

**FOREIGNIZATION & DOMESTICATION STRATEGIES OF METAPHOR
TRANSLATION IN SAHAR KHALIFA'S ASSABBAR: A COGNITIVE, READER-
ORIENTED APPROACH**

Ahlam Ahmed Othman

Faculty of Arts & Humanities, British University in Egypt, Cairo, Egypt
Faculty of Humanities, Al-Azhar University, Cairo, Egypt

ABSTRACT: *The translation of metaphor has always been a challenge to the translators of literary works. Two seemingly opposing concepts were introduced by Venuti to describe the choices translators of literature make: Domestication which is often equated with reader-orientedness and Foreignization which means staying close to the source text. In their translation Sahar Khalifa's Assabbar, however, Trevor LeGassick and Elizabeth Fernea have aptly chosen different Domestication and Foreignization strategies: Exact Translation, Substitution, Deletion and Explication while retaining the Original Metaphor. Thus, they could render a natural translation while preserving the culture of the original text. 31 out of 74 metaphors of fighting in Assabbar are rendered an Exact Translation which proves that this metaphor has similar mapping conditions in both the English and Arabic cultures. It also proves that the translators have opted for Strong Domestication to evoke in the TL reader the same feelings the SL reader receives from the original text; namely, the persistence of Palestinian Resistance despite the martyrdom of its icons.*

KEYWORDS: Translation of Metaphor , Cognitive Approach , Reader-oriented Approach, Domestication , Foreignization

INTRODUCTION

The translation of metaphor has always been a challenge to the translators of literary works "since transferring them from one language and culture to another one may be hampered by linguistic and cultural differences" ("Metaphor and Translation" 1253). Since different cultures conceptualize the world in varying ways, metaphors are culture-specific. The cognitive approach defines metaphor as a means to understand one domain of experience (the target domain) in terms of another (the source domain) (Lakoff & Johnson 3). Thus, "metaphor" is a conceptual phenomenon which refers to the conceptual mapping of a source domain (e.g. THE HEAT OF A FLUID IN A CONTAINER) onto a target domain (e.g. ANGER). The term "metaphorical expression," on the other hand, refers to any individual linguistic expression based on this conceptualization (e.g. I gave vent to my anger) ("Metaphor and Translation" 1258). According to the cognitive approach, the translatability of metaphor is an issue of conceptual systems rather than individual linguistic expressions in source and target languages.

Theoretical Underpinning:

In his *Annotated Texts for Translation: English-German* (2001), Schaeffner lists three possible cases occurring in metaphor translation: (1) the same conceptual metaphor may exist in source and target cultures with identical or similar metaphorical expressions, (2) it may

exist in both cultures with different metaphorical expressions or (3) the conceptual metaphor may be specific to one of the compared cultures (44). For these three cases, Ahrens and Say formulate the following principles of translation:

1. If a similar image-schema mapping exists, and the information mapped is the same, then use an exact translation.
 2. If a similar image-schema exists, but there is a different mapping for a particular instance in the target language, i) use an explanatory simile or ii) substitute with another instance in the target language that carries the same meaning (from the same conceptual metaphor).
 3. If the image-schema mapping does not exist in the target language, either i) translate directly with an attached explanation or ii) use an explanatory simile.
- (101)

Translators, however, might make different choices to create a certain emotional impact on the reader. For example, they might choose to retain the original metaphor in the source language (SL) even when “a similar image-schema mapping exists, and the information mapped is the same,” in the target language (TL), which is called foreignization.

In his seminal work, *The Translator's Invisibility* (1995), American Literary Translator and Professor of Literature, Lawrence Venuti, introduced the two terms of foreignization and domestication to explain the degree of reader-orientedness or alienation in literary translation. According to Venuti, “Foreignizing translation signifies the difference of the foreign text, yet only by disrupting the cultural codes that prevail in the target language” (20). In domesticating translation, however, “the translator works to make his or her work invisible, producing the illusory effect of transparency that simultaneously masks its status as an illusion: the translated text seems natural, i.e. not translated” (ibid. 5).

In his article, “Measuring Foreignization in Literary Translation” (2012), Piet van Poucke constructed a quantitative model for assessing translations on a foreignization-domestication scale that ranges from Strong Foreignization to Strong Domestication. In Strong Foreignization, the translator retains both form and meaning of the translated text. On the lexico-semantic level, Strong Foreignization includes “all forms of borrowing (retention, preservation, transcription, transliteration, loanwords, loan-based neologisms) (Poucke 145). In Moderate Foreignization, the translator makes minor changes in either form or meaning, but nevertheless stays close to the translated text. According to Poucke, “deliberate literal (or direct) translation (in the case of calques, for instance, when more idiomatic alternatives are available in the TL but are not used by the translator) as well as ... Specification, explication or addition, when the form of the original is retained” (ibid.) all fall within the scope of Moderate Foreignization. Significant changes in form and meaning, however, signal Moderate Domestication. These include a wide range of strategies: “Transposition, Modulation (Newmark; Vinay / Darbelnet), Equivalence (Newmark; Vinay / Darbelnet), Generalization, Substitution (Pedersen), Trope Change (Chesterman), Cultural Substitution (Baker), Paraphrase (Baker; Chesterman) and others, but they all have in common that the TT [Target Text] is adapted to the taste and expectations of the public” (ibid. 146). As for Strong Domestication, it is equivalent to *mutation*. According to Kitty van Leuven-Zwart, a text is *mutated* in the case of “addition of clauses or phrases, deletion of clauses or phrases, and radical change of meaning” (168).

METHODOLOGY

To see how far the employment of Foreignization and Domestication strategies of metaphor translation affects the reception of a translated literary work by the TL reader, the metaphors of fighting in Sahar Khalifa's novel, *Assabbar*, as translated by Trevor LeGassick and Elizabeth Fernea will be examined. Sahar Khalifa is a leading Palestinian novelist and short story writer who was born in Nablus in 1942. *Assabbar* is the novel that gave Khalifa literary recognition on an international scale. It was translated into many languages including English, French, Italian and Dutch. Set in the early seventies after the 1976 setback, *Assabbar* depicts the Palestinian division over the means of fighting the occupation. Representing the conservative movement "Fatah," the Protagonist, Usama Al-Karmi, sees armed struggle as the only means of liberation. Trained in Jordan for years, Usama returns to the West Bank planning to blow up the Israeli buses. On the other hand, Usama's cousin, Adil, represents the Palestinian leftist movement that focuses on economic development. Adil's family that used to be rich is now suffering from poverty as a result of the occupation that destroyed their farm. To sustain his family that consists of a sick father, a sister and a young brother, Adil works at an Israeli factory. Witnessing the injustice done to Palestinian workers, like Abu Sabir who has not been compensated for his job accident, Adil decides to form a Labor Union that protects the rights of Palestinians working in Israeli factories. Usama, however, regards Adil as a traitor of the Palestinian cause and decides to blow up the Israeli buses that carry Adil and other Palestinian workers. Although Usama dies in the process, there is hope that the new generation represented by Basil, Adil's brother, will continue the Palestinian armed struggle.

Data Analysis and Discussion

One of the Palestinian icons in Khalifa's *Assabbar* is Usama Al-Karmi, the protagonist. Upon his return to Palestine after a long time of training in Jordan, Usama feels he has become "a single shot in a fusillade ... a rocket, a guided missile" (6). The exact translation of the Arabic metaphorical expression "صاروخاً صاروخاً موجهاً" and "طلقة في عداد الطلقات" emphasizes the strength of Palestinian resistance and warns the Israelis that its icons will act as guided missiles; that is, sacrifice their lives to fight the Israeli occupation.

If Usama is compared to a guided missile, Basil, the youngest member of Al-Karmi family who represents the new generation of Palestinian resistance, is aptly described by one of the political prisoners as "a bright new flame from Jabal Al-Nar, Our Mountain of Fire!" (118). Again, the exact translation of the Arabic metaphorical expression "شعلة جديدة" emphasizes the strength of young Palestinian fighters. However, the preservation of the Arabic name of the mountain "جبل النار" shows the translators' tendency towards "foreignization," described by Venuti as highlighting the "otherness" in translated texts by resisting the values of Anglo-American culture and making the foreign identity of the text visible (20). The Moderate Foreignization strategy of explication while retaining the original is employed here for a purpose. Since the Israelis have changed names of places in the occupied territories to obliterate the identity of Palestinians, the translators' choice to retain the Arabic name of the mountain is considered in itself an act of resistance, emphasizing the Palestinians' claim to the land.

To further emphasize the strength of resistance men, Elias, one of the Palestinian prisoners, is described as follows: "He waves to me with a hand of steel. / A hail of sparks flies from his other hand!" (120). The exact translation of the metaphorical expressions "يلوح لي بيد من حديد" /

(101) "وأخرى تطاير منها الشرر" (101) arouses the TL reader's sense of admiration of Elias' fortitude, just as the Arabic metaphors raise the SL reader's admiration of the man whose resistance has never weakened despite his disfigurement while exploding an Israeli bus.

Not only resistance men but also simple Palestinian workers in Israeli factories are described as powerful in the face of the Israeli occupation. Thus, Zuhdi, a Palestinian worker who has reluctantly taken an Israeli job, violently attacks his Israeli supervisor for saying "dirty Arabs." When he is sent to prison, however, the other prisoners suspect he is a traitor and keep avoiding him. Suddenly, Sahar Khalifa writes, "his eyes flashed and he threatened to use his iron fists on them" (136). The exact translation of the Arabic metaphorical expression (113) "تطاير الشرر من عينيه وأخذ يهددهم باستعمال قبضته الحديدية" helps the non-Arabic reader recognize the similarity between Elias and Zuhdi for their hands are equally compared to steel in their strength.

All doubts concerning Zuhdi's loyalty to the Palestinian case are dispelled when, after his release, he finds himself in the midst of an armed attack on the buses taking him and other Palestinian workers to Israeli factories. He initially expresses his perplexed feelings saying: "Now you've had it, Zuhdi, by God. You're caught between two fires" (182). Following Ahrens's and Say's second principle, "If a similar image-schema exists, but there is a different mapping for a particular instance in the target language," the translator should either "use an explanatory simile or substitute with another instance in the target language that carries the same meaning (from the same conceptual metaphor)" (101). Accordingly, the translators substituted the Arabic metaphorical expression "بين المطرقة والسندان" with another metaphorical expression "caught between two fires" that carries the same meaning from the same conceptual metaphor "Hard Choice as Entrapment". Since Substitution is one of the Moderate Domestication strategies the translator chooses to bring the SL text closer to the reader, the translators succeeded in transferring Zuhdi's feelings of perplexity to the non-Arabic reader who does not have the same metaphorical expression in his culture.

However, Zuhdi's confusion soon comes to an end and his nationalist feelings drive him to side with the Palestinian militias. He first kills an Israeli soldier with a screwdriver. Then, he picks the machine gun and starts fighting at Usama's side. He describes himself as "a *shawka* now, a 'thorn'" (182). The translators' choice to keep the Arabic metaphorical expression "شوكة" together with the English explication shows the translators' tendency towards Moderate Foreignization. Again, the use of the Moderate Foreignization strategy of explication while retaining the original is made here for a purpose: to establish a link in the TL reader's mind between the original title of Sahar Khalifa's novel *AlSabbar*, and the translated title, *Wild Thorns*. Earlier, however, Zuhdi has asserted to Adil, "الشوك لا يصنع الورد" (149) "الشوك لا يصنع الورد" translated exactly as "'The thorns aren't there to produce roses,' ... 'they're there to protect them'" (177). The exact translation of the metaphorical expression emphasizes the comparison between resistance men and thorns in the TL reader's mind just as it is established by the Arabic metaphorical expression in the SL reader's mind. Zuhdi protects Usama and his men as thorns protect roses. He keeps fighting at Usama's side until they are both killed by Israeli bullets.

While Usama and Zuhdi fight the Israelis till death, Adil, Usama's cousin, takes no action against Israeli injustice. He continues to work for the Israelis even after Abu Sabir's hand is cut and the Israeli employer refuses to compensate him because he does not have a work permit. He cannot even think of a heroic story to ease Abu Sabir's suffering. Sahar Khalifa writes: (50) "وأخذ عادل يقدح زناد فكره دون جدوى" translated as "Adil racked his brains, but

couldn't remember any heroic tales" (52). It is worth noting here that although the English fixed idiom "racked his brains" is not an exact translation of the Arabic metaphorical expression, it evokes in the TL reader the same response the Arabic metaphorical expression does to the SL reader because it belongs to the same conceptual metaphor: "Thinking as Pain". The Substitution strategy used here has a Moderate effect of Domestication on the TL reader and helps make the translated text "invisible," to quote Venuti (5).

Adil's justification for his inaction is his father's illness. He compares his father's kidney machine to "the gate of the hell [which] sucks up money to keep my father's bones alive" (55). He contents himself with fighting against hunger. When Usama tries to convince him to join his cause, Adil wonders: "And who's going to fight the battle of the stomachs?" (63) Here is another instance of Strong Domestication that makes the translated text "invisible" to the TL reader. The exact translation of the Arabic metaphorical expression "ومعركة الأمعاء من" (58) "يخوضها؟" helps the TL reader draw a comparison between fighting occupation and fighting hunger. Although there is a great difference between the two types of fighting, both occupation and hunger are dangerous enemies of man.

Usama, however, does not accept Adil's excuse and scolds him for his inaction while Palestinian women are being raped by Israeli soldiers. Adil argues: "This isn't the age of Messiah, remember," but Usama retorts: "No, it's the age of reptiles/ Or doormats" (64). The exact translation of the Arabic metaphorical expressions: "عصر" and "هذا ليس عصر المسيح. تذكر" (59) "التماسيح / أو المماسيح" helps the TL reader see the difference between the two characters. While Adil justifies his inaction by saying that "This isn't the age of Messiah," Usama insists that one has to fight the reptiles (i.e. the Israelis); otherwise, one would be as worthless as a doormat. However, Usama's words do not move Adil or prompt him to take any positive stance. His only response is to ask Usama to tell him "an Abu Zayd story that [he] can use to cheer up the injured man" (64). The translators here deleted the Arabic metaphorical expression (59) "عساي أفسح بها قلب المصلوب" because the conceptual metaphor of "Heart as Balloon" does not exist in the TL culture. According to Leuven-Zwart, deletion is a strategy of Strong Domestication which is equivalent to *mutation*. Although the translation of the meaning makes the translated text "invisible" to the reader and reminds him/her of Abu Sabir, "the injured man", it has lost the effect of the Arabic expression "قلب المصلوب" which is congruent with Adil's previous talk about "the age of the Messiah." The preservation of the name of the Arabic hero, Abu Zayd El-Hellali, however, attests to the translators' keenness on maintaining the "otherness" of the translated text and preserving the SL culture. Abu Zayd El-Hellali is the hero of the epic poem of Banu Hilal, described as "the Iliad of the Arab people" by Egyptian poet Abdel Rahman al-Abnudi who has spent 35 years recording and publishing the oral tradition in Egypt, Tunisia, Morocco and Arabia. The story centers around his heroic deeds after his father disowned him till his return to the tribe. According to al-Abnudi, "Abu Zeid al-Hilali personifies the Arab leader whom the nation looks up to and is looking for to unite it during crises and periods of danger" (as qtd. In Tabarra 1).

While Basil, Adil's younger brother, plans to free the Palestinian lands, Adil continues to drink and criticize the injustice of powerful nations that support the Israeli occupation. He says: "Torture: a topic defined to perfection by the pimps of politics at the United Nations" (56). Although the conceptual metaphor of "Torture as Hobby" exists in English, the translators chose to translate the Arabic metaphorical expression. "التعذيب! هواية يحترفها قوادوا" (53) "هيئة الأمم" using the conceptual metaphor "Torture as a Well-Defined Topic". The reason for the use of the Moderate Domestication strategy of Substitution, instead of the

Strong Domestication strategy of exact translation, here is probably the contradiction between the Arabic verb "يحترف" and the object "هواية," which the translators found hard to reconcile in English. The apparent contradiction in the Arabic metaphorical expression, however, stresses the endless torture that makes Adil feel that "An entire nation's drowning" (61), an exact translation of the Arabic metaphorical expression, (57) "وشعب بأكمله يغرق", which succeeds in transferring Adil's feelings of desperation to the TL reader.

It is the same sense of desperation that Haj Abdullah, the grocer, expresses to Usama using the Arabic proverb (65) "اليد لا تناطح مخرز يا أستاذ أسامة" translated as "A hand can't fight an owl, can it, Mr Usama?" (73) Because a different mapping exists in the TL culture, the translators opted for Moderate Domestication substituting the Arabic word "مخرز" or "Big Needle" with the English word "Owl" to drive the idea of defeatism home to the TL reader. Haj Abdullah believes that the young generation's talk about politics cannot change the status quo. He tells Usama: (65) "25 سنة واحنا نتاجر بالكلام," which is rendered an exact translation: "We've been trading in words for twenty-five years" (73) because the TL culture has the conceptual metaphor of "Word as Commodity".

Nevertheless, in Sahar Khlaifa's novel, *Assabbar*, words are not only compared to commodities but also to weapons. Instead of directing these weapons against their enemies, however, the Palestinians use words to attack one another. The author describes Usama's reaction to the Palestinian workers' envy and hatred of their rich fellow citizens and their disregard of their real enemies using the metaphorical expression "والكلمات المشحونة بالحق تدوي" (76) "في أذنيه فترتعش جفونه". Khalifa compares the sound of words that are full of hatred to the thunder caused by a rifle stuffed with bullets. Although the conceptual metaphor of "Word as Weapon" exists in the TL culture, the translators deleted the Arabic metaphorical expression and translated its meaning instead: "His head throbbed in response to the conversation, so full of hatred" (90). Consequently, their translation lost the strong emotions that the original metaphor produces in the SL reader.

In other instances, however, the translators preserved the conceptual metaphor of "Word as Weapon" by giving an exact translation of the Arabic metaphorical expression, a Strong Domestication strategy, or providing a similar English metaphorical expression from the same conceptual metaphor, a Moderate Domestication strategy. For example, Khalifa's "ابتسم" (83) "عادل وألقى قنبلة جديدة", which refers to Adil's attack of Usama for leaving the occupied territories and returning only when fired from his job, is exactly translated as "Adil smiled and dropped another bombshell" (98). On the other hand, Usama's reaction to Adil's accusation, (83) "وأحس أسامة بالطعنة تخترق صدره", is translated with an English proverb that belongs to the same conceptual metaphor; namely, "Usama felt the knife twist in his heart" (98), instead of rendering an exact translation of the Arabic verb "تخترق" as "pierce". The reason for preferring the Moderate Domestication strategy of Substitution to the Strong Domestication strategy of Exact Translation here is to arouse strong feelings of pity in the heart of the TL reader. The act of twisting a knife inside someone who has just been stabbed widens the wound and increases the pain, compared to the act of piercing a knife. The translators thus succeeded in transferring to the TL reader the same meaning of the aggravated suffering of Usama.

In Khalifa's novel, as in real life, the Palestinians fight one another while the Israelis continue their occupation of Palestinian territories. Upon his return to the West Bank, Usama felt "he was now a prisoner in the genie's bottle" which is an exact translation of the Arabic metaphorical expression: "بات سجين القمقم" (20). Usama likens himself to a prisoner and

compares the Palestinian land to a genie's magic bottle. The preservation of the SL metaphor thus helps the TL reader see the effect of the Israeli policy of expansion and reduction of Palestinian territories. Similarly, the exact translation of the Arabic metaphor: "كانت الأيدي" as "Skilled hands had removed all the natural ground cover of spring to prevent anything undesirable from slipping across the border" (20) helps the TL reader understand the Israeli policy of Palestinians' expulsion. The Israelis have even cut the trees to prevent the Palestinians from "slipping across the border". Because the conceptual metaphor "Tree as Cover" exists in both SL and TL cultures, the translators had no difficulty translating the Arabic metaphorical expression. Likewise, they could easily translate the Arabic metaphorical expression "يمصون دمنا ليجعلوا حياتنا جحيماً" as "They suck our blood and make our lives hell so we'll migrate" (18) because the conceptual metaphor of "Life as Hell" exists in both SL and TL cultures.

"And who is responsible?" Salih, one of the political prisoners, asks, "This is a question that demands an answer, no matter how much the truth may hurt" (125). The translators wanted the TL reader to share Salih's feelings of pain by rendering the Arabic metaphorical expression (140) "مهما جرحتنا الحقيقة" an exact translation. Their task was easily accomplished because, as mentioned above, the conceptual metaphor of "Word as Weapon" exists in both the SL and TL cultures. The answer to Salih's question, however, is as vivid as Usama metaphorically expresses: "الأرض: جريمة نحن مرتكبوها. والشعب: خدعة. مقلب شربناه. شربة تجر عناها" (23). To transfer the Palestinians' feelings of guilt Vis a Vis the Israeli occupation to the TL reader and, meanwhile, preserve the conceptual metaphor of "Land as Crime" that does not exist in the TL culture, the translators had to explain the target domain "the land" as follows: "The land itself, the occupation, was a crime we ourselves perpetrated" (23). To translate the second metaphorical expression "والشعب: خدعة", the translators had to look for a similar metaphorical expression that belongs to the same conceptual metaphor and explain the target domain as "And the people's strength is only a myth" (23). As for the third Arabic metaphorical expression, "مقلب شربناه شربة تجر عناها وحسبت علينا قضية", they had to explain both the target domain and source domain as follows: "We swallowed the rhetoric and believed it was a cause, a revolution" (23). Through explication, a Moderate Foreignization strategy, the translators succeeded in transferring and emphasizing the meaning while preserving the Arabic metaphorical expressions.

CONCLUSION

To summarize, although Domestication and Foreignization are two seemingly contradictory concepts, the former is often equated with reader-orientedness and the latter with staying close to the source text, the translators of Khalifa's *Assabbar*, LeGassick and Fernea, have aptly chosen different Domestication and Foreignization strategies including Exact Translation, Substitution, Deletion and Explication while retaining the Original Metaphor. Thus, they could render a natural translation while preserving the culture of the original text. 31 out of 74 metaphors of fighting in *Assabbar* are rendered an Exact Translation which proves that this metaphor has similar mapping conditions in both the English and Arabic cultures. It also proves that the translators have opted for Strong Domestication to evoke in the TL reader the same feelings the SL reader receives from the original text; namely, the persistence of Palestinian Resistance despite the martyrdom of its icons.

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