

Challenges of Translating Lexical, Poetic, and Cultural Elements of Shakespearean Selected Sonnets by Tow Arabic Translators

Tantangan Menerjemahkan Elemen Leksikal, Puitis, dan Budaya dalam Soneta Pilihan Shakespeare oleh Dua Penerjemah Arab

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Abstract

This study explores the challenges of translating Shakespeare's sonnets into Arabic through a comparative analysis of translations by Badr Tawfiq and Bushra Ayoob. The research investigates the extent to which poetic elements, such as rhyme, rhythm, figurative language, and cultural connotations, can be effectively transferred into Arabic without compromising their aesthetic value. Utilizing a qualitative comparative method, the research focuses on two selected sonnets, analyzing lexical choices, poetic rhythm, and cultural symbolism. The analysis is enhanced by the framework of Ashuja'a and Saeed (2018), which incorporates five distinct translation strategies. Findings reveal that Tawfiq's translation remains faithful to the original text's structure and content, whereas Ayoob's version demonstrates greater flexibility and cultural adaptation to suit Arabic poetic traditions. The study concludes that poetry translation transcends literal transfer, representing a creative process that requires a delicate balance between accuracy and artistic innovation. This is particularly crucial when addressing rich literary texts like Shakespeare's works. This research contributes to the field of literary translation by highlighting the necessity of aesthetic and cultural sensitivity in producing successful poetic renditions.

Kata kunci

soneta; rima; ritme; puitis;
leksikal.

Abstrak

Penelitian ini mengeksplorasi tantangan dalam menerjemahkan soneta Shakespeare ke dalam bahasa Arab melalui analisis komparatif terhadap terjemahan karya Badr Tawfiq dan Bushra Ayoob. Penelitian ini menginvestigasi sejauh mana elemen puitis, seperti rima, ritme, bahasa kiasan, dan konotasi budaya, dapat ditransfer secara efektif ke dalam bahasa Arab tanpa mengorbankan nilai estetisnya. Dengan menggunakan metode komparatif kualitatif, penelitian ini berfokus pada dua soneta pilihan dengan menganalisis pilihan leksikal, ritme puitis, dan simbolisme budaya. Analisis ini diperkuat dengan kerangka kerja Ashuja'a dan Saeed (2018) yang menggabungkan lima strategi penerjemahan yang berbeda. Temuan menunjukkan bahwa terjemahan Tawfiq tetap setia pada struktur dan isi teks asli, sedangkan versi Ayoob menunjukkan fleksibilitas dan adaptasi budaya yang lebih besar agar sesuai dengan tradisi puitis Arab. Studi ini menyimpulkan bahwa penerjemahan puisi melampaui transfer harfiah, yang merupakan sebuah proses kreatif yang memerlukan keseimbangan halus antara akurasi dan inovasi artistik. Hal ini sangat krusial ketika menangani teks sastra yang kaya seperti karya Shakespeare. Penelitian ini berkontribusi pada bidang penerjemahan sastra dengan menyoroti perlunya sensitivitas estetika dan budaya dalam menghasilkan terjemahan puitis yang berhasil.

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A. Introduction

Translation has served to meet various communication needs during numerous disaster scenarios (AlShaye, 2025). It is essentially the process of conveying meaning from one language to another. Newmark (1988) stated that translation is often, though not always, the process of transferring the meaning of a text into another language while preserving the author's original intent. Saleh (2017) defined translation from a transformational perspective, stating that translation involves changing the meaning of a text from one language to another. From his perspective, Holmes (1972) defined translation as an activity that involves transforming texts from one language to another while respecting cultural and linguistic differences. These views align with Venuti (1995), who provided a definition of translation similar to previous ones but focused on ensuring the equivalent in the target language corresponds to the original text. Ashuja'a and Saeed (2018) also share this regard. Since translation is considered a bridge among nations to transfer knowledge and culture, it remains vital to human interaction. Fitara (2024) noted that translation is significant because it is evidence of a willingness to engage and live with other cultures. Similarly, Bell (1991) defined the translation process from a replacement perspective, stating it is the replacement of a text in one language by one in another, so that the essence of the original remains intact even when expressed in a different linguistic and cultural context. Through translation practices, a linguistic phenomenon known as loanwords has emerged, defined as a metaphorical term reflecting a condition where nothing is taken away from the donor language and there is no expectation of return (Dunkin, 2014, cited in Purwitasari, 2025). However, loanwords are often not translated, so translators, specifically those translating poetry, should be aware of such cases. Therefore, in translating poetry, a fundamental challenge is to preserve not only the literal meaning but also the subtleties embedded in cultural idioms, stylistic choices, and historical references.

In the same regard, Ashuja'a and Saeed (2018) emphasized translation strategies, remarking that no translation is completed without the translator considering certain strategies. Such strategies play a vital role, and translators should be aware of selecting strategies that assist in conveying the intended meaning, especially in literary translation. They noted that literal, addition, deletion, cultural, and compensation strategies are the most frequently used in texts generally and in poetic texts specifically. Furthermore, Abdulmajeed (2025) highlighted the importance of reflecting the imaginative, intellectual, and intuitive writing of the author. This suggests that by adopting suitable strategies in translating poetic texts, a translator can transfer the intended meaning of the original creator. As this study concerns poetry translation, it involves the intricate use of language, metaphor, rhythm, and sound, which can differ greatly between languages. Such elements require specific strategies to be effectively transferred. Consequently, translating poetry requires a high level of skill and ingenuity to preserve the artistic essence of the original text while ensuring that the meaning and emotional impact are effectively communicated in the target language. Ardakani et al. (2015) argued that the activity of poetic translation has always existed, gaining popularity at some times and losing momentum at others, yet it is always practiced.

The aim of this study is to conduct a comparative analysis of the structural and cultural dimensions of the English sonnet and lyrical Arabic poetry, exploring how form, rhythm, and thematic conventions manifest across these two traditions. It seeks to examine the extent to which cultural elements inherent in both languages influence the translation outcome. Furthermore, the study endeavors to assess the effectiveness of two Arabic translators in rendering Shakespeare's sonnets, with particular attention to how each reproduces the aesthetic, emotional, and rhetorical impact of the original text. In addition, it aims to evaluate the translation strategies employed by the two translators, investigating how these strategies address linguistic challenges, cultural differences, and the preservation of figurative and sound features. Mohsen (2021) insisted that modern Arabic poetry contains specific recurring themes such as boredom, sadness, emptiness, and loss. As such elements exist in Shakespeare's poetry as well, this study explores how translators transferred them into Arabic. Through this exploration, the research aspires to contribute to a deeper understanding of cross-cultural poetic translation and the interplay between form, meaning, and culture. Although Shakespeare is considered a poet for all ages, this study specifically investigates the sonnet form, lyrical Arabic poetry, and the translation of cultural elements in selected sonnets by translators Bushra

Ayoob and Bader Tawfik. It focuses on how poetic elements, such as rhyme schemes and cultural factors, are conveyed in each translation.

Regarding the literature, it has long been argued that translating concepts and ideas from one language to another is not a straightforward task (Mansour, 2015). Poetry translation is often seen as even more challenging due to the intricate use of rhythm, rhyme, and metaphor. Various factors contribute to the problems students encounter when translating English poems. Factors related to culture, figurative language, and structural differences are considered main hindrances in translating literary works (Sukmaningrum et al., 2023). According to Jakobson (1959), poetic translation involves the transposition of artistic elements, which is particularly challenging due to its reliance on aesthetic complexities. Thus, a translator must maintain the essence of the poem while transferring its emotional qualities. The skill and background of the translator play a crucial role here, as it is not merely about literal translation but about rendering the text in a way that resonates with the target audience.

In her study, El Khalii (2018) contributed to the discourse with a theoretical work entitled "The Translation of Creativity and the Creativity of Translation." El Khalii analyzed scholarly perspectives, finding that opinions on poetry's translatability range from total impossibility to full potential, depending on the translator's creativity. She emphasized that translating poetry is not simply the reproduction of content but a creative act resulting in an independent artistic work. Poetic translation is an art before it is a science or technical skill. Chouiti (2020) aligns with El Khalii by examining the intersection of creativity and professionalism. Chouiti reflected on how literary translation is as vital and demanding as any specialized field. Her conclusions emphasized that successful poetry translation requires a fusion of artistic passion and linguistic competence, often necessitating that the translator be a poet themselves. Most recently, in 2023, two studies contributed fresh insights. Abdullah Hurmah analyzed the intellectual and emotional complexities of poetry translation, calling for a deeper understanding of its psychological dimensions. He stressed that effective translation must capture emotional and stylistic authenticity.

Regarding the difficulties of translating poetic texts, Ghazala (2019) stated that poetry can be among the most difficult texts to translate, yet it is translatable not only by poets but also by distinguished translators. Ardakani et al. (2015) agree, arguing that as long as human communication is necessary, translation will maintain a firm stronghold. This supports the possibility of translating poetry despite its inherent difficulties. In contrast, some claim that poetic texts are untranslatable. Khalifa (2015) pointed out that while many consider translating poetry impossible, success can be achieved when linguistic and stylistic aspects are taken into account. Rhythm, meter, and historical context are all translatable if the translator carefully manages these aspects during the transfer.

Concerning cultural elements, which are abundant in poetic texts, Ghazala (2025) noted that the debate continues regarding their translatability. He proposed solutions through strategies such as adoption, reconciliation, clash, and neutralization. Bhameed (2020) agreed, stating that cross-cultural dimensions of translation studies remain unresolved. In conclusion, culture is a crucial factor that greatly influences the translation process (Mohammed & Al-Azzawi, 2025). Translators should be particularly aware when translating culture because it is a sensitive aspect. In addition to these difficulties, Farghal and Almannan (2025) claimed that verse should be translated by verse, which requires a poet-translator to render formal aspects. Finally, it appears that previous studies have often lacked a broad coverage of elements when examining such fluid texts. This study will attempt to cover a wider range of elements, including lexical, rhythmic, and cultural factors, while proposing meaningful solutions to these thorny problems.

B. Method

This study is categorized as comparative descriptive research, utilizing a qualitative content analysis design. Creswell (2018) defined research design as the intersection of philosophy, strategies of inquiry, and specific methods. This research specifically focuses on the study and analysis of literary translations within poetic texts. It adopts a descriptive and analytical approach to compare translations of Shakespeare's sonnets by two Arabic translators. The study interprets the differences

between these translations by carefully examining lexical choices, poetic rhyme, and cultural elements to determine the extent to which these components are successfully delivered to the target reader.

Data collection in this study is viewed as a systematic process of gathering and measuring information on targeted variables within an established system, enabling the researcher to answer relevant questions and evaluate outcomes (Pan & de la Puente, 2005). The data consist of content collected from dependable resources, specifically two sonnets by William Shakespeare: Sonnet 18 and Sonnet 60. These are analysed alongside their respective Arabic translations, one by Badr Tawfiq and the other by Bushra Ayoob. Regarding the sampling, this study employs purposive sampling rather than random sampling, meaning the data were deliberately chosen for specific characteristics relevant to the research. Purposive sampling is defined as a non-probability sampling technique in which the researcher selects participants based on specific purposes or criteria relevant to the study (Palinkas et al., 2015). To enhance the analysis, this study adopts the model proposed by Ashuja'a and Saeed (2018), which includes strategies that have proven effective in translating the poetic genre.

The procedure for the analysis will be implemented by designating the source text of Shakespeare's sonnets as ST. The first translation, produced by Badr Tawfiq, will be designated as T1, while the second translation, produced by Bushra Ayoob, will be designated as T2. For the purpose of the analysis, the text will be examined stanza by stanza alongside both Arabic translations to facilitate a comprehensive comparison.

C. Results and Discussion

A qualitative content analysis approach is employed to compare two Arabic translations of Shakespeare's Sonnets 18 and 60. The comparative analysis focuses on lexical, poetic, and cultural elements, as well as how these dimensions are transferred into Arabic. In this section, the source text of Shakespeare's sonnets is designated as ST. The first translation, produced by Badr Tawfiq, is designated as T1, while the second translation, produced by Bushra Ayoob, is designated as T2. For the purpose of this analysis, the text is examined stanza by stanza alongside both translations to facilitate a comprehensive comparison.

The analysis begins with Sonnet 18, whose central theme highlights the power of the lover to achieve immortality through poetry. The poet compares his lover to a summer's day, noting that the lover's beauty, brightness, and grace surpass the fleeting nature of summer. By the end of the sonnet, the poet ensures that as long as humanity endures and is able to read his verses, the poem will persist, and through it, the lover will be immortalized. The structure of Sonnet 18 follows the standard Shakespearean form, consisting of fourteen lines. These lines are written in iambic pentameter and are organized into three quatrains of four lines each, followed by a final two-line couplet. The lines follow the characteristic rhyme scheme of ABAB CDCD EFEF GG.

1. RQ1 - To what extent do lexical, poetic, and cultural elements of sonnet 18 and 60 transferred by the two Arabic translators into Arabic language?

What follows is a detailed analysis of the two Arabic versions to the source text to response to the first question of the research.

a. Sonnet 18

Table 1. The First Stanza of Sonnet 18 with Its Arabic Translations

| ST – Source Text | T1-Badr Tawfiq's Translation | T2 – Bushra Ayoob's Translation |
|---|--|---------------------------------|
| Shall I compare thee to a summer's day? | هل أقارنك بيوم من أيام الصيف؟ | لا تشبهين عزيزتي فصل الجفاف |
| Thou art more lovely and more temperate: | إنك أحب من ذلك وأكثر رقة | بل أنت نسمات على خد الضفاف |
| Rough winds do shake the darling buds of May, | الرياح القاسية تعصف ببراعم مايو العذبة | تأتي الرياح على الأراضي كالجراد |
| And summer's lease hath all too short a date: | وليس في الصيف سوى فرصة وجيزة | فتعيث فيها كل أنواع الفساد |

Lexical Choices

Tawfiq's translation is more faithful to the original text, as he chose words that accurately capture the intended meanings, such as "أيام الصيف" (summer days). In contrast, Ayoob's translation takes more liberties by using phrases that deviate from the source. For instance, the phrase "فصل الجفاف" (the season of drought) was chosen instead of a literal equivalent to offer a metaphor that resonates more naturally with Arabic cultural perceptions of summer. This choice serves the poetic tone and rhythm of the translated sonnet, providing a richer and more expressive alternative than the literal translation of "أيام الصيف".

Poetic Rhyme

Twfiq did not use specific rhythm, while researcher employed Double Rhyme such as ضفاف جفاف, جراد فساد Which made the translation more in harmony with the style of traditional Arabic poetry.

Cultural elements

Tawfiq's translation leans more towards a literal approach, making it understandable but potentially lacking the depth and beauty of the original text. In contrast, researcher on the other hand, took considerable liberties in her translation, adapting the imagery to better align with Arab cultural imagination, such as likening the winds to locusts that ruin the land an image familiar in Arab culture, yet not found in the original text.

Table 2. The Second Stanza of Sonnet 18 with Its Two Translations

| ST – Source Text | T1-Badr Tawfiq's Translation | T2 – Bushra Ayoob's Translation |
|--|--|--|
| Sometime too hot the eye of heaven shines, | تشرق عين السماء أحيانا بحرارة شديدة | يشد حر القيط في تلك السماء |
| And often is his gold complexion dimm'd; | وغالبا ما يصير هذا الوهج الذهبي معتما؛ | بهجيرة مهما سقيت فلا ارتواء |
| And every fair from fair sometime declines, | والروعة بأسرها تتلاشى عنها روعتها يوما ما | فيصير الغصب الرطيب في ذلك الوادي الخصب |
| By chance, or nature's changing course, untrimm'd; | بالقدر أو الطبيعة التي قد تتغير دورتها بلا انتظام: | لفلاة أرض بات يكسوها الجديب. |

Lexical Choices

Tawfiq's translation is close to the literal meaning of the original text, as seen in his use of "عين" to render "the eye of heaven shines" and "الوهج الذهبي معتما" for "his gold complexion dimm'd." On the other hand, Ayoob's translation has been altered more significantly to suit the Arabic context, such as using "يشد حر القيط" instead of "too hot the eye of heaven shines." In this instance, lexical choices drawn from the Arab environment are used more deeply, such as "القيظ" and "الجديب," which reflect the specific nature of heat and drought in the desert environment.

Poetic Rhyme

In Tawfik's translation, the rhyme does not adhere to the traditional style of Arabic poetry; however, the text is not entirely devoid of poetic rhythm. Although the translation attempts to convey the Western rhythmic structure, the overall tone is "smoother" and lacks strict adherence to traditional Arabic poetic rhyme schemes. In contrast, in Ayoob's translation, the rhyme is more closely aligned with the traditional style of Arabic poetry. The translator utilizes both rhyme and meter in her formulation, creating a distinct balance between the verses. Examples include the pairings of "الارتواء" with "السماء" and "الجديب" with "الخصيب," which carry a rhythmic resonance much closer to the conventions of traditional Arabic prosody.

Cultural Elements

Tawfiq's translation does not contain many specific Arabic cultural terms, as he maintains a close adherence to the source text without incorporating terms that align deeply with Arab culture. For example, expressions such as "the sky" and "the golden glow" are universally understood but lack a distinct connection to the Arabic cultural heritage. In contrast, Bushra's translation incorporates specific Arabic cultural terms into the text, such as "القيظ" and "الجديب", which are traditional terms familiar within the Arab desert environment. Additionally, the use of expressions like "فلاة أرض" and "الواد الخصيب" reflects the natural environment and terrain that frequently appear in classical Arabic literature.

Table 3. The Third Stanza of Sonnet 18 with Its Two Translations

| ST – Source Text | T1-Badr Tawfiq's Translation | T2 – Bushra Ayoob's Translation |
|---|--|---------------------------------|
| But thy eternal summer shall not fade, | لكن صيفك الخالد لن يذوي أبدا | وحبيبتني نبع الحياة بمقلتيها |
| Nor lose possession of that fair thou owest; | أو يفقد ما لديه من الحسن الذي تملكه | وثمار حب أينعت في وجنتيها |
| Nor shall Death brag thou wander'st in his shade, | ولا الموت يستطيع أن يطويك في ظلاله | لا ليس يكسوها الذبول |
| When in eternal lines to time thou growest | عندما تكبر مع الزمن في الأسطر الخالدة. | مهما تكالبت العذول. |

Lexical Choices

In Tawfiq's translation, terms such as "الذوي", "صيفك الخالد", and "الزمن" function as poetic expressions with a classical tone, adhering closely to the original Shakespearean language. Consequently, this translation maintains a higher degree of literal fidelity to the English source text. In contrast, in Ayoob's translation, phrases like "ثمار حب", "نبع الحياة", and "العذول" convey a more romantic and emotional resonance. This version aligns more closely with the conventions of traditional Arabic literature, as it focuses explicitly on themes of love and beauty while moving away from the literal constraints of the English text.

Poetic Rhyme

In Tawfiq's translation, the rhyme is relatively balanced. Although maintaining an exact rhyme is difficult due to the inherent linguistic differences between English and Arabic, the translation succeeds in preserving the general Shakespearean rhythm. In contrast, the rhyme in Ayoob's translation flows with greater musicality. Lexical choices such as "الذبول", "وجنتيها", "مقلتيها", and "العذول" blend together effectively to enhance the overall harmony, thereby creating a stronger sense of poetic coherence. This specific approach to rhyme demonstrates the profound influence of traditional Arabic poetry, which emphasizes melody and rhythmic structure to a greater extent than literal equivalence.

Cultural Elements

In Tawfiq's translation, the vocabulary used may be recognizable to the Arabic reader, but it does not carry a profound cultural resonance within the Arabic tradition. Terms such as "صيفك الخالد" and "الذوي" function as general expressions of eternity and decay; however, they align more closely with Western conceptualizations of time and mortality rather than reflecting deeper Arab cultural references. In contrast, Ayoob's translation is more in harmony with Arab culture, particularly through the use of "ثمار حب" and "نبع الحياة", which serve as profound symbols in Arabic poetry. Furthermore, the term "العذول" specifically reflects classical Arabic literature, representing the figure who censures or blames love. This addition provides a layer of cultural depth that resonates strongly with traditional Arab literary themes.

Table 4. The Last Couplet of Sonnet 18 with Its Two Translations

| ST – Source Text | T1- Badr Tawfiq's Translation | T2 – Bushra Ayoob's Translation |
|--|--|--|
| So long as men can breathe, or eyes can see, So long lives this, and this gives life to thee. | فما دامت للبشر أنفاس تتردد و عيون ترى سيبقى هذا الشعر حيا، وفيه لك حياة أخرى. | مادام في الشعر سر مختزل، سيظل شعري خالدا ويظل يندقها غزل. |

Lexical Choices

In Tawfiq's translation, the expression "أنفاس تتردد" serves as an accurate and direct translation of "breathe." This expression effectively reflects the repetitive and vital process of energy and life. Similarly, the phrase "عيون ترى" is a precise translation of "eyes can see," conveying the core idea of vision and sensory perception. Furthermore, "حيا" is a word that closely aligns with "lives" in English, maintaining the same meaning of ongoing existence. Finally, "حياة أخرى" is a significant addition that reflects the poetic theme of immortalizing the beloved, granting them a form of eternity through the power of words.

In Bushra's translation, the expression "سر مختزل" moves away from literal translation, transforming the concept of "breath" into a deeper philosophical idea related to the hidden essence of poetry. The phrase "يندقها غزل" adds an emotional and romantic layer to the text; the verb "يندق" is traditionally used in Arabic poetry to express a sense of abundant emotional giving, a nuance that does not appear in the original English text. Additionally, while the word "خالدا" is an appropriate translation for "eternal," it carries a stronger romantic connotation in this context due to its association with imagery of love and enduring devotion.

Poetic Rhyme

In Tawfiq's translation, the rhyme is not musically distinct, as the words "تتردد" and "ترى" are phonetically similar but do not create a clear rhythmic structure. The parallelism between "حيا" and "أخرى" resembles a scattered rhythm that does not fully align with the expected flow of traditional Arabic poetry. The rhyme in Bushra's translation is more cohesive and better suited to Arabic rhythmic conventions, particularly with the pairing of "مختزل" and "غزل." The rhyme in this version functions more effectively from a musical perspective, creating a smooth poetic flow for the Arabic reader that aligns closely with traditional Arabic prosody.

Cultural Elements

In Tawfiq's translation, the expressions "أنفاس تتردد" and "عيون ترى" are familiar within Arabic culture when discussing life and perception, yet they cannot be considered culturally distinctive. The phrase "وفيه لك حياة أخرى" is a beautiful addition that attempts to recreate the Western notion of immortality through poetry, but it lacks a unique Arabic cultural distinction. Consequently, while the translation adheres to conveying the original meaning, it remains conceptually closer to Western poetry in its approach to immortality, without incorporating specific cultural influences from the Arab world.

b. Sonnet 60

In *sonnet 60*, Shakespeare meditates on the relentless advance of time and its unavoidable effects on human life, beauty, and accomplishments. The poem opens with a striking image of waves ceaselessly moving toward the shore, symbolizing the continuous flow of moments that carry life toward its inevitable conclusion.

Table 5. The First Stanza of Sonnet 60 with Its Two Translations

| ST – Source Text | T1- Badr Tawfiq's Translation | T2 – Bushra Ayoob's Translation |
|---|--|---------------------------------|
| Like as the waves make towards the pebbled shore, | مثلما تتلاحق الأمواج نحو الشاطئ المفروش بالحصى | كالبحر حين يمد فوق الشط أمواجه |
| So do our minutes hasten to their end; | تسرع أيضا دقائقنا إلى نهاياتها؛ | تتري سريعا يجيء ثم يعود أدراجه |
| Each changing place with that which goes before, | تحل كل منها مكان التي مضت قبلها | تمضي الدقائق والزمان عجول |
| In sequent toil all forwards do contend. | في جهد متتابع وتنافس بينها جميعا في حركتها إلى الأمام. | والعمر يوم واحد يقصر حين يطول. |

Lexical Choices

Tawfiq's translation adopts a direct style and language that aligns closely with standard dictionary Arabic, resulting in verses that are clear and smooth in meaning. Words such as "تتلاحق" and "في جهد متتابع" clearly express the original imagery. Bushra's translation is characterized by greater poetic freedom. This is evident in the choice of metaphorical expressions, such as "يمد فوق الشط أمواجه" and "العمر" and "يوم واحد يقصر حين يطول." These phrases carry a contemplative and, at times, philosophical tone; however, they stray significantly from the literal meaning of the original source text.

Poetic Rhyme

Tawfiq's translation leans toward prose, lacking a regular rhyme scheme or a distinct rhythm; this reflects the translator's primary focus on semantic content rather than poetic form. In contrast, Bushra's translation features a deliberate poetic rhythm and noticeable rhymes, such as "أمواجه" with "أدراجه" and "عجول" with "يطول." These choices bring the translation closer to the spirit of the English sonnet, which is intrinsically built upon a specific sound structure and metrical pattern.

Cultural Elements

Tawfiq's translation preserves the overall atmosphere of Shakespeare's era. The use of expressions such as "دقائقنا" and "تنافس بينها" presents time as an abstract concept and effectively conveys the Western philosophical perspective found in the original source text. In contrast, Bushra's translation situates the text within an Arabic or contemporary cultural context. In this version, a popular interpretation of time appears in the phrase "العمر يوم واحد," which is a familiar saying in Arab culture with a distinct proverbial tone.

Table 6. The Second Stanza of Sonnet 60 with Its Two Translations

| ST – Source Text | T1- Badr Tawfiq's Translation | T2 – Bushra Ayoob's Translation |
|---|--|---------------------------------|
| Nativity, once in the main of light, | عدما يأتي الوليد إلى نور الحياة | فالشمس عند شروقها طفل على المهد |
| Crawls to maturity, wherewith, being crowned, | يجبو حتى ينضج، فإذا توجته الأيام | وإذا مضت لغروبها تندس في اللحد |
| Crooked Eclipses gainst his glory fight | أنشبت مخالب الخسوف الخراب فيما لها من البهاء | فتري الزمان اليوم قد سلبك |
| And time that gave, doth now his gift confounds | والزمن الذي وهب، يدمر الآن ما له من العطاء. | في لحظ عين ما كان قد وهبك |

Lexical Choices

In Tawfiq's translation, the translator adopts a symbolic style that leans toward eloquence and density. The lines begin with the image of a newborn who "يأتي إلى نور الحياة," then progress through life until reaching "توجته الأيام," a powerful metaphor referring to demise. Phrases such as "الزمن الذي وهب، يدمر" reflect a rhetorical tone influenced by classical language, which aligns closely with the grandeur of traditional Arabic texts. In contrast, Bushra's translation takes a more accessible and poetic approach. The opening line, "فالشمس عند شروقها طفل على المهد," is a gentle and simple metaphor that personifies time from childhood to death. Words such as "تندس في اللحد" add a dramatic feel without

relying on excessive symbolism. The final line, "في لحظ عين ما كان قد وهبك", closes the passage with a proverbial expression that resonates deeply with Arabic cultural wisdom.

Poetic Rhyme

In Tawfiq's translation, there is no clear rhyme scheme or noticeable poetic rhythm, which situates the text closer to artistic prose than to formal poetry. The translator appears more focused on conveying complex imagery and deep meaning than on maintaining a rigorous sound structure. On the other hand, Bushra's translation maintains a relatively consistent rhythm with clearly noticeable rhymes, such as the pairings of "المهد" with "اللد" and "سلبك" with "وهبك". These rhymes make the text more appealing to readers familiar with the conventions of Arabic poetry, as they provide a rhythmic resonance that aligns with traditional expectations.

Cultural Elements

The verses in the original text employ nature-based imagery, such as "مدّ الزمن" and "ليل لا نهاية له", to express the passage of time and death in a philosophical manner that reflects a Western perspective on life and fate. Tawfiq's translation attempts to preserve this meaning while utilizing powerful imagery from the Arabic language, such as "مخالب الخسوف" and "نور الحياة". These are familiar expressions in classical Arabic poetry that reflect the influence of Arab culture in reinterpreting the source text's intent. In contrast, Bushra's translation completely reconstructs the imagery to align with Arab cultural paradigms. This is evident in the comparison of the sun to a child who is subsequently buried in "اللد", as well as the use of terms like "سلبك" and "وهبك". These lexical choices are deeply connected to the concept of fate (Qadar) within Islamic and Arab culture, effectively domesticating the Shakespearean theme for the target audience.

Table 7. The Third Stanza of Sonnet 60 with Its Two Translations

| ST – Source Text | T1- Badr Tawfiq's Translation | T2 – Bushra Ayoob's Translation |
|---|--|---------------------------------|
| Time doth transfix the flourish set on youth, | يستلب الزمان زهرة الشباب من نطاقها | وكذا السنين على الملامح ترسم |
| And delves the parallels in beauty's brow, | ويحفر خطوط التجاعيد المتوازية في جمال الجبين | تجعيد وجه قد غدا يتألم |
| Feeds on the rarities of natures truth, | يقتات بالكائنات النادرة التي بلغت في الطبيعة حد الكمال | هي سنة تمضي على الإنسان |
| And nothing stands but for his scythe to mow; | ولا شيء ينهض لمواجهة منجله القهار: | لا حرز منها في سالف الأزمان. |

Lexical Choices

Tawfiq's translation (ترجمة توفيق) utilizes elevated and rhetorical language, leaning toward heavy figurative imagery such as "زهرة الشباب" (the flower of youth), "يقتات بالكائنات النادرة" (feeding on rare beings), and "منجله القهار" (his irresistible sickle). These expressions suggest a dramatic struggle with time and death, effectively creating a powerful and somber poetic atmosphere. In contrast, Bushra's translation employs simpler and more direct language. She utilizes expressions such as "ترسم السنين" (years drawing) and "تجعيد وجه قد غدا يتألم" (wrinkles on a face that has come to suffer), which represent familiar imagery that aligns more closely with contemporary Arabic poetic sensibility. While Tawfiq emphasizes the grandeur of the struggle, Bushra focuses on the visible, human impact of time.

Poetic Rhyme

In Tawfiq's translation, the rhyme does not follow a regular pattern; instead, it functions as a free prose translation, situating the work closer to prose poetry. In contrast, Bushra's translation employs a clear and regular rhyme scheme, utilizing pairings such as "ترسم" with "يتألم" and "الإنسان" with "الأزمان". This adherence to an AABB pattern adds a distinct smoothness and musicality to the text, aligning it with the rhythmic expectations of traditional poetic forms.

Cultural Elements

The original source text emphasizes the concept of memory that lives on in the hearts of those who remember life; however, Tawfiq's translation shifts this focus toward a dramatic struggle with time. By introducing imagery of death and might, such as "منجله القهار" (his irresistible sickle), he evokes depictions of "Death" common in Western iconography. Although not a direct translation, this reimagining emphasizes mortality over remembrance. In Bushra's translation, the use of expressions like "لا حرز منها" provides a classical and familiar phrase within the Arabic context, meaning "no escape" or "no protection." However, like Tawfiq, this translation also avoids addressing the emotional or memorial dimension present in the original text, specifically the idea of "البقاء في القلوب" (remaining in the hearts). Instead, it remains focused on describing the passage of time and its physical effects on the human form, prioritizing the external decay over the internal legacy.

Table 8. The Last Couplet of Sonnet 60 with Its Two Translations

| ST – Source Text | T1- Badr Tawfiq's Translation | T2 – Bushra Ayoob's Translation |
|--|---|--|
| And yet to times in hope my verse shall stand, The echoes of our love will make it home | لكن الأمل في الأزمنة المقبلة يشد شعري بالتحمل مثنياً على فضائك، رغم يده القاسية. | لكن شعري إن أتيت تورداً، وتفرداً، وعلى الزمان تمرداً. |

Lexical Choices

Tawfiq's translation used eloquent and grammatically coherent language, where the translator chose expressions like "يشد شعري بالتحمل" and "مثنياً على فضائك." These are phrases that carry a contemplative and philosophical tone rather than an emotional or sentimental one. As for Bushra's translation, it is marked by a distinctly poetic quality in both wording and structure. The use of words like "تفرداً", "تورداً", and "تمرداً" reflects a strong poetic sensibility and adds a touch of sensual beauty and emotional defiance to the text.

Poetic Rhyme

In terms of rhyme, Tawfiq's translation does not follow a clear rhyme scheme, which causes the text to lose some of the poetic rhythm that characterizes Shakespeare's verse, where the original rhyme (come/home) is simple and balanced. As for Bushra's translation, it relies on a strong sonic resonance through unified endings with the pattern "fa'alan," which gives the text a musical rhythm. This structural choice compensates for the loss of the original English rhyme by employing a traditional Arabic poetic meter that enhances the auditory experience for the target reader.

Cultural Elements

As for the transfer of cultural terms or symbols, Tawfiq's translation completely moves away from the original imagery, such as "صدى حينا" and "نهاية الزمن." Instead, the text transforms into a general discourse on "الأمل" and "مدح الفضائل" which deviates from the personal emotional dimension of the original text, making it closer to contemplative prose than to the poetry of eternal love. Obviously, Bushra's translation demonstrates a deep understanding of the original message, despite not translating it literally. Instead of "echoes of our love" and "end of time," the translator employed the concept of "التمرد على الزمان," which effectively recreates the core idea of the original text: the immortality of love despite the inevitability of extinction.

2. RQ2 - What are the translation strategies adopted by the two Arabic translators?

The discussion of the two translations above reveals that literal and cultural strategies are more frequently utilized by both Arabic translators. However, Badr Tawfiq's translation adheres more closely to a literal approach in order to remain faithful to the source text. In contrast, Bushra Ayoob's

translation is more creative and culturally oriented. She attempted to align more closely with the target language by focusing extensively on the poetic features of Arabic verse. Therefore, both translators successfully conveyed the intended meaning to the target reader, although they differed significantly in their stylistic approaches.

D. Conclusion

Based on the findings of this study, both translators, Badr Tawfik and Bushra Ayoob, successfully conveyed the intended meaning to Arabic readers. However, Tawfik's translation remains more committed to the source text; specifically, he adopted a literal translation approach while sparingly utilizing the addition, deletion, and cultural strategies proposed by Ashuja'a and Saeed (2018). Consequently, Tawfik's rendering loses the original rhyme, resulting in a translation that resembles plain speech rather than providing the poetic features necessary to create the same effect on the target reader as the original text. In contrast, Ayoob's translation primarily adopted a cultural strategy, carefully accounting for poetic features such as rhyme and rhythm. Moreover, she effectively utilized addition, deletion, and compensation strategies.

Several key recommendations are proposed to enhance the practice and pedagogy of poetry translation. First and foremost, academic institutions and translation departments should collaborate with literary experts to develop a practical guide for poetry translation between English and Arabic. Such a guide would serve as a valuable reference, offering strategies, standardized literary terminology, examples of poetic renderings, and possible equivalents for English meters, particularly iambic pentameter, within Arabic prosody.

Secondly, institutions are encouraged to implement a multidimensional evaluation framework for assessing poetic translations. This framework should incorporate criteria such as semantic accuracy, rhythm, imagery, cultural sensitivity, and emotional resonance, thereby providing a balanced and objective assessment standard. Third, it is essential to distinguish between academic translations, focused on literal and linguistic analysis, and creative translations intended for literary audiences. Recognizing this distinction allows translators to make informed choices based on the text's purpose.

Closely related to this is the fourth recommendation: redefining the concept of "faithfulness" in poetic translation. Rather than limiting fidelity to literal meaning, it should encompass the preservation of the poetic spirit, emotional tone, and aesthetic experience. Fifth, translators should be trained to explore rhythmic equivalencies between English and Arabic poetic traditions. Adapting English metrical structures to compatible Arabic meters can significantly enhance the musicality and poetic flow of the translation.

Sixth, fostering interdisciplinary collaboration between translators and literary professionals—such as poets or critics, is strongly encouraged. This collaboration helps strike a balance between artistic beauty and linguistic precision. Finally, it is recommended that poetic translations, especially those used in academic settings, include translator annotations in the form of brief introductions or footnotes. These annotations provide context for interpretive decisions and clarify challenges encountered during the translation process, offering additional insight to readers, students, and critics alike.

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