

## Translating dialectal expressions and terms embedded in Saudi modern novels with a particular emphasis on Ragaa Alsanea's *Girls of Riyadh*

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## Abstract

Translating dialectal terms and idiomatic expressions embedded in Saudi contemporary fiction is an underresearched topic, and the assessment of translating dialectal terms and expressions has not been examined adequately as there is a scarcity in the studies addressing such a translation issue. Therefore, the current study is mainly interested in assessing how far the translators of *Girls of Riyadh* could succeed in translating the embedded dialectal expressions in the novel and whether their translation could transfer the overall effect, aesthetic values, cultural atmosphere, style and pragmatic effect. To achieve this end, the study has classified dialectal elements under the rubric of cultural markers and assessed the rendition of these cultural markers in connection with Dickins' degrees of cultural transposition and House's concept of covert translation and its criteria. Following the assessment of samples from the novel, the study has found that the translators neither follow domestication nor foreignization and that they rely heavily on the communicative translation strategy, and in most cases dialectal expressions are omitted or rendered into formal English.

**Keywords:** covert translation; cultural marks; dialect; idiomatic expressions; cultural transposition.

## 1. Introduction

This paper is mainly concerned with assessing the translation of cultural markers and dialectal and idiomatic expressions embedded in *Girls of Riyadh* (2005), a Saudi novel authored by Ragaa Alsanea and translated by the author of the novel and Marilyn Booth (2008). Newmark (1988: 31) defines cultural markers “as words and combinations of words denoting objects and concepts, characteristics of the way of life, the culture, the social and historical development of one nation and alien to another”. These cultural markers are represented clearly in Saudi novels via using dialectal expressions and terms and culture specific elements and so on. Many studies have examined the linguistic aspects of Saudi dialects ranging from phonological, sociolinguistic, semantic, syntactic to pragmatic studies (e.g. Arnold & Klimiuk, 2019; Behnstedt, 2009; Holes, 2018; Ingham, 1994; Trudgill, 2009). In the same vein, there are many studies addressing the (in)translatability of Arabic literature into English, but there are few studies dealing with the problems stemming from translating Saudi literature into English. What is striking, however, is that studies on whether and how dialectal expressions and terms embedded in Arabic literature are translated and more specifically in contemporary Saudi novels are known for their scarcity to the extent that it is seldom to encounter a study focusing on addressing the problems of translating Saudi dialects into foreign languages. Hartman (2012) remarks that the translation of *Girls of Riyadh*, a Saudi novel, poses a significant translation challenge due to the employment of an experimental literary form. This experimental literary form draws heavily on “playing with her register of Arabic including Saudi dialect, Americanized Arabic, and the like” (Hartman, 2012: 17). She adds that the translator has purposefully adopted foreignization for translating the dialectal expressions and terms embedded in the novel in order to maintain the overall effect of Saudi culture in the TL; the publisher, however, asked her to smooth out the foreignization of dialectal terms and expressions in order to meet the expectations of the readership. The publisher favors domestication over foreignization and the translator adopts foreignization. Adopting either domestication or foreignization is insufficient to deal with the sheer complexity and ambiguity in translating dialectal expressions and terms.

Another notable exception is Farghl and Al-Hamly’s study (2015) on the semiotic/pragmatic value of employing proverbs in *The Four Girls of Riyadh*. Farghl and Al-Hamly’s study focuses on how and whether the translator succeeded in transferring the semiotic/pragmatic values of the proverbs used in the novel in the English translation. The study examines a corpus of 24 proverbs / proverbial expressions extracted from the novel. The dialectal terms and cultural bound-features embedded in these proverbs were omitted in the translation and a literal translation approach was followed. The study incorporated context as a discourse parameter that enriches the hypothesis of the translatability of proverbs. In an innovative article dealing with the cultural politics of *Girls of Riyadh* in translation, Ware (2011) has drawn critics’ attention toward the aim of translation itself and the target readership expectations. He argues that *Girls of Riyadh* has the potential

to feed the British expectations of sex, sexuality and censorship in Saudi Arabia. In the same vein, the book contains invaluable anthropological information that is so interesting to the British reader which requires to reflect the SL as accurately as possible. Despite the idea that these two goals seem to be contradictory, they have to be realized together. Since the novel is replete with Saudi slang and dialectal terms and expressions, these dialectal terms require to be accurately rendered without losing their effect in the TLT. Ware's study, however, does not address the translation strategies that help achieve the expectations of the readership without either distorting the valuable anthropological information or thwarting the SL overall effect in the TLT.

What the current paper aims at is to assess the translation of slang and dialectal terms and expressions including proverbs and idiomatic expressions in the translation of *Girls of Riyadh*. The assessment will focus on functional correspondence between the SL and TL and whether the translation could transfer the same effect of the SL to the TL not only without breaking the principle of fidelity but also without failing the expectations of the target readership. The assessment will be based on House's principle of covert translation and Dickins' model of cultural transposition and its various degrees. Therefore, the present study attempts to provide answers to the following questions:

- 1) How can the dialectal aspect affect the translation problems in the translated novel?
- 2) What is the validity of the proposed approach for assessing the selected translation samples?

Prior to defining and discussing the key concepts in translation, it is important to explain that this study is located within the framework of descriptive translation studies (DTS), in the sense that it provides an analysis of a ST-TT pair (Toury, 1995: 10).

## 2. Najdi dialect and the emerging socioeconomic realities

Dialect is generally defined as a low variety of language which is used in rural areas, and it is associated with uneducated people and the working class. Therefore, dialect is a low variety of language (Auer, 2005; Chambers & Trudgill, 1980; Guella, 2015; Ingham, 1994; Holes, 2018). Trudgill (2009: 3) remarks that dialects "can be regarded as subdivisions of a particular language". It is a language variety which is mainly influenced by geography and social interaction. Different geographical locations entail linguistic differences resulting into a greater difficulty in comprehension. However, "geographical space ... is not enough to account for Variation" (Spolsky, 1998: 28). Socioeconomic realities too contribute to making linguistic differences and dialectal variations. This study focuses on the translation problems of the Najdi dialect because the novel under examination was written in Riyadh—the central geographical location of Najd. Najdi dialect has been subject to remarkable linguistic changes.

Looking at the history of Najd area, one can easily know that it was such a geographically isolated area in the Arab peninsula, and this geographical isolation amidst such a grand desert impeded its contact with the neighboring Arab countries. Ingham (1994: 6) writes:

The Bedouin and the population of inner Najd were always in the past fairly infrequent visitors to the outer lands and consequently little was really known about their dialect by the inhabitants of Syria, Iraq and Egypt from whom such statements usually originated either directly or by report. However, there is an element of truth in these statements as there is no doubt that when compared with the dialects of the outer area, these dialects do retain a number of features of an archaic type and thus have a somewhat Classical ring when compared to the other more well-known dialects.

The Najd region has been vulnerable to unprecedented demographic and socioeconomic changes following the discovery of petroleum in Saudi Arabia. It has no longer been such a nomadic isolated region which suffered from lack of natural resources, poverty and unavailability of modern education. The oil revenues have converted the country into an urban community capable of hosting multinational companies and establishing an international education system; this has largely contributed to changing the Najd dialect. It has become an attractive place for foreign laborers from Egypt, Jordan, Syria, Sudan, India, Pakistan, Bangladesh, East Asia and the West, and these expats have made an impact on the change of Saudi dialect. Many Saudis started to travel abroad for tourism and education purposes. Due to this type of emerging social realities, Najd dialect has shifted from a mere nomadic and simple dialect to an urban and complex one, which can be subsumed under the umbrella of social dialectology, which “differs from traditional dialectology in its shift of focus from rural, settled communities to communities characterized by immigration and mobility” (Britain & Cheshire, 2003: 2). Studying Najd dialect from a sociolinguistic perspective helps reveal its complex relationship with the surrounding realities, the deep impact of the changing socioeconomic realities upon people’s perception of language and even their evaluation of meaning that provides peculiar senses for the lexical items that once had maintained settled meanings. In this respect, Spolsky (1998: 28) remarks that “all languages change over time, as new words are added to deal with new concepts or as contact with other languages and ‘phonetic drift’ leads to modifications in phonology”.

The contact of the Najd dialect with various Arabic dialects and different languages has distanced it away from Classical Arabic, which results in semantic change of many of its lexical items and increases the gap between the Najd dialect and Classical Arabic / MSA. Many dialectal expressions and terms have changed to match the new socioeconomic realities of Saudi Arabia. Najd dialect is no longer able to maintain its phonological, semantic and lexical purity. Dialectal expressions and terms always develop new senses which are different from the original meanings in both Modern Standard Arabic and Classical Arabic. In addition, dialect is known for its narrow locality where a particular dialectal lexical item can be understood differently across different geographical locations in the same language.

Due to their oral nature, lexical items are more vulnerable to semantic change including amelioration and pejoration.

### 3. Translating dialect embedded in fiction

The majority of previous studies focus on understanding the nature of dialect itself rather than dealing with the problems resulting from translating dialectal items embedded in fiction. The issue of translating Saudi fiction into foreign languages has become an urgent need because fiction vividly mirrors culture, customs and tradition and represents a good communication channel for intercultural understanding. What is remarkable is that fiction is considered a rich source for exposing Saudi culture, tradition, habits, the life of people, their way of thinking and their perception of themselves and of others.

Dialect is considered a convenient medium that helps communicate the authentic life of a people in a natural style. Therefore, one of the main objectives of this paper is to focus on how to translate across different dialects; that is, this study is mainly concerned with highlighting the translation strategies and techniques that enable translators to render Saudi dialect into English without losing both the original dialectal notion and effect and the authenticity and the naturalness of the source text. However, the idea of maintaining a sense of dialectal authenticity and naturalness in the target text is a challenging translational issue for translators due to many factors ranging from cultural, social and historical to even conceptual elements. Therefore, it is necessary to shed light onto those studies addressing the issue of translating dialect embedded in narrative and fictional works in order to learn about whether their works consider the array of the problems relating to translating dialects. Määttä (2005) addresses the translation problems encountered in the translations into French of non-standard literary dialect, in particular the speech of African Americans, in William Faulkner's *The sound and the fury*. He remarks that the dialectal expressions and terms were used on purpose in order to communicate the viewpoint of the novelist and his ideology. However, when the translator avoids translating the dialectal expressions, the omission of dialectal terms has become a barrier to communicating the core message of his work of art. In this way, translation betrays the original text and becomes unfaithful to it. Dialect is not only considered to be a linguistic medium but also a cultural and social vehicle that distinguishes one community from another. Dialectal expressions are always accompanied with traditions, customs, tools, instruments and history of communities. Therefore, the idea of avoiding translating dialectal expressions and terms often leads to the loss of ideology and of cultural, social and historical values of the artistic work. In this respect, Määttä (2005: 320) argues that

[L]iterary representation of non-standard language, imitating the lexical, morphosyntactic, and phonological characteristics of the characters' alleged real speech, plays an important role in William Faulkner's novel *The sound and the fury*. This non-standard language is part of the

polyphonic structure and the ideological construction of the novel: it reflects and creates focalization (cf. Genette, 1980), i.e., narrative point of view or narrative focus, indicating through whose perspective the events and the speech are described.

The process of translating narrative is regarded to be a kind of literary representation where images, figures of speech, metaphors and the atmosphere have to be rendered side by side with language. The non-standard language is used in fiction and narratives for a purpose, which is to convey the authentic life of the local communities represented in the work of art. One of the difficulties which may encounter translators who undertake the translation of dialectal expressions and terms embedded in fiction is how to maintain focalization in the target text. Gérard (1980) argues that focalization aims to communicate the viewpoint of the narrator, how he perceives the world of his novel and how he represents the characters to the readers. Dialectal expressions and terms are used by narrators in fiction to communicate their viewpoint to the reader. Therefore, if a translator omits or downplays these embedded expressions in his/her translation, it will negatively affect the rendition of the literary work's message and the narrator's viewpoint in the target text. Mattiello (2009) argues that non-standard varieties like dialects and slang pose translation problems at the level of cultural transfer, where it is difficult to find parallel social sets, and sometimes it is also difficult to find similar modes of expression at the cross-linguistic level. "It is difficult to cope with non-standard varieties, as they are often used to create an extremely rich range of effects" (Mattiello, 2009).

#### **4. Translation theories and the problems of translating dialect**

The approaches of translation addressing the problems of translating dialectal expressions are known for their scarcity, and sometimes they are based on a limited scope, which may fail to assimilate the cultural and linguistic diversity of dialects. One translation approach dealing with translating dialectal terms and expressions suggests that translating dialectal terms requires decoding their meaning in the source language before translating them into a foreign language. Jakobson's tripartite typology (1959) argues that there are three kinds of translation:

- 1) Intralingual translation or rewording is an interpretation of verbal signs by means of other signs of the same language, 2) Interlingual translation or translation proper is an interpretation of verbal signs by some other language, 3) Intersemiotic translation or transmutation is an interpretation of verbal signs by means of nonverbal sign systems. (1959: 233)

Adopting the intralingual approach for decoding dialectal terms in the same source language reduces the complex translation process to a basic notion of rewording that may lead to numerous translation problems. In the same vein, Dickins et al. (2016: 3) remark that intralingual translation can be regarded as a reformulation of meaning and that "it is very



easy for reformulation to consciously or unconsciously become distortion, either because the translator misrepresents the ST or because the reader misreads the TT or both". Mattiello (2009: 65) reduces the translation strategies dealing with dialect and slang to "transposing a linguistic variety into another, which views the translation process as transcoding SL into TL". However, translating dialect is a rather comprehensive process that transcends the act of transcoding. It relies upon rendering an integral cultural system in which dialect has developed and acquired its unique linguistic features. In addition, dialectal terms and expressions are considered to be metaphorical derivations developed from the original meaning of the lexical items. Newmark (1981: 104) argues that metaphorization is realized when one of the following conditions is fulfilled: "the transferred sense of a physical word ...; the personification of an abstraction ...; the application of a word or collocation to what it does not literally denote, i.e., to describe one thing in terms of another". In addition, polysemous words are potentially metaphorical. This would inevitably pose a translation challenge for the translators with texts laden with dialectal terms where intralingual equivalences do not fill in the gaps emanating from the difference between the lexical item and its metaphorical sense in the SL.

Newmark (1981) remarks that metaphor has a twofold purpose; the first is cognitive and the second aesthetic. Both the intralingual and interlingual approaches of translation cannot achieve the two purposes of the metaphor simultaneously simply because the intralingual approach focuses on depicting the dictionary meaning of the lexical item and the interlingual approach decodes the dictionary meaning to ST, which makes translation lose its referential purpose and its pragmatic effect. Behnstedt (2009: 64) remarks that "lamb" within an Arab sheep-rearer's world is not simply "a lamb": it might be "weaned", "fat", "have two or four new incisors"; it might be "one year old or two" and "consequently have different names".

Translating texts embedded with culture-bound elements like dialectal expressions, traditional tools and religious reference into another language, the culture of which may be totally different from that of the SL, can impede the idea of providing a comprehensible and digestible translation in the TL. The idea is that in this type of text, the translator has to be accountable for transferring the cultural elements of the SL to the TL without breaking with the codes of fidelity or falling into the trap of oversimplifying the cultural component in the translation. At the same time, if a translator decides on maintaining the cultural dimension without any kind of adaptation or even linguistic and cultural compromise between the SL and TL, he may produce an odd text in the TL, which seems to be inharmonious with the nature and norms of the TL; subsequently, a translation may lose its effect in the TL.

To achieve this end, Bassnett (2002) follows Anne Cluysennar's work on literary stylistics, which maintains the cultural factors at the expense of certain linguistic aspects. Bassnett suggests that a translator dealing with the cultural text should adopt a hermeneutic circle where he should start examining his text from the whole to the parts and vice versa. Howev-



er, focusing on rendering the whole meaning of the text may result into omitting or ignoring some important lexical items, dialectal, culturally bound elements embedded in the SL, the loss of which may strip the TL of the aesthetic effect found in the SL. However, maintaining such exotic elements in the TLT may create what is known by Snell-Hornby (1999) as a hybrid text that includes strange, exotic and indigestible elements in the TL, which impede understanding and the naturalization of the translation so that a translated text may either assimilate such exoticism and strangeness or reject it. However, the notion of hybrid text seems to be inapplicable to texts belonging to totally different cultures, which is a clear example in both Arabic and English cultures. Therefore, interjecting elements from the SL into texts may incur many translation problems. For example, a translator may not be able to decide which norms in the source text need to be maintained in the TLT and which do not. In addition, such a process requires what Vermeer (2000 [1989]) calls the bicultural translator. Bassnett and Lefevere (1990: 8) argue that culture is the most important unit in translation. It is more significant than words or texts. However, they suggest that culture-bound elements, religious elements, traditional tools, concepts and customs and traditions peculiar to the SL and which have no conceptual or cultural equivalence in the target text can be either omitted or translated literally. That is to say, when a translator is faced with certain types of expressions in the SL, he has the freedom of omitting these terms and expressions or translating them literally. However, both choices are deemed to be incongruent with the nature of fictional texts embedded with these exotic and strange expressions simply because these dialectal terms and culture-bound elements are responsible for bestowing pragmatic and aesthetic effects on such types of texts, and therefore stripping these texts of their cultural elements will convert their genres from fiction into ordinary texts, and in this way TLT has become denuded of its aesthetic form and has lost its literary style.

### **5. House's covert translation strategy and translation dialect**

House (1997: 69) argues that the concept of formal equivalent seems to be unsuitable for culture-specific, geographical, temporal or social texts. House (1981 [1977]: 185-211) suggests two strategies: overt and covert. In overt translation, the translation is not being addressed directly to the addressee. Overt translation is regarded to be a translation of the original text. However, a covert translation is directed at both target text and source text addressees. It is a type of translation that is regarded as an original text in the source language. An ST and its covert TT are pragmatically of equal concern for the source and target language recipients. An ST and TT have equivalent purposes in terms of audience and their needs in both source culture and target culture.

Therefore, it is desirable to keep the function of the source text in the target text unchanged. House (1981 [1977]: 196-97) remarked that the translator has to examine the source text through the lenses of the target culture's recipient. She adds that the propo-

sition that particular texts necessitate either a covert or an overt may not hold in every case. In addition, the idea of choosing whether the translation approach is overt or covert is subjective. Having regarded that fictional work as a culture-specific work of art, the translator has to opt for an overt translation. However, if this work has a relevance to the target audience, the translator has to opt for a covert translation. House adds that the specific purpose of translation can determine whether a translator should opt for covert or overt translation (1981 [1977]: 202 and 204). House (1981 [1977]: 202 and 204) focuses on the functional translation. As a result, in this paper, the approach of the study is to assess the translation of dialectal expressions embedded in the Saudi novel in relation to covert translation and in relation to Dickins's et al. concept of cultural transposition (2016: 36). The study examines a random corpus of dialectal terms and expressions embedded in *Girls of Riyadh* in relation to the following assessment criteria derived from House's concept of overt and covert translation strategies:

- 1) Identifying the function of the translated text.
- 2) Adapting the culture-specific elements to the target text notions.
- 3) Avoiding omission in translation.
- 4) Adapting the cultural setting to that of the target text in order to meet the expectations of the target reader.
- 5) Observing the naturalness of expressions.

In addition, the assessment of the translation of dialectal expressions, culture-bound elements and expressions is made in relation to Dickins's et al. concept of cultural transposition (2016: 36), that considers the following elements in the translated text:

- 1) Register: TLT is assessed in terms of tonal register and social register. Tonal register carries affective meaning which can be subsumed under one of the following categories: vulgar, familiar, polite or formal. In tonal register, a translator has to accurately assess the ST expressions in relation to SL politeness scale and whether they are rendered with expressions as close as possible to a corresponding TL degree of politeness. However, social register is known as style that reflects the speaker's social stereotype that shows such information about the speaker as education, social persona, social class and so on. These data are always related to style and jargon, which is different from text to text. Therefore, a translator has to select the appropriate style and jargon that fulfill the expectations with regard to social register. That is to say, a translator has to use TL register to compensate for loss of connotations carried by the ST dialect.
- 2) Exoticism: It colors the TT with cultural foreignness where TLT uses foreign lexical items and syntactic structures that are different from the ones used in the ST where

adaptation is kept to minimum, thereby constantly signaling the exotic source culture and its culture strangeness.

- 3) Calque: A calque uses TL words and follows TL syntax; however, it is unidiomatic in the TL.
- 4) Cultural transplantation: It is similar to adaptation and is largely different from exoticism. The entire text has to be rewritten in the target culture setting. Dickins considered cultural translation as final, drastic possibility. It is the expectation rather than the rule. It is only done with literary works.
- 5) Cultural borrowing: It introduces foreign elements into the TT. Sometimes, a cultural borrowing becomes an established TT expression.
- 6) Communicative translation: It is normal in the case of culturally conventional formulae where literal translation would be inappropriate.
- 7) Compensation: The translator has to avoid falling into the trap of both exoticism and cultural transplantation. Instead, he resorts to using an alternative lying between them. In this technique, a translator has to *make occasional additions*.

## 6. Discussion and analysis

Examples of literal translation are rampant in *Girls of Riyadh*, which have distorted the messages of the SL, thwarted the referential purpose and the pragmatic effect. Here is an example from *Girls of Riyadh*.

### 6.1. Examples of literal translation

SL	CLAQUE
ولكل من يري أن الناس خيبتها السبت والحد واحنا خيبتنا ما وردتش علي حد	"that every weekend for the rest of your lives will be a total loss—not to mention the rest of the week"
سألت عنها العافية	"May good health knock her door"
من تكون : ما شاء الله ملح وقيلة	Ma shaa Allah, God willing, no envy touch her, she's so pretty.
من بداية العرس وهي تدور وتباشر شايلة العرس علي راسها	"It looks like she's carrying the whole wedding on her shoulders."
تؤمن أم قمره بنظرية المرأة الزبدة والرجل الشمس	Gamrah's mother was a firm believer in the theory that "woman is to man as butter to the sun"
أصبحت قمره تستمع الي أحاديث والدتها عن "عملية الزواج" بلذة شاب يقدم له أبوه سيجارة ليذخنها أمامه لأول مرة	As for Gamrah, she started listening to her mother's anecdotes and treatises on "the enterprise of marriage" with heightened enjoyment and a sense of pride of a young man whose father offers him a cigarette to smoke in front of him for the first time.

The ST phrase *ولكل من يري أن الناس خيبتها السبت والحد واحنا خيبتنا ما وردتش علي حد* has been translated as “that every weekend for the rest of your lives will be a total loss—not to mention the rest of the week” (Alsanea and Booth, 2007). Here, the cultural metaphor in SL is vocative as the writer intends to send an indirect message to the readers in order to elicit their sympathy and solidarity against oppression befalling Saudi women. To achieve this end, she has expressed her mind using idiolect as a type of inflected language which has a pragmatic and cultural function, and, therefore, the authorial intentions can be communicated smoothly to the readership. Despite the idea that this work is translated by a professional English literary translator and the author of the work, a Saudi female novelist, who recognized such dialectal features and extralinguistic realities, the translators opted for a literal translation which ignores the metaphorical expression in SLT.

The metaphor in SLT is known as a stock metaphor “which is an efficient and concise method of conveying a physical and/or mental situation both referentially and pragmatically” (Newmark, 1981: 108). At the macro level, the idiomatic expression derives its core message from parodying the verse: “Not (the path) of those who earn thine anger nor of those who are astray” (Fatiha: 7). The phrase *الناس خيبتها الحد* metaphorically refers to Jews, and *الناس خيبتها السبت* metaphorically refers to Christians. Therefore, this core message of that idiomatic saying from a purely religious perspective is that “disappointment and misfortune befalling us are beyond expectations”. A stock metaphor, Newmark argues, has to produce the same image in the TLT which has comparable frequency and currency in the appropriate TL register. Producing the same image in the TLT, however, seems to be offensive and may be ideologically and dogmatically an invalid presupposition in the English culture that regards Christianity and Judaism as sources of salvation and purity rather than a kind of misfortune or disappointment. Newmark (1988: 109) suggests that “extended stock metaphors, however, often change their images particularly when they are embedded in proverbs, which are often cultural”. Adopting Newmark’s vision, a translator may break with the fidelity in return for using Nida’s dynamic equivalence.

## 6.2. Examples of omissions

SL	TTL	TYPE OF OMISSION
ويا قرد ,حظنا من بعدك , أي يالتعاسة الحظ, وأظن التعبير النجدي مشتق من حيوان القرد لكثرة تطنطيه, الذي يشبه الحظ في عملية وقوفه وانبطاحه المستمرين, أو هو من حشرة القرادة كما يقول	It is completely omitted.	
يقولون صديقتها من زمان يبدو لي أنها سعة ودبرة	“The bride’s sisters” “She seems a good girl”	Translator has omitted <i>دبره</i> which is a colloquial Najdi word which means “a clever housewife”

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صح شيز سوكير في بس بيغي لها تنحف شوي وتلعب رياضة مثلك	"I think she really needs to ditch a few pounds and work out like you do."	The translator has omitted "صح شيز سوكير"
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In addition to the literal translation strategy used by the translators of *Girls of Riyadh*, the translation includes a wide range of omissions, ranging from words, expressions, idiomatic expressions, proverbs to short paragraphs which undermines the fidelity of translation. In addition, dialectal expressions have been almost avoided in the TL, which has negatively affected the sense of intimacy and solidarity imparted in the SL. The literary features of the novel derive their power and cultural effect from using dialectal terms and expressions; they, however, were omitted in the translation, which has distorted and manipulated the function of TL. These terms are closely related to the cultural atmosphere represented in the original work of art; therefore, the idea of stripping TTL cultural markers and culture-bound elements represented in dialectal expressions in both abstract and concrete forms inevitably turns the fictional aesthetics into a different flat genre.

ويا قرد, حظنا من بعدك , أي يالتعاسة الحظ, وأظن التعبير النجدي مشتق من حيوان القرد لكثرة تطنطنيه, الذي يشبه الحظ في عملية وقوفه وانبطاحه المستمرين, أو هو من حشرة القردة كما يقول

The above short paragraph is highly charged with purely dialectal Najd terms, and it also shows an example of code-switching. A short extract is started with the dialectal proverb *ويا قرد حظنا من بعدك*, which is directly followed by Modern Standard Arabic. Code-switching is meant to match the social persona to the contextual realities produced by the novel that narrates the private life of four educated Saudi girls who belonged to an Americanized Saudi social class system, the emergence of which has been largely pushed forward by the socioeconomic realities in Saudi society immediately after the emergence of superfluous oil wealth. Indeed, code-switching is highly reflective of the paradoxical identity of the four heroines of the novel where the sense of belonging is unstable, shaken and divided between their original nomadic culture and the new imposed realities of sweeping modernization in Saudi Arabia. It is the old new story of dichotomy between tradition and modernity, the significance of which is to reflect the suppressed psychological ordeal into their depth. Therefore, translating dialectal expressions not only reveals aesthetic elements in the novel, but also communicates its core message and the authorial intentions. Therefore, the idea of omitting the dialectal elements in the TTL brings about several negative consequences on the translation quality of the work of art. For example, a new feature of Najdi contemporary dialect is shown in injecting English expressions in the speech of the upper-class girls and boys living in capital cities like Riyadh, which is reflective of the linguistic and cultural change occurring to Saudi culture. Therefore, omitting *صح شيز سوكير* may undermine the function of the novel and manipulate the original meaning and deconstruct the fidelity to SL.

### 6.3. Some examples of communicative translation

SL	COMMUNICATIVE TRANSLATION
ودخيلك قولي لقمورة ما صار شين	"Please, tell Gamrah to calm down. It is nothing to worry".
لساتون الناس مآربزين هون ما حدا فل	"No one is going to leave"
عمركو، ما حتتعلمو أصول الحش، المهم شوفي البنت هادي ... أما عليها مواهب	You will never gossip 101. Anyway, check out that girl-she's got talent, all right.
إذا هي سمرا ليش يحطون لها فاونديشن أبيض ذي الطحين مخلينها طالعة زرقاء وفي فرق واضح بين وجهها ورقبتها ز يعجع .....	By God, her make-up is painful! Her skin is too dark for such a chalky foundation. They have made her practically blue—and look at the contrast between her face and her neck. Ewww... so vulgar.
ياريتها راحت للمشغل اللي خيطت عندو سدومة بدال هالعك اللي عاملتو بنفسها	I wish she had gone to the dressmaker who made Sadeem's dress instead of this mess she came up with herself.
تصدقين أنا سمعت ان الرسول دعا للشينة؟	"Can you believe it; I heard that Prophet Mohammed used to send up prayers for the unlovely one."
فيها عرق؟ بياضها بياض شوام مهو بياضنا المشوهب	"Is her blood pure? " Her father's mother was Syrian"
أي واحدة فيهم؟ الدفع الأمامي والاخلفي؟	"Which 'talent'—front bumper or back?"
الخلفي يا حولة -تومتش	"Are you cross-eyed? Back, of course.
أحلي مواهب فينا حق سديم	"The most 'talented' of all of us is Sadeem
يا ليت عندي مواهب زيها من ورا	"I wish I had a back bumper like hers."
سياستها جابت العيد	"the policy of withholding had decidedly backfired in this case"

It seems that the translator has relied heavily on the communicative translation strategy for dealing with the translating problems resulting from the excessive use of dialectal terms and expressions in the novel where the novelist tends to use dialectal language as a kind of self-assertion through which she tries to emphasize her vision of the oppression befalling Saudi girls in a patriarchal society; therefore, dialectal and colloquial speech has become a reflective register of the prevalent linguistic structure, and this colors the traits of literary work and shape the life, ideology, thoughts, values system, social realities and belief in a certain way. In this type of cultural fiction that is marked with many dialectal terms and expressions, the idea of dropping ST dialectal features is likely to incur a very damaging translation loss. At the level of register, using communicative strategies for translating dialectal terms and culture-bound elements leads to flatten out the discursive levels employed in the fictional work.

It also makes the TLT lose its colloquial flavor. The loss of colloquial flavor and the flattening out of the discursive levels not only impede the function of the SL in TTL but also change and distort it. That is to say, the translator has often failed to keep the tonal register in the TLT as close as possible to that of SL. Dickins et al. (2016: 212) argue that tonal register has the affective meaning through the identity of the speakers can be easily reflected.

*Girls of Riyadh* is a quest for the Saudi feminine identity in which linguistic expressions can be used either as a means of asserting such identity or undermining it. Therefore, a translator's failure to communicate the tonal expression of SL in the TTL will preclude the target readership from understanding the truth of this concealed world. In other words, a translation is no longer capable of providing the target readership with the realities of this world as close as possible to their original contextual realities with their original flavor and unique exoticism. Rather, the translation introduces a new version of reality which seems to be foreign, odd and strange to the SL. This can be reflected easily when *ودخيلك*, a colloquial Syrian word injected into Najd dialect due to the social interaction happening at a wider scale in Saudi Arabia, has been translated "Please", which is a formal English expression of politeness, whose formal equivalence in Arabic is *من فضلك*, and it is infrequently used in daily speech. In addition, despite the fact that expressions like *مأربزين*, *مواهب الحش*, *للشينة إيش*, *هالعك*, *العيد*, *سياستها* are communicatively rendered into English, they are not assessed accurately on the SL politeness scale, as they are not rendered into English with expressions as close as possible to a corresponding TL degree of politeness. For instance, *مأربزين* in Arabic refers to an unwelcomed visitor who refuses to leave the host's place, which is omitted by the translator and compensated by the overall meaning. Thus, the translator fails to convey the notion and atmosphere of the SL in the target text. The idea is that English and Arabic cultures are more distant from each other, which further complicates the process of matching the register of the SL to the TLT at both tonal register and social register.

Tonal registers conceal more than they reveal, the translation of which can be related to depicting the overall sense of SL into TLT. It can be achieved by cultural transplantation, as the entire text has to be rewritten in the target culture setting. However, the process of adaptation cannot be done randomly as the translator has to conjure up the image of tonal register in the TLT in conformity with the target readership, where the closest cultural images having their bearing with the source text have been transplanted into the TLT.

The translator has relied heavily on the communicative translation methodology, which negatively affects the process of transfer of the social register from the SL to the TLT. Dickins et al. (2016: 213) remark "that social register carries information about such things as the speaker's education, social persona, occupation and professional standing". Therefore, a translator is required to select the appropriate jargon and style fulfilling the expectations with regard to social register. Choosing an inappropriate social register will inevitably undermine the fictional characters' social persona and therefore results into problems of mistranslation. The novel



purposefully employs vernacular speech and dialects in order to introduce what social stereotypes the characters belong to. These characters belong to strange and sometimes contradictory social categories embodying a kind of inner struggle between the emerging modernization of the Saudi community and the overwhelming sense of tradition and culture, which can be inferred from their lexical choices and their tonal and social registers that combine purely Bedouin dialectal features, Egyptian vernacular speech, Levantine expressions and Americanized Saudi speech. Avoiding the transfer of such a linguistic mosaic embedded in the structure of the novel may strip TLT of its affective meaning, function and vivid description.

#### 6.4. Some examples of cultural borrowing

سياسة ال يالله بمد اليائين مد حركتين , أن ال بالكاد هي أضمن الطرق في مجتمعنا المحافظ مثل ما تبين	The strategy of Yaalla, Yalla, which means “get going, but just babbrely” is the most foolproof path to a quick marriage proposal in our conservative society.”
اية والله, الشيون هم اللي سوقهم ماشي	E Wallah, must be true, I swear, the ugly ones seems to be in demand these days.
انا اللي الحمد لله مهما أكلت ما أسمن فمرتاحة	“Alhamdu lillah, thank God, I never gain weight no matter how much I eat, so I’m not worried.”
والله ما شاء الله	Mashaa Allah, God’s will be done.

The translator has kept the use of cultural borrowing in the novel to a minimum, and cultural borrowing is clearly reflected in religious terms and expressions which can be justified simply because the religious equivalence in the target culture is conceptually different. However, despite the fact that this translation is done by the author herself, a Muslim Saudi lady and a British professional, there are some mistranslations in these religious terms. For example, *ما شاء الله* is rendered as *Mashaa Allah, God’s will be done*. The second translation, *God’s will be done*, is a kind of mistranslation as the translators may confuse the meaning of *Inshallah*, an equivalent of *God’s will be done*, with *Mashaa Allah*, an equivalent of *May Allah protect you from envious and jealous people*.

#### 6.5. Some examples of cultural transplantation

يالله يالله يالله تمشين , يالله تتحركين , يالله ترقصين, الله الله بالعقل والثقل , لا تصيري خفيفة, الكلمة بحساب واللفتة بحساب	You barely walk, you barely talk, you barely smile, you barely dance, be mature and wise, you always think before you act, you measure your words carefully before you speak and do not behave like a child.
تبارك الله	So-o-o gorgeous
-طول الرفة وأنا أذكر الله عليك-	“The whole evening I’ve been praying to God to take good care of you.”

The translators seldom use the cultural transplantation for rendering the idiomatic expressions and dialectal terms in the novel despite its effectiveness for translating dialectal expressions without losing either the overall effect or style. Indeed, cultural transplantation can help render text across dialects. Dickins et al. (2016: 219) remark that in “cases of literary works, however, (e.g. where some speakers’ speech is represented in a specific marked dialect), the transplantation might also justifiably represent this in a dialect form”. Therefore, cultural transplantation may be a valid translation strategy for dealing with the dialectal terms and expressions embedded in dialectal terms and expressions. In the above examples, the translators have made linguistic, stylistic, idiomatic adaptations to the target language culture where Arabic expressions like *ياالله ياالله تمشين, يالله تتحركين, يالله ترقصين, الله الله بالعقل والنقل* were adapted to the target language culture; e.g. *ياالله* translates as *barely*, which is a kind of clear cultural adaptation. In addition, *ياالله* translates as *So-o-o gorgeous*, which is also a kind of cultural adaptation.

## 7. Conclusion

Assessing the translation of *Girls of Riyadh* in relation to House’s concept of covert translation and Dickin’s concept of transplantation, it has been found out that the translators neither use domestication nor foreignization in TLT. Rather, the communicative translation strategy is excessively adopted in the TLT. Translating dialectal terms and expressions into equivalent dialectal terms and expressions using cultural transposition with a particular emphasis on cultural transplantation and occasional addition may help the translator maintain the features of SL, its vividness, realism, sense of intimacy, literary imagination, creativity and aesthetic effect in the TLT. Several translation theoreticians have come against the appropriateness of rendering Arabic colloquial forms into English dialectal forms suggesting a kind of compensation in both time and place. Sometimes, they tolerate the translation loss at the expense of translating across dialects. However, the idea of occasional addition (a kind of compensation) is a kind of translation across dialect where a translator may add colloquial expressions that maintain the effect of the SL in the TLT. The idea of omitting the dialectal expressions can be a drastic solution in literary texts which are excessively laden with dialectal terms and expressions, e.g. *Girls of Riyadh*. Therefore, the translation loss may bring about negative consequences and undermine the aesthetic effect and it may distort the whole meaning of the text including its message. In addition, using the communicative translation strategy may contribute to creating a tough and soulless translated text that is short of cultural effect, and it may also strip the translated text of its genre and convert it into a mere tasteless prose which has nothing to do with the contextual realities of the TLT. Therefore, when a translator is entitled to translate a text teeming with dialectal items and vernacular speech, he has to fully consider the register and render the text as close as possible to the tonal and social registers. In addition, cultural transplantation may address the issue of selecting an appropriate register to the target culture and never betrays the source culture. In addition, House’s translation model can also be used in translating

dialectal terms embedded in literary works where the following steps have to be taken into consideration: (1) identifying the function of the translated text; (2) adapting the culture-specific elements to the target text notions; (3) avoiding omission in translation; (4) adapting cultural setting to that of the target text in order to meet the expectations of the target reader; (5) observing the naturalness of expressions.

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