogues are first between "Fleece" and the sharks, and then with Stubb, followed by the Arabic translation:

Fleece: Fellow-criters: Ise ordered here to say dat you must stop dat dam noise dare. You hear? Stop dat dam smackin' ob de lip! Massa Stubb say dat you can fill your dam bellies up to de hatchings, but by Gor! You must stop dat dam racket!"
Stubb: 'Cook,' here interposed Stubb, accompanying the word with a sudden slap on the shoulder, 'Cook! Why, damn your eyes, you mustn't swear that way when you're preaching. That's no way to convert sinners, Cook!'

Fleece: 'Who dat? Den preach to him yourself,' sullenly turning to go.

Stubb: 'No, Cook; go on, go on.'

Fleece: 'Well, den, Bellubed fellow-critters:-

Stubb: 'Right! 'Exclaimed Stubb, approvingly,' coax 'em to it; try that,' and Fleece continued.

'Dough you is all sharks, and by natur wery voracious, yet I zay to you, fellow-critters, dat dat voraciousness –top dat dam slappin' ob de tail! How you tink to hear, 'spose you keep up such a dam slappin' and bitin' dare?'

'Cook', cried Stubb, collaring him, 'I wont have that swearing. Talk to 'em gentlemanly.'

Once more the sermon proceeded. (1972, 401).

The selected excerpt above clearly shows that Melville intentionally used the Black English dialect of "Fleece", and this must have been done painstakingly in order to portray a character's personality through his nonstandard dialect, and also to place this character on the social ladder. The literary realization of this dialect, which deviates from the norm, was done through distinctive features of lexis, syntax, phonology and even spelling: "Fleece, the old black cook", makes use of a dialect which has certain social connotations reflecting his social status: numerous mispronunciations due to sound substitution such as "dat" instead of "that"; "ob" instead of "of"; "de" instead of "the"; "belubed" instead of "beloved"; "dough" instead of "though"; "den" instead of "then"; "zay" instead of "say"; "tink" instead of "think"; "dare" instead of "there" In terms of syntax, "I'se ordered" instead of "I am ordered"; questions without the auxiliary "do", "You hear?" instead of "do you hear?" or the omission of the auxiliary "be", "who dat?" instead of "who is that?" lack of subject verb agreement, "you is all sharks" instead of "you are all sharks". On the morphophonological level, notice also how the final realization of "smacking" is pronounced as "smackin"; and "slapping" is pronounced as "slappin".

It is clear, therefore, that Melville used this dialect variety primarily for characterization; if a translator decides not to translate this functional dialect, then he ignores portraying the character as intended by the author. A competent translator needs to tackle the problem of translating this type of text by trying to find an equivalent variety in the target language. This is important because target readers of the translated text expect to associate a certain dialect with a social group. The following translation by Abbas was an attempt on his part to use a dialect he is well-conversant with, the rural Sudanese language variety, in order to communicate the spirit of the dialogue and to give a natural tinge to the interaction between two speakers (Stubb and Fleece) representing two language varieties. Although Abbas was not a Sudanese himself, he lived in Sudan teaching there for many years, and he was aware of how the rural Sudanese dialect functions.
Arabic dialect translation (Abbas 1998, 358-359):

FILIS: "The kowtows I made; now I say, you are to wash the room. What is to happen? Are you going to wash your hands? What are you going to wash, your head, your hands?"

FELIS: "I heard you calling! God be with you. Don't enter! We are following you in the toilet!"

Felis: "You go out! God be with you. We are following you."

FELIS: "No! We did not understand what you said."

FELIS: "Fleece, this is ugly. Tell me who is this kowtow?"

FELIS: "Tell me who is this kowtow?"

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FELIS: "Tell me who is this kowtow?"

The following are six suggested types of strategies:

1) Colloquialization

The strategy Abbas employed here is colloquialization. This strategy was important in depicting the character of "Fleece", since as Aziz says, (2002, 2): "how a character speaks is an important part of the process of characterization and should be reflected in a translated text [...].and that a conversation in a novel or a short story should be written in the low variety if it is to imitate the style and the language of a natural conversation". Moreover, Aziz criticizes "the present practice among translators (and some writers) to render conversation in a formal (sometimes a high formal) style, which is a characteristic of the high variety". Colloquialization was, therefore, used to substitute the source Black dialect text associated with the underprivileged character in the novel. By adopting this strategy, Abbas tried to imitate, through the rural Sudanese Arabic, the syntactic, phonological and morphological anomalies found in Black English, i.e., awkward constructions having similar features to the dialect of the source text.

2) Standardization or Neutralization

A second strategy used by Arab translators is neutralization (See Farghal and Shunnaq 2019) or standardization. This strategy decreases all stigmatized dialect markers of the source text by using a standard target language variety, and thus avoids using any equivalent dialect. In the following example, we provide an illustration of this strategy to some excerpts used in the previous example above:
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Example:
Fellow-critters: I’ve ordered here to say that you must stop dat dam noise dare. You hear? Stop dat dam smackin’ ob de lip! Massa Stubb say dat you can fill your damn bellies up to de hatchings, but by Gor! You must stop dat dam racket. Dough you is all sharks, and by nature wery worracious, yet I zay to you, fellow-critters, dat dat worraciousness.”

We offer the following proposed Arabic translation using a neutralization strategy:

In this procedure, the number of all dialect markers in the English text was decreased at all linguistic levels. Neutralization, therefore, stripped the Black dialect text of the social connotations and the linguistic distortions. In other words, employing this strategy essentially eliminates the use of the marked Black dialect completely with the result that the characterization also lost its strength.

3) Pidginization

A third strategy suggested in this study is pidginization. This solution to dialect translation draws on using pidgin Arabic, used usually by the foreign labor force in different Arab countries, consisting of both skilled and unskilled manual workers and maids. Pidgin speakers (temporary immigrant workers) in this case, are held low esteem by their Arab masters. The speech varieties used by those speakers are simplified forms of Arabic both syntactically and semantically. The familiar term for pidgin among linguists can also be foreigner talk for such a simplified register. Below are some examples of pidgin Arabic. These examples are based on our informal observations in Saudi Arabia, Kuwait and Jordan. An attempt is made to translate in pidgin English is given between brackets:

Examples:
We do not understand: nihna ma yifham (we not understand).

I drive a taxi. I must work: ana su: g taxi. ana lazim yeshtighil (taxi me drive.I must to work).

This person has a good brain: hadak fi: mux zein. (dat has good head).

No fasting. Ramadan has ended: sar ma fi sawm. Ramadan khlas ru: h (Ramadan finished, no more fast).

There is a good restaurant to eat at: fi” matam zein mal akel (food good eat restaurant here).

The examples above represent reduced forms of Arabic: loss of verb inflections, adjectives precede their nouns, lack of subject-verb agreement, among other anomalous structures. These features of pidgin
seem to satisfy the criteria used by Hall (1966), Ferguson and De Bose (1977), and Mulhausler (1986). Not all translators are necessarily familiar with Pidgin Arabic except those who had the chance of communicating with foreign workers in Arab countries especially in the Gulf countries where thousands of immigrant workers are found. We only offer this form of Arabic in translating dialects as an alternative to avoid using a particular Arabic dialect. The advantage of employing this strategy, moreover, is that it will not cause any negative prejudice against Arabic dialects, since Pidgin does not usually have native speakers using it, and consequently it does not activate negative associations among its speakers.

4) Artificial Variety

A fourth related strategy to pidginization is the creation of an artificial variety or pseudo-dialect. This could be a fictitious, unspecified dialect made up by the translator. The artificial variety is devoid of standard language features. It differs from the pidgin form in that it does not exist in the target language. It can be called a ‘broken dialect’ since the translator intentionally distorts its forms by using substandard patterns for the social purposes of language use to portray certain characters in the target dialect. Translators who opt to use this strategy, however, must be aware of making this contrived dialect accessible to the readers as much as possible. Features of the artificial dialect may include hesitations, pauses, false starts, anomalies in grammar, vocabulary, and pronunciation. In brief, what a translator aims at when using a pseudo dialect strategy is mainly to produce incorrect language forms to capture the speech of certain characters. This could be done possibly by making appropriate types of errors such as identifiable syntactic errors: gender error, failure to use relative pronouns, missing indirect object or errors in using the plural system. In fact, creating this type of dialects will pose special challenges to a translator who, at the end of the day, will either be credited or blamed for his attempt of dialect creation for a given target audience. It is natural for different readers to have different reactions to a translated text especially if it does not abide by the accepted norms in different countries. Zaltin (2005, 14), in this respect, says that "Spain and the Caribbean countries are more open to the use of slang and obscenities than Chile and Argentina, where audiences will prefer more formal language".

By the same token, we expect a similar situation in the Arab countries, where certain readers in certain countries of the Middle East may have different preferences, reacting positively or negatively to dialect translation in literary works. The division between the classicists and the colloquial proponents in this part of the world is characterized by an endless conflict between those who oppose or support dialect studies. Dialect opponents base their argument on the premise that such an undertaking could weaken the classical language and give dialects more importance at the expense of the cultural and religious identity associated with the language. On the other hand, proponents of the colloquial form argue that individuals using their native dialects can express themselves much better and more naturally than when using a formally learned language taught consciously at schools. It is beyond the scope of the present study to elaborate on this point of controversy (see Al-Wer 1997, and Davdar 2020).
5) Comment Insertion

A fifth strategy that we suggest for marked dialect translation is what we may call "comment insertion". In this strategy, certain clarifying phrases are inserted to describe a character's dialect like the following example:

"Fleece, the Black cook, speaks with a heavily marked Black English"
(In this case, the problem is transferred to the actor if he is to perform on stage).

Another inserted comment by the translator is: "Fleece said in a local vernacular".

The following are equivalent inserted comments in Arabic which could be like:
And he said in a local dialect
وقال بلحلة محلية

And he responded in a Bedouin dialect
وأجاب بلحلة بدوية

And he added in a rural dialect
واضاف بلحلة ريفية

And he said in a weak/poor dialect
وقال بلحلة ركية

These inserted comments may help target readers get the intended impressions about dialect functions through describing a character's marked dialect and help them evaluate the social and emotional situation of the character, as well as the linguistic aspect of the local color too. It must be admitted, however, that the challenge in theater (rather than in reading) may never be fully resolved in translation alone.

6) Orthography

A sixth type of strategy is non-standard orthography. This strategy makes use of non-standard spelling such as the omission or addition of certain letters to depict idiosyncratic dialects or the speech of foreigners. Kenny (2001, 144-147) cites some examples of this strategy used first in the source text and then reproduced by translators, "Pieke Biermann uses non-standard spelling to depict the Berlin dialect spoken by the prostitutes in her novel "Violetta", Eric Loest uses non-standard spelling to depict the Saxon dialect and the German of a Polish couple". Kenny, further, explains that "such non-standard spellings are mostly used to provide information about speakers and/or other aspects of the context of the situation where readers are forced into alternative modes of interpretation". It should be mentioned here that a translator making use of this strategy may draw the attention of the source text readers, through a translator's note, about the motivation for using unconventional spelling forms in the translated text to avoid a possible reader intolerance of unusual orthography. In fact, some source text writers such as Shaw did write notes of this nature when he depicted through bad spelling the non-standard dialect of the flower girl by saying in a note during the first appearance of the flower girl in the first act of the play "Here, with apologies, this desperate attempt to represent her dialect without a phonetic alphabet must be abandoned
as unintelligible outside London (Shaw 1957, 9). Unfortunately, most Arab translators who translated this note did not inform target text readers about its intention since the dialect was rendered in classical Arabic, and therefore the note lost its value.

Conclusion

This study has shown through a variety of examples that the translation process may sometimes require a translator to be a coauthor of the source text through his intervention by offering to the TL reader what translation theorists call the "Skopos" (purpose) of the target rather than the source text (Vermeer 2000). In this respect, Farghal (2017, 2019) rightly describes this kind of translator's intervention as either extrinsic or intrinsic managing. “Extrinsic managing” is used when the translator superimposes certain directionality on the target language text by reorienting the target reader in presenting "thought-worlds that are different at varying degrees from those expounded in the source text".

We have already provided examples where translators changed both register and discourse when translating the substandard dialects used by certain characters in dramatic dialogues. In such cases the translators attempted to adopt an equivalent dialect of their own choice in order to be able to portray a character through the kind of dialect he uses. Extrinsic managing, in this case, may be argued to be "condemnable" rather than "commendable", to use Farghal's terminology. It could be condemnable from the viewpoints of those who oppose employing a non-standard dialect in Arabic translation and the other problems we have already discussed, which result from this kind of translation direction. "Intrinsic managing", on the other hand, "is meant to facilitate things for the TL reader by offering translations that read smoothly and naturally" (Farghal 2019, 40). This kind of managing tends to be "commendable".

Competent translators of dramatic dialogues with marked/non-standard dialects in literary work need to familiarize themselves with the peculiarities and connotations of certain marked dialects. Recreating substandard speech in dialogue translation naturally requires a linguistic sensitivity akin to the translation of poetic texts as we have tried to show when employing various types of translation strategies. Using some of these strategies in translation is meant to achieve an equivalent sociolinguistic/cultural impact on the target readers at the level of either dialect or idiolect (individual speech). However, it will be difficult to claim that such strategies will solve all problems of dialect translation. They are offered only to draw the attention to the fact that translators need to think of how it is possible to render important social features of the source text's non-standard speech into the target text. Moreover, the tendency of bypassing dialect translation in Arabic translation for different reasons discussed earlier in this study is another consideration for offering the strategies (See also some other similar strategies suggested by AL-Rubai and AL-Ani 2004). Therefore, we feel that if playwrights intentionally deviate from standard speech in order to convey certain social implications in developing characterization, then this deviation needs to be reflected in a parallel dialect translation recognized by the target readers.

The colloquial Egyptian dialect, "of the illiterate"(Badawi 1973), we believe, may offer a more hospitable climate than other Arabic dialects in different countries for translation. Badawi, in this respect, identified five levels of Arabic: The Classical Language of the tradition, the Modern Classical Language,
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the Colloquial of the Educated, the Colloquial of the Enlightened, and finally, the Colloquial of the Illiterate, which is understood almost by all speakers of Arabic due to the strong influence of the Egyptian mass media and its dominance of Arabic TV and cinema. Our informal observation, moreover, also shows that the colloquial Egyptian dialect of both the educated and the uneducated has a good influence on the vernaculars of many Arabs (in terms of comprehension and sometimes production) in the Middle East and in the North African Arab countries. The importance of Badawi's five level model, which is quite different from Ferguson’s description of diglossia we have already discussed, is that it reflects the kind of education received by an individual speaker. We, therefore, recommend these levels to be considered in future studies on dialectical varieties.

مشاكل واستراتيجيات ترجمة اللهجات في الأدب

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الملخص


الكلمات المفتاحية: الحوار السرحي، الأنواع الأدبية، ترجمة اللهجات، استراتيجيات الترجمة
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