

Examining Cultural Equivalence used in the Translation of Dammaj's Novel "Al-Rahinah"

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Abstract:

This research paper examines the type of cultural equivalence used in translating Dammaj's novel "Al-Rahinah" into English by May Jayyusi and Christopher Tingley. Using Nida's ideas about formal and dynamic equivalence, this study looks into whether the cultural aspects of Yemen in "Al-Rahinah" were communicated in a formal or an adaptive way. During the analysis, the type of equivalence used was identified and quantified. In this case, formal equivalence was rarely used, although dynamic equivalence seemed to be mainly employed to transfer the Yemeni cultural items into English. Generally, it appeared that the translators relied on the dynamic equivalence to add, explain, replace, or omit source linguistic terms that may have resulted in a significant loss and misrepresentation of Yemeni culture. Besides, the formal equivalence approach was inefficient because it presupposed a word-for-word translation of cultural items, which led to their ineffective conveyance in the target language. As the research findings showed, none of the dynamic and formal equivalency in translation contributed to the better translation outcome because both approaches concealed a significant number of cultural notions present in the source text.

Keywords: *"Al-Rahinah", cultural and dynamic equivalence, word-for-word translation.*

دراسة التكافؤ الثقافي المستخدم في ترجمة رواية "الرهينة" للكاتب زيد مطيع دماج

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الملخص:

يتناول هذا البحث نوع التكافؤ الثقافي الذي استخدم في ترجمة رواية دماج "الرهينة" إلى اللغة الإنجليزية بقلم مي جيوسي وكريستوفر تينجلي. بالاعتماد على تقنيات نيدا في التكافؤ الرسمي والديناميكي. تبحث هذه الدراسة فيما إذا كانت العناصر الثقافية اليمنية في "الرهينة" قد تم نقلها بشكل شكلي أو تكييفي. أثناء التحليل، تم تحديد نوع التكافؤ المستخدم وقياسه كمياً. في هذه الحالة، نادراً ما يستخدم التكافؤ الرسمي على الرغم من أن التكافؤ الديناميكي يبدو أنه يستخدم بشكل رئيسي لنقل العناصر الثقافية اليمنية إلى اللغة الإنجليزية. بشكل عام، يبدو أن المترجمين اعتمدوا على التكافؤ الديناميكي لإضافة أو شرح أو استبدال أو حذف المصطلحات اللغوية المصدرية التي ربما أدت إلى خسارة كبيرة وتحريف للثقافة اليمنية. علاوة على ذلك، أثبت نهج التكافؤ الرسمي عدم فعاليته لأنه افترض مسبقاً ترجمة كلمة بكلمة للمواد الثقافية مما أدى إلى عدم فعالية نقلها في اللغة الهدف. وكما أظهرت نتائج البحث، لم يساهم أي من التكافؤ الديناميكي والرسمي في الترجمة في تحسين نتائج الترجمة لأن كلا النهجين أخفيا عدداً كبيراً من المفاهيم الثقافية الموجودة في النص المصدر.

الكلمات المفتاحية: "الرهينة"، التكافؤ الثقافي والديناميكي، الترجمة كلمة بكلمة.

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INTRODUCTION

Research Background

Translation is a crucial bridge between civilizations and, consequently, a means of worldwide communication and exchange of thoughts, customs, and knowledge. Eugene Nida and Lawrence Venuti have stressed that two languages are not the same and hence cannot be translated with absolute accuracy (Nida in Venuti: p. 153). Translators must manipulate various cultural peculiarities and idiomatic expressions to convey the true essence of the meaning of the source text, considering the re-shaping of the text for the audience in the target situation.

Nida thus identified three major elements in translation: (1) the nature of the message [content versus form]; (2) the intention of the author and that of the translator; and (3) the decodable capacity of the audience intended to read the text. He further differentiates between formal equivalence that stresses literalness in terms of word and grammatical compliance and dynamic equivalence that evokes equivalent naturalness in expression and response by the reader (Nida & Charles, 1969).

This study employs Nida's (1964) principles for the examination of the translation of Yemeni cultural particulars in Zayd Mutee' Dammaj's 1984 Arabic novel *الرهينة* (Al-Rahinah) and its English version, titled *The Hostage*, translated in 1994 by May Jayyusi and Christopher Tingley. Culturally specific terms such as "عكفة" (Aokfah), rendered dynamically as "soldiers," serve to underscore its much greater historical and religious significance (Al-Gomhoria, 2012; Al-Eryani, 1996; Marib News, 2020). The study examines whether formal equivalence or dynamic equivalence is dominant and assesses how conducive each is to maintaining cultural authenticity.

This study is considered significant since it analyzes one of the most common problems in translating two entirely different languages and cultures. It can help translators to be more careful in choosing the appropriate cultural equivalence and make use of Nida's theory in translating difficult and different cultural items. In addition, it is hoped that this study will make a contribution to educational people such as the students in the field of translation.

Questions of the study

The objectives of this study attempt to answer the following questions:

1. What type of cultural equivalence is used to transfer the Yemeni cultural items from Arabic into English in the novel?
2. How do the translators translate the Yemeni cultural items (formally or dynamically)?
3. Which strategies (formal or dynamic) are more appropriate to achieve an effective cultural equivalence of the Yemeni cultural items in English?

Research Questions

1. How does the translator convey, amplify, or change the themes of feminism, especially the presentation of Mariam and Laila in the translation of Hosseini's *A Thousand Splendid Suns*?

2. To what extent do the linguistic and cultural variations used by the translator reflect the feminist critique implanted in the source text?
3. How do sociocultural and ideological contexts influence the presentation of gendered power dynamics and feminist struggles in the targeted translation?

LITERATURE REVIEW

The theoretical parts of the study

1. Translation

Translation for Newmark is the ability that involves the effort to transport a written message or statement from one language into another, but at the same time, it should preserve its original meaning. This emphasizes the importance of capturing the essence of the text as it is transformed into a different linguistic and cultural setting (1988). However, for Bell, translation is the process of conveying in a target language what has been transported in a source language, maintaining both semantic and stylistic equivalence. He emphasizes that translation focuses on accurately conveying meaning and style between languages. It is more than the mere translation of words from one language to another; it involves conveying the original message in its essence and tone in the target language (1991:5).

Besides, Nida asserts that translation consists of rendering the closest natural equivalent of the source-language message, in that order, first in terms of meaning and secondly in terms of style. He means that translation is just the very process of finding the most accurate equivalent in the target language for the message conveyed by the source language, considering both meaning and style. It first considers how to make the translated message convey the same meaning as the original message; then attention is paid to reproducing the style or manner of expression found in the source language (Eugene A. Nida and Taber, 1969).

2. Translation and cultural gap

Newmark defines culture as "the way of life or manifestations that are common to the community that employs a particular language to express its views." (1988: 94) In this way, it continues, recognizing that each language group possesses distinct culturally embedded characteristics. Nida confers equal importance to both linguistic and cultural differences between the SL and the TL and concludes that "differences between cultures may cause more severe complications for the translator than do differences in language structure." (1964:130).

Translation is closely related to culture, as the cultural differences in the source language can impact understanding in the target language, which in turn can be seen in some of the translation scholars' definitions of translation. Toury (1978: 200), for example, defines translation as "a kind of activity that inevitably involves at least two languages and two cultural traditions." This statement underscores the perpetual challenge confronting translators — the nuanced handling of cultural elements embedded within a source text (ST) and the strategic selection of techniques to effectively transmit these nuances in the target language (TL). These problems could, one way or another or both ways, affect all those

languages in the case of encroachment between cultural and linguistic bestialities (Nida 1964: 130).

3 The Influence of Culture on Translation Activities in Literary Texts.

Zhang (2018) emphasizes that culture significantly affects the translation of literary texts in two main ways: Culture determines the scope and nature of translation activities. and affects the translation process itself. The cultural context of the target language determines whether translation can take place, its size, and the area of focus. A nation with a more open mindset is more supportive of translation efforts. Moreover, he argues that translators are influenced by their own cultural backgrounds, which can unconsciously affect their work. Despite efforts to avoid bias, the translation often reflects the target culture. The way ideas are expressed and the style of the translation are deeply influenced by the translator's cultural attitude, whether open or conservative. Thus, absorbing foreign languages and cultures is both necessary and inevitable in the translation process.

4. Equivalence in translation

The concept of similarity is intricately woven into the theoretical framework and practical application of translation. The concept of similarity has become a focus for translation scholars. Such a concept became a cornerstone of translation theory in the 1960s and 1970s, emphasizing the "similarity" between the source text (ST) and the target text (TT). Therefore, some inquiries about the nature and level of such similarity are put forward, stressing the definitions of some other forms of equivalence.

Bell states that texts in different languages can be equivalent in different degrees (full or partly equivalent) in respects of different levels of presentation (equivalent in respect of context, semantics, grammar, lexis, etc.) and different ranks (word-for-word, phrase-for-phrase, sentence-for-sentence). Occasionally, the source language text has no meaning in the target language text, so the meaning in the target language can be fully or partly equivalent, but the meaning in the target text can be said to be equivalent to the meaning in the source text when they have a function in the same communicative situation and express the same purpose (1991: 6).

The introduction of the concept of "equivalence in difference" by Roman Jakobson brought new ideas to translation theories". He (1959) suggests three kinds of translation: intralingual translation, interlingual translation, and intersemiotic translation. Since then, this concept of equivalence has dominated the translation theories for several decades (Hatim & Munday, 2004). When he addresses the thorny problem of equivalence in meaning between words in different languages, he immediately stresses the fact that there can be no full equivalence between two words. Jakobson, 1959/2000, p. 114).

Newmark's *Approaches to Translation* (1981) and *A Textbook of Translation* (1988) are not written to impose authority on any theory of translation, but, rather, they present a basis for adapting methods for the solution of problems as they arise during the translation process. Scheier and Newmark redefined the concepts of formal and dynamic equivalence, which are identified as semantic and communicative translation, respectively. Besides, the use of conversational translation elicits an equivalent response from the target text reader as that

of the ST reader and is similar to Nida's dynamic equivalence. Semantic translation focuses on the rendition of the contextual meaning of the ST according to the syntactic and semantic characteristics of the TT, which is similar to Nida's formal equivalence. Besides, Newmark (1981) strongly asserts that literal translation is the best in semantic and communicative translation too, p. 39.

Adopting pragmatic theories of language use, House (1997) has come up with a translation model in which the basic requirement for equivalence of ST and TT is that the original and translation should match one another in function. This function should be achieved by employing equivalent pragmatic means. The translation is only, therefore, considered to be adequate in quality if it matches the "textual" profile and function of the original. In more detail, carrying out contrastive German-English discourse analyses, House has distinguished between two basic types of translation, namely, overt translation and covert translation.

5. Nida's theory of equivalence

Nida's contribution to translation studies cannot be overemphasized; his two famous books in the 1960s, *Toward a Science of Translating* (1964) and the co-authored *The Theory and Practice of Translation* (Nida and Taber, 1969), tried to give more "scientific" meaning to translation. Drawing theoretical concepts from semantics and pragmatics and influenced by Chomsky's generative-transformational grammar of 1965, Nida proceeds in a more systematic manner to explore the field of translation studies.

Equivalence on equivalence, Nida believes that there exist two basic kinds of equivalence, which are (1) formal equivalence and (2) dynamic equivalence. Concretely speaking, Nida has the conviction that in formal equivalence the TT closely resembles the ST in form as well as content, whereas in dynamic equivalence an attempt is made to carry over the meaning of the ST into the TT as naturally as possible. It might be argued that Nida is in favor of dynamic equivalence since he considers it to be a more effective translation procedure. This comes as no surprise given the fact that Nida was, at the time at which he proffered his views about equivalence, translating the Bible and hence trying to produce the same impact on various audiences he was simultaneously addressing. Nida's bias is more open in Nida and Taber's edition (1969) because it is argued that dynamic equivalence in translation goes beyond correct communication of information (p. 25). As Munday (2001) says, Nida is credited for introducing a receptor-based direction to the task of translating (p. 42). However, Nida's theory has been severely criticized on a number of grounds.

Lefevere (1993:7) holds that equivalence is still focused on the word level, whereas Broeck (1978) wonders how it is possible to measure the equivalent effect since no text can have the same effect or elicit the same response in two different cultures in different periods of time (p. 40). Perhaps the most critical of Nida's work is Edwin Gentzler, whose *Contemporary Translation Theories* (2001) devotes one full chapter to the "science" of translation—his placing the word science within quotation marks perhaps done as a way of indicating his doubtful views regarding translation methods' scientific merit.

Despite these criticisms, it would be possible to conclude that Nida moved a long way forward from the position of his predecessors because he was able to come up with a systematic and analytical procedure for translators working with all kinds of texts and, more

importantly, brought into the translation game the readers, that is, the receptors as well as their cultural expectations (Despoina Panou 2013).

Previous Studies on The Hostage Novel

This study is descriptive-qualitative research with a content analysis method. Since qualitative research involves studies that do not attempt to quantify their results through statistical summary or analysis (Marczyk, DeMatteo, & Festinger, 2005:17). Descriptive analyses are commonly utilized to summarize a study's sample before delving into the primary hypotheses. Moreover, Bogdan & Biklen (1992:28) state that descriptive qualitative research concerns providing a description of a phenomenon that occurs naturally without any intervention of an experiment or an artificially contrived treatment. The researcher attempts to analyze written material in a way that will produce reliable evidence about the equivalence and the use of Nida's formal and dynamic strategies in translating cultural items. Furthermore, she attempts to analyze data using content analysis within their contexts and presents findings as letters and descriptions. The process involves collecting, rewriting, sorting, analyzing data, and drawing conclusions.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Type of the study

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Methods of data collection

This study conducts a comparative analysis of 25 culturally significant items from Zayd Mutee' Dammaj's 1984 Arabic novel *Al-Rahinah* and their 32 corresponding translations in May Jayyusi and Christopher Tingley's 1994 English version, *The Hostage*. The research employs a novel analytical approach to examine how these cultural elements were rendered across the two language versions. The research follows Nida's theory of equivalence (formal and dynamic) in translation strategy analysis. The process involves (1) comparative reading of English and Arabic texts to identify cultural terms, (2) verification with external sources (books, studies, online resources) to establish meanings, (3) categorization of data based on Nida's framework, and (4) presentation of findings in bilingual (Arabic-English) tables for analysis. The procedure is guided by a non-participant observational approach, which examines language patterns via indirect intervention. The design thus ensures systematic, objective evaluation of the way in which cultural concepts in Yemen are translated.

ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION

This section evaluates the accuracy of Nida's translation theory in rendering Arabic cultural items. The evaluation will test the translation strategies proposed by Nida (1964), namely formal and dynamic equivalence, in transferring cultural items from Arabic into English. Therefore, the discussion will be focusing on the cultural equivalence and determining its effectiveness in conveying the cultural terms and filling the cultural gaps between the two languages.

The equivalence used in translating the cultural items in Al-Rahinah

Table (1): The equivalence used in translating the cultural terms in Al-Rahinah

No	Source Language Arabic	page	Target Language English	page	Type of Equivalence
1	علان	3	Allan	23	Formal
		43	Rainbow	56	Dynamic
2	دار	3	Palace	23	Dynamic
		6	House	26	Formal
		10	Building	29	Formal
3	الفقيه	4	Faqih	24	Formal
		28	Learned men	44	Dynamic
4	الفروض	4	Duties	24	Dynamic
5	الطاعة	4	Obedient prisoners	24	Dynamic
6	نشيد	5	Refrain	25	Dynamic
7	الكوافي	6	kerchiefs	25	Dynamic
8	القصاص	8	Cement	27	Dynamic
9	عبادي	15	My love	33	Dynamic
		55	.....	67	Omission
10	بنادق البشلي	17	.....	35	Omission
11	جمنّة	17	pot	35	Dynamic
12	جمنّة	17	.....	35	Omission
13	جنبية	20	dagger	37	Dynamic
14	منزر	20	Cloak	38	Dynamic
15	شرشف	50	cloak	62	Dynamic
		23	.....	40	Omission
		28	Rich carpets and luxurious cushions	44	Dynamic
16	الطنافس	64	plates	76	Dynamic
		23	Round the whitewashed were Shelves	40	Dynamic
17	الأرفف الجصية عرض الحوائط	28	Nargila	44	Dynamic
18	المداخ	28	Coffee	44	Dynamic
19	القشر	28	Qur'an	44	Formal
20	مصحف	28			

21	مجرد مجابرة	33	.....	48	Omission
22	اسوار من ذهب ونقوش الزينة	38	Engraved gold bracelets	52	Formal
23	عاقل القرية	43	The wise men	57	Dynamic
24	المولد	43	births	57	Formal
25	الزكاة	53	Alms tax	65	Formal

1. Translation using dynamic equivalence

Table (2) : The translation using dynamic equivalence

Source Text	English Translation
الفروض	Duties
الطاعة	Obedient prisoners
نشيد	Refrain
الكوافي	kerchiefs
القضاض	Cement
عبادي	My love
جمنّة	pot
جنيبة	dagger
منزر	Cloak
شرشف	cloak
المداعة	Nargila
الطنافس	Rich carpets and luxurious cushions plates
الارفف الجصية عرض الحوائط	Round the whitewashed were shelves
القشر	Coffee
عاقل القرية	The wise men

The term "الفروض" [Alforud] means "the pillars of Islam, which are the testimony, the prayers, the payment of Zakat, the pilgrimage, and fasting during Ramadan." However, they translated the term [Alforud] into English as "duties," which is more general and doesn't indicate the kind of duties; however, its proper translation in this case is by adding the word "دينية" [religious] to become "الفروض الدينية" [religious duties] according to (Almanny Dictionary).

The term "الطاعة" [Alta'a] in the ST relates to the religious aspects, and hence the obedience here is meant to Allah, and this is clear from the context of the sentence in Arabic, as it is preceded by the terms "Quran and religious duties." However, it was translated into English as "obedient prisoners," which, in fact, makes a kind of confusion for the TT readers and conveys the ST meaning incorrectly, as the type of obedience here may be understood to be directed to the Imam by following his orders in the fortress and becoming obedient prisoners

to him. The English readers should know to whom this obedience is directed, so it is better to translate the term [Alta'a] as "obedience to Allah" according to (Almanny Dic).

Translating the term "نشيد" [Nasheed] into English as "refrain" was not a choice, as it doesn't reflect its correct meaning in Arabic. The term "refrain" means (a short part of a song or a poem that is repeated ...) (Cambridge Dic.), while the term "نشيد" here, according to the context, indicates a sort of a prayer, which is "غفر الله لك يا سيدنا ... ولوالديك مع والدينا ...", "May Allah forgive you, sir ... and your parents with ours ... and may He forgive your parents ...". It is better to translate the term [Nasheed] into English as "prayer."

Furthermore, translating the term "الكوافي" [Al-kawafi] into English as "kerchiefs" disregards the cultural significance of the term, resulting in a loss of the cultural message and its inherent meaning. The term "kerchiefs" means (a woman's square scarf worn as a covering for the head or occasionally the shoulders) (Dictionary), while the term [Al-kawafi] is worn by men. Although the writer in the novel compared the duwaydar to women with their smooth skins, soft voices, and clothes hanging down to the floor, he didn't state that they wear a women's veil. Hence, the best translation of the term [Al-kawafi] is "keffiyehs," which is the plural form of "keffiyeh" according to (Almaany and Wordreference Dictionaries).

Additionally, translating the term "القتضاض" [Al-Qadad] into English as "cement" overlooks the cultural significance of the term and highlights the cultural gap between the two languages. Although both [Al-Qadad] and cement are materials used in construction, they have differences in composition and usage, as cement is a binding material used to aggregate (sand and gravel) together to create concrete by mixing it with water to form a paste that hardens upon drying. On the other hand, [Al-Qadad] is made of two primary materials: lightweight gravel and water. However, through meticulous mixing and careful handling, this blend becomes remarkably sturdy and long-lasting, remaining intact for several days. The process of applying [Al-Qadad] involves precise and attentive work, extending over multiple days to ensure thorough coverage. It has been in use for over a millennium.

Translating the term "عبادي" into English as "my love" reveals a flaw in the translation and disrupts the flow of events in the novel, as "عبادي" is the name of the duwaydar who was the friend of the hostage in the Governor's palace. His name was mentioned twice in the novel. However, the translators avoided translating it as a proper name; instead, they translated it the first time as "my love," and they omitted it in the second, which may make the TT reader get lost with the characters and events, while translation's key job is to bring the meaning closer to them. This translation violates the format of the novel and the desire of the writer. As the writer intentionally hid the name of the hostage, unlike the name of the duwaydar "عبادي," to deliver a message to readers that the absence of the proper name of the hostage means that the hostage has become the proper that can be attached to all the children of the revolutionary fighters in Yemen (Ghaiman, 2008). So, it was better to put the name as it is mentioned in the novel by transliterating it into "Abadi."

Translating the term "جمنّة" [Jamanah] into English as "pot" highlights the cultural gap between the two languages. Finding an appropriate equivalent for [Jamanah] that preserves its unique meaning is quite challenging, as it is closely tied to the lifestyle of people from that time. Despite the minimal functional similarities, there is a significant difference between the two terms. As a result, the translation of [Jamanah] as "pot" only brings the TT readers closer to its function, but it doesn't reflect the shape of [Jamanah] and its belongings, such as the provider of the [Jamanah], the smell of coffee, the fireplace, and the general atmosphere in the saloon "الديوان" where it is provided.

The term Janbiyah is translated into English as dagger, hence losing so much of the cultural identity of that word. The whole word Janbiyah refers to a special dagger of Yemen, but with its historical context, it retains the entire appearance of a dagger, which is a short, curved blade with a central ridge. The name comes from the way the knife is worn on the side, like an extension of the wearer. As a weapon for slashing alongside swords and knives, the Janbiyah holds much social status in Yemen, representing toughness and masculinity. Its diagonal placement signifies higher status and is prominent in traditional events like Al-Bara'a dance and marriage ceremonies. Moreover, as a symbol of tribal ethics, it's offered as collateral in resolving disputes. As a result, translating the term [Janbiyah] into the general meaning as "dagger" makes it lose many of its unique characteristics, such as considering it as a symbol of authenticity and historical heritage, its sheath, which is covered in leather or silver, its decoration with gold and silver and rhinoceros' horns, and its exorbitant prices, in addition to its moral value to the Yemenis.

The translation of the term "منزر" [miazar] into English as "cloak" does neither capture the meaning of the term nor its cultural value. The term "cloak" means "a loose outer piece of clothing without sleeves that fastens at the neck and is worn instead of a coat." (Cambridge Dic.). While the term [miazar] means "a conventional piece of cloth in Yemen that men used to wear around their loins, the part from the waist until the knees." These are clothes that have a well-known meaning for Yemenis and non-Yemenis who live in or know Yemen. They are clothes that symbolize tribal masculinity. So, the term "cloak" that was selected by the translators obliterates an important part of Yemeni heritage, which is not only the [miazar] but also the rest of the equipment and supplies that complete it, along with the image of the pure tribal: the jambiya, the qat, the Kalashnikov and the Bazooka, the military vehicles, and the dusty poor shepherds. Hence, it was better to replace the term "cloak" with another one closer to the Yemeni culture and the image of the tribal wearing the [miazar]; the term "loincloth" (Almanny Dic) answers the purpose.

The term "شرشف" [sharshaf] was translated into English as "cloak," too. Which doesn't only show the cultural gap between the two cultures as the previous one, as they translated the term "منزر" [miazar] also into "cloak," but also distorts the religious function and creates a kind of confusion and misunderstanding for the TT readers about the Yemeni culture. As they depicted that "cloak" is worn by both men and women, which is, however, not true for both. The term [sharshaf] means (a black piece of cloth that women in the northern governorates of Yemen used to put on over their clothes to cover themselves from head to feet). It consists of three separate pieces to cover the head, the bosoms, and the third is tied

around the waist until the feet, while the term "cloak," as the researcher explained before, is much different from it. Perhaps it was better to use transliteration of the term [sharshaf] with the help of a footnote to explain it and convey its meaning to the TT readers.

In addition, translating the term "مداعه" [Mada'ah] into English as "Nargila" obliterates an important part of the Yemeni heritage, although the two terms have things in common. As the [Mada'ah] is similar to the "Nargila" in terms of quality and temperament, but it differs from it in form as it is larger and longer in size. It is made of Cocos nucifera and is embellished with copper and other motifs. Moreover, the stem of the [Mada'ah] is four meters long to spin on the largest number of seats in the wide and long saloon "ديوان" as more than one person takes turns using it while chewing qat, which is considered a daily Yemeni ritual. [Mada'ah] is one of the traditional Yemeni crafts that is dominated by manual effort in many stages of its manufacture; also, [Mada'ah] appeared in Yemen many decades before the advent of the "Nargila." As a result, it is inadequate translation because it does not show the form of the [Mada'ah] and its belongings, i.e., the provider of the [Mada'ah], the smell of tobacco, the fireplace, the stem, and the nature and form of furniture of "the saloon" الديوان, etc. However, there is another equivalent that may express this cultural privacy better, which is to use the cultural equivalent "Hubble bubble."

The term "الطنافس" [Al-tanafes] seems to cause problems for the translators as they faced troubles understanding it and conveying its meaning to the TT readers. They followed different strategies in translating it, first by omitting it in P. 23/44, "الطنافس النحاسية والفضية", as they translated it into "silver and brass" only, which left the meaning incomplete for the readers; in P. 28/44, they translated [Al-tanafes] into "rich carpets and luxurious cushions." However, the term [Al-tanafes] alone, without the adjectives of silver and brass, can be used to mean big cushions (Tareekh Al-Yemen, p. 317). As a result, this translation was close to the true meaning of the term and acceptable. Finally, in P. 64/76, the term [Al-tanafes] was preceded by the adjectives of brass and silver, "الطنافس النحاسية والفضية", which was translated as "brass and silver plates"; however, there was a kind of inadequacy and limitation of the meaning, as it is not restricted to being just plates. Perhaps the best translation of the term [Al-tanafes] is "copper and silver utensils/pots/tools," which were put on shelves and used as a kind of decoration of all shapes and metals in Yemeni heritage. The manufacture of copper tools and antiques took a prominent position, as the Yemeni craftsmen in past centuries preserved the origins of this craft, which was linked to the manufacture of many tools that the ancient Yemenis used in their daily lives since pre-Islamic times, specifically in the second half of the third millennium BC.

The phrase "الأرفف الجصية عرض الحوائط" was translated into English as "round the whitewashed walls were shelves," which reflects a giant deficiency in its meaning as well as its true image in the Yemeni culture. As we find that the translators replaced the adjective "الجصية" [Al-Jassiya], in which the shelves are described by "الأرفف الجصية" [Al-arfof al-Jassiya], which means "gypsum shelves," with the strategy of assigning its white color to

the" walls—"whitewashed walls"—in" order to remedy their deletion of the adjective itself. Regardless of the fact that the adjective "الجبصية" is not meant for the walls mainly in the ST but rather for the shelves, we still have a bigger defect, which is the absence of the characteristic of "الجبص" [gypsum] and its use in ancient Yemeni architecture. The main usage of gypsum is in the field of decoration, such as the manufacture of AlQamaryat, and in the buildings that adopt the Yemeni style. Gypsum is widely present in Yemeni architectural construction, in the inscriptions of mosques and their domes, antiques, and models. So, the shelves here represent an image of the Yemeni art distinguished by gypsum decoration and engraving, which is important to be transported to the TT readers as it embodies a cultural heritage that reflects the ethnicity of the Yemeni people.

The word "القشر" [al-kishr] is translated into English as "coffee," although the two words are fundamentally different. "Coffee" refers to a beverage made from roasted coffee beans. Known for its dark color, bitterness, and slight acidity. and the amount of caffeine that stimulates This is in contrast to [a-kishr], a traditional Yemeni hot drink made from coffee mushrooms, spices, ginger, and sometimes cinnamon. Unlike coffee, kish does not need to be roasted. The coffee husk, which is the outer layer of the coffee bean, accounts for approximately 2% of the coffee bean's weight. Therefore, "القشر" [al-kishr] is more accurately translated as "coffee piece," "coffee husk," or "cascara," which is also a word. commonly used in Spanish

Finally, the term "عاقل القرية" was translated wrongly as "the wise men," while the true translation is "the neighborhood head." The term "عاقل القرية" in Yemen means the one who is responsible for a neighborhood or a village to take responsibility regarding the services of its people and the management of their affairs. Mistranslating such a term is considered a grave mistake due to its importance. The head of the neighborhood and the village, in Yemen, is not a simple and insignificant person; rather, he is considered one of the most important men of the state because he directly represents the members of society. All regions in the country consist of neighborhoods and villages, and those in charge of them are the head people.

2. Translation using formal equivalence

Table (3): The translation using Formal Equivalence

Source Text	English Translation
مصحف	Qur'an
اسوار من ذهب ونقوش الزينة	Engraved gold bracelets
كتاب المولد	The book of births
الزكاة	Alms tax

The translation of the term "مصحف" into English as "Qur'an" may cause giant confusion to the TT readers, though it's a correct translation, which shows us the importance of using footnotes in translation. As the context was talking about recording the date of births in the Qur'an. However, this is a common tradition in Yemen. Important family events such as

births and marriages are recorded in the margins of each copy of the Quran, which is especially common in villages (a practice that actually occurs not just among Yemenis but also across a wide part of the Muslim world). The Quran is the holy book and the center of the Muslim family. It is often a convenient and reliable place to record these important life events. However, this practice is more related to a cultural context and less to a religious order. It is a practical solution for recording important information at times and places where other formats of documents are inaccessible or unreliable. Such information should be provided to TT readers to understand the reasons for this behavior. and does not affect the sanctity of the Quran. Even if it's not the correct behavior.

The phrase "اسوار من ذهب ونقوش الزينة" was translated wrongly into English as "engraved gold bracelets," as the phrase "نقوش الزينة," adornments engravings," here doesn't describe the gold bracelets; instead, it describes the hand engraving of Sharifa Hafsas, which are made by a dye or henna to decorate her hands. Hand adornments is the most important and most widely used cosmetic product for women in Yemen until today, although it was an ancient means of decoration and is commonly used on Eid, especially by young girls, by engraving on their hands and feet as a symbolic language of joy.

Another mistake can be seen in the translation of "المولد" [Al-Mawlid] as "births." Regardless of the cultural gap between the two cultures and that there is no equivalent in the TT for such a religious term, they made things worse by translating it in a plural form while it is singular. The term [Mawlid] refers to the observance of the day of birth of the prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him). Besides being called Mawlid an-Nabī (مَوْلِدُ النَّبِيِّ, "Birth of the Prophet"), his birthday is also known as al-Mawlid(al-) sharif (المَوْلِدُ المصطفى, "(The) Noble Birth"), and its observance has been a common practice even since Muhammad's lifetime. However, the term "birth" means "the time when something begins (especially life)" (vocabulary dic). So, this term doesn't indicate a specific occasion, as its meaning in Arabic, neither in its plural nor singular form. However, this cultural and religious gap can perhaps be solved by translating the term [Al-Mawlid] into English as "The Prophet's Birthday" (Al-Manny) with an explanation to it.

The term "الزكاة" [Alzakat] was translated into English as "Alms tax"; however, this translation doesn't convey the term [zakat] completely or render its meaning to the TT readers as it is in the ST. [Alzakat] means charity God obligates Muslims to pay yearly. It is considered a religious obligation for all Muslims who meet the necessary criteria of wealth to help the needy, and by Quranic ranking, it is one of the Five Pillars of Islam. There are many types of [zakat], such as the [zakat] of money, agriculture, trade, gold, and cattle and other valuable assets owned and rented by someone. However, "alms" are money, food, or similar items given to the poor as a charitable act; it is a voluntary contribution to aid the poor" (Vocabulary Dic).

The differences between the two terms are now clear, as the [zakat] is not just a form of charity or alms-giving, tax, or tithe. And it is not only a gesture of generosity; it is everything and so much else. That is why there can be no equivalent to the word Zakat because of the supreme originality of the Qur'an; however, to solve such a problem, it is

better to render its meaning into the TL as Ghazala (2004:84-85) states: "The appropriate rendering of the term [Zakat] into the TL is by adding the term "compulsory" or "obligatory" to the English term "alms" or "charity" instead of "alms ta"x.

3. Translating the same cultural item using both formal and dynamic equivalence

Table (4): The translation of the same cultural items using both formal and dynamic equivalence

Source Text	Formal Translation	Dynamic Translation
علان	Allan	Rainbow
الفقيه	Faqih	Learned men
دار	House Building	Palace

It is noticed that the translation of the term "علان" [Allan] was challenging to the translators; first, they translated it formally using transliteration in P.3/23 as "Allan" without an explanation or footnote to describe it better, which left the meaning of such an important term incomplete to the TT readers. Moreover, they translated it using a dynamic equivalent in P. 43/56 as "rainbow," which again failed to overcome the cultural gap or to render its meaning to the TT readers. The term "rainbow" means "an arc of color in the sky that can be seen when the sun shines through falling rain." (Wikipedia). While the term "علان" [Allan] means the last month of the agricultural year in Yemen, which corresponds to the month of September, and in this month the Yemenis bid farewell to autumn associated with hunger and poverty and welcome the season of blessing. When it comes, Yemenis celebrate and sing joyfully; the most wonderful songs and chants of the Yemenis are those that are sung during [Allan]. However, the transliteration along with an explanation or footnote is perhaps the best strategy to render its meaning without losing its cultural value.

Moreover, the term "الفقيه" [Alfaqih] means "an Islamic jurist, an expert in fiqh, or Islamic jurisprudence and Islamic law." (Wikipedia). He is a "reciter of the Koran and elementary-school teacher." (Hans Wehr Dic). However, they translated it formally using transliteration as "Faqih" in p. 4/23 and provided an explanation in the footnote "a religious teacher" as it was given in the Arabic version by the writer. In contrast, they translated its plural form, "الفقهاء" [Alfuqahaa], as "learned men" on p. 28/44; however, the phrase "learned men" is a general phrase that refers to any educated men. Thus, the term [Alfaqih] was not given its cultural value. To solve this problem and make a close equivalent of this term, it was better to use the first translation in the plural form too as "fuqaha'a" or to translate both terms as "legist jurisprudent(s)" or "expert(s) of fiqh" as stated in (Hans Wehr, p. 723).

Finally, the term "دار" [Dar] was translated into three different terms in English, which creates a kind of confusion for the TT readers as the translators didn't keep the consistency in their translation. First, they translated it as "palace" in P.3/23, then as house in P.6/26, and finally as "building" in p.10/29. However, describing it as a "house" or "building" detracts from its architectural art, which is unique from others as it was renowned for its huge

number of rooms, its decorations, its language, its stairs and its terraces, the size of its interior courtyards, and the amount of gardens. Furthermore, it was intended for the Imam, his governors, and his representatives, who ruled Yemen during that period of time. Hence, the term "palace" is the closest and best equivalent.

4. Translation using Omission

There were many omissions in the novel, such as the omission of (عبادي-بنادق البشلي-جفنة - (الطنافس-مجرد مجابرة). However, translators might use omission as a translation strategy to address challenges that arise during the translation process. As Baker (200) states, it functions as a translation strategy that can be used to deal with non-equivalence problems at the word level and above. However, Delisle et al. (p. 165) define omission as "a translation error where the translator fails to render a necessary element of information from the source text in the target text." According to Tso (2010), "omission is not a common translation strategy as it is traditionally identified with the translator's failure to translate some information or effect in the ST." Omission is often seen negatively because it hinders the complete narration of the source text, which contradicts the core translation principle of "faithfulness."

The omission of the term "عبادي" hinders the complete narration of the whole story of the ST and, as the researcher mentioned before, violates the format of the novel and the desire of the writer. So, instead of omitting it, it can be transliterated easily into the TT as "Abadi."

Moreover, the term "البنادق البشلي" could have been translated into the TT using transliteration as "al-bashli rifle," which is a German rifle named "Mauser" that has been brought to Yemen by Turks; it was named "al-bashli" by Yemenis who still keep these pieces as a decoration in their reception rooms (المجالس).

The translators also omitted the term "جفنة" due to the cultural gap and the lack of equivalence in the TL. It means a deep masticating pot made of engraved wood; it is a unique Yemeni pot. Instead of omitting it, they could have used the strategy of transliteration with a footnote or indicated its function by pointing out that there was food that was brought (with or without transliteration) as "some food for breakfast in Jefnah" or "some food for breakfast" only.

By omitting the term "الطنافس النحاسية والفضية" in "الطنافس" and translating it into "silver and brass" only, they left the meaning incomplete. Instead, it can be translated as "copper and silver utensils/pots/tools," as the researcher suggested before. They also omitted the phrase "مجرد مجابرة" and changed the whole dialogue to avoid translating it while it can simply be translated as "just a talk."

The frequency of formal and dynamic equivalence

Table (5): The frequency of formal and dynamic equivalence

Type of equivalence	Fre.	%
Formal equivalence	8	25
Dynamic equivalence	19	59.375
None (omission)	5	15.625
Total of cultural items	25	
Total of TT translations	32	100%

Conclusion

The researchers noted that dynamic equivalence was mainly employed by The Hostage translators in translating Yemeni cultural terms into English to bring target-culture norms to them. On the one hand, it enhanced readability, but on the other, there was a considerable loss of cultural accuracy, like transposing "القضاض" into "cement" or omitting "جفنه" or "البنادق البشلي" without adequate explanation. The presence of formal equivalence showed its weakness in some cases, with oversized literal translation (e.g., "المولد" as "births") or varied approaches (or indeed occasional cocky indeterminacy like "الفقيه" and "الدار"). These instances display the difficulty of translating culture-specific concepts for which there appears to be no direct equivalent, and any choice becomes a compromise of the original intention.

Based on the research findings, the researcher proposes that transliteration, detailed footnotes, and international versions help to bridge the gap, while native Yemeni translators need to take charge of minimizing culture gaps. In addition, it would be important for translators to immerse themselves in Yemeni culture, religious nuances especially, to present a true picture free from distortion. The above procedures put forward a two-fork credo that believes that the target readership appreciates an accurate portrayal of the cultural base of the storable story while simultaneously catering for translation fidelities. In conclusion, research brings to light the cultural orientation of a literary translation, thus preserving the original heritage and, at the same time, ensuring readability.

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