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Problems Encountered by Students of Translation in Translating Classical Arabic Poetry into English - A Case Study of Postgraduate Diploma Students of Translation, Batch (7), Translation and Languages Centre, Faculty of Education -Hantoub, University of Gezira

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Abstract

Translation of classical Arabic poetry is notably challenging, requiring translators to be highly skilled and knowledgeable. This study examines the difficulties faced by translation students in translating classical Arabic poetry into English, identifies the nature of these problems, and explores effective solutions. Using an analytical-descriptive method, data were collected through a diagnostic test and a questionnaire targeting 22 postgraduate students and 10 staff members from the University of Gezira. Results revealed that 80% of students struggled with translation issues, including lack of equivalence (90%), cultural boundaries (100%), and difficulties in understanding Arabic poetry (70%). Recommendations include offering intensive poetry translation courses and consulting experts to improve translation skills. Future research should address challenges in translating Arabic figures of speech into English.

Key words: *Classical Arabic poetry, translation challenges, cultural boundaries, equivalence, intensive courses.*



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Introduction

Translation is the act of transferring the meaning of one language, called the source language, into another language, called the target language. Throughout history, translation has served as a means of conveying meaning and building bridges between cultures. Translation of classical Arabic poetry is a type of translation that primarily deals with classical Arabic poetry. It requires various kinds of knowledge, versatility, and skills compared to other types of translation, which is part of its difficulty. Arabic poetry is unique because it is rich in connotative and figurative meanings.

Poetry can be identified from other literature by specific characteristics, which create a reality distinct from the surrounding reality. Poems are seen as literary works of writing that make use of literary elements like imagery and rhyme.

Statement of the Problem

Translation students often face difficulties when translating classical Arabic poetry into English. Thus, the study aims to examine the problems experienced by translation students in translating classical Arabic poetry into English.

Objectives of the Study

1. To examine to what extent students of translation encounter problems in translating classical Arabic poetry into English.
2. To investigate the nature of the problems faced by translation students when translating classical Arabic poetry into English.
3. To suggest effective techniques and strategies to overcome the problems experienced by translation students when translating classical Arabic poetry into English.

Questions of the Study

1. To what extent do students of translation encounter problems in translating classical Arabic poetry into English?
2. What is the nature of the problems faced by students of translation in translating classical Arabic poetry into English?
3. What are the effective methods or strategies used to overcome the problems experienced by translation students translating classical Arabic poetry into English?



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Hypotheses of the Study

H1: Lack of equivalence is a problem faced by translation students translating classical Arabic poetry into English.

H2: Understanding Arabic poetry is a problem when translating classical Arabic poetry into English.

H3: Translating Arabic figures of speech is a problem faced by translation students translating classical Arabic poetry into English.

H4: Translating Arabic structures is a problem faced by translation students while translating classical Arabic poetry into English.

H5: Cultural barriers are problems experienced by translation students translating classical Arabic poetry into English.

H6: Most students of translation encounter problems when translating classical Arabic poetry into English.

H7: Offering extensive courses in poetry translation is an effective method to overcome the problems experienced by translation students translating classical Arabic poetry into English.

Significance of Study

In addition to offering a critical examination of the problems that make translating classical Arabic poetry difficult for students of translation, the study aims to be a resource for students and anyone with an interest in translation. The study is also significant for researchers, curriculum designers, and instructors.

Methodology of the Study

The study adopted the descriptive-analytical method. A test was administered to the translation students, asking them to translate eight verses from classical Arabic poetry into English. The total sample of the study comprised twenty-two postgraduate diploma translation students, batch (7), who were randomly chosen from the Translation and Languages Centre, Faculty of Education-Hantoub, University of Gezira. A questionnaire was designed to collect data from ten staff members at the Translation and Languages Centre and the Department of English, Faculty of Education-Hantoub, University of Gezira. The data collected from both tools



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were analyzed using the Statistical Packages for the Social Sciences (SPSS) program, using percentages and means.

Scope of the Study

The study is limited to investigating the problems faced by translation students in translating classical Arabic poetry into English. It is also limited to postgraduate diploma translation students, batch (7), at the Translation and Languages Centre, Faculty of Education-Hantoub, University of Gezira. The study will be conducted during the academic years 2020–2024.

Literature Review

Introduction

This section deals with the literature review related to the current study.

Definition of Translation

Translation has not a homogeneous definition, for instance, Catford (1965: 20) argues that “Translation [is] the replacement of textual material in one language (SL) by equivalent textual material in another language (TL)”. Similarly, Newark (1981:23) states that “translation is a craft in which the translator tries to substitute a written message in the source language for another written message in the target language”.

According to Bell (2001:6), translation is “changing the place of a text in one language by a representation of an equivalent text in another language”. Munday (2007: 8) notes that translation is “a set of actions performed by the translator while rendering the source (or original) text (ST) into another language”. These definitions show that the core of translation is the transference of the meaning from one language into another. Meanwhile, Muamaroh (2008:150) asserts that “translation is the process of transferring not only the message but also the style and the culture from the source language to target one”. It is obvious that the latter definition is not concerned with the linguistic qualities of the text, but it is also concerned only with the cultural and stylistic elements of the text. This view is supported by Bassnett S. (1980:21) who notes that: “Translation involves the transfer of ‘meaning’ contained in one set of language signs into another set of language signs through competent use of the dictionary and grammar; the process also involves a whole set of extra-linguistic criteria”.

Translation Procedures

According to Krings (1986:18), the translation procedure is "translator's potentially conscious plans for solving concrete translation problems in the framework of a concrete translation task." Whereas Loescher (1991: 8) defines translation procedure as "a potentially conscious procedure for solving a problem faced in translating a text or any segment of it". These definitions illustrate that the essence of the translation procedure as the potentiality of the translator is to find out a solution in a conscious way to the problems that might occur while translating a text.

Types of Translation Procedures

Mona Baker (1998:26-63) mentions seven translation procedures as follows:

1. A more general word (subordinate). This strategy uses a superordinate to address a lack of specificity in the target language.
2. More neutral/less expressive words. This strategy substitutes a term with a less expressive meaning for the original text's word. When a word is equivalent in the source language but may be interpreted differently in the target language, this might be regarded as a compromise.
3. Cultural substitution. This strategy replaces the SL word with a TL word with a different prepositional meaning to deal with words that are peculiar to a culture. But this TL word is going to affect TL readers in the same way that it affects SL readers.
4. Using a loan word or a loan word plus explanation. With this approach, non-equivalent at the word level is mostly addressed by translation using a borrowed word or loan word plus explanation. This strategy is notably employed to manage buzz words and products distinctive to a certain culture.
5. Paraphrasing using unrelated words. This strategy works well for the concepts that need to be paraphrased to make their meaning clear and avoid confusion.
6. Omission. This approach is often put last on the list since it is considered the last resort when all other strategies cannot be employed to effectively deal with a lexical item.
7. Illustration. This strategy helps the translator in overcoming the difficulty of finding a good equivalent for a given object. The current strategy is primarily used when referring to tangible entities. A well-known example of this method is using a picture of a tagged tea bag to describe



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the concept of a tagged thing, rather than relying on lengthy descriptions that may not accurately convey the meaning.

Stages of Translation Process

According to Nida and Taber (1982:33), there are three stages of the process of translation: the first stage is “analysis,” in which the surface structure is analyzed in terms of (1) the grammatical relationship, (2) the meaning of the words and the combinations of words. The second stage is “transfer,” in which the analyzed material is transferred in the mind of the translator from SL to TL. The third stage is “restructuring,” in which the transfer is restructured in order to make the final message entirely acceptable in the TL”.

Scope of Translation Studies

Translation is regarded as an interdisciplinary study that involves a wide range of different disciplines, William, and Chesterman (cited by Hatim, B., and Munday, J. 2019), reminds us that translation studies cover the following:

- 1). Analyzing and translating texts.
- 2). Translation quality assessment.
- 3). Translation of literary works.
- 4). Multi-media translation.
- 5). Translating technology.
- 6). Translating history.
- 7). Translating ethics.
- 8). Terminology and glossaries.

As mentioned earlier, the primary aim of translation is to convey the meaning from one language which is often called the source language (SL) into another language which is often called the target language (TL). Therefore, the good, translated text is the text which conforms to the original text in terms of accuracy in linguistic and extra-linguistic senses. Otherwise, the translated text would be at the best, either ambiguous or at the worst indigestible. Tytler (cited by Mundy, J. (2019), puts it as: “The translation should give a complete transcript of the ideas of the original work, the way the translation is written should reflect the original's style, and the translation should be as easy to read as the original”.

Characteristics of Good Translation

Dolet (cited by Mundy, J. (2019) proposes five principles to guarantee good translation as follows:

1. The translator must perfectly understand the sense and material of the original author, although he [sic] should feel free to clarify obscurities.
2. It is crucial for the translator to be conversant in both SL and TL, so as not to diminish the majesty of either language.
3. Translators should not translate words for words.
4. The translator should avoid Latinate and unusual forms.
5. The translator should assemble and liaise words eloquently to avoid clumsiness.

Methods of Translation

Molina and HurtadoAlbir (2002:507) define the translation method as “the way a particular translation process is carried out in terms of the translator objective, i.e., the global option that affects the micro-units of the text.” While Zabalbeascoa (2000:117-27) puts it differently arguing that the translation method is “a concept that is not usually associated to a decision-making, but to an acquired skill to be applied according to a prescribed method or procedures”.

According to Newmark (1981:38-69), there are two major translation methods as follows:

1. Communicative Translation

Newmark supports that communicative translation is “an attempt to produce on its readers an effect as close as possible to that obtained on the readers of the original” (ibid).

2. Semantic Translation

Newmark (1981:39) asserts that semantic translation is “an attempt to produce on its readers, as closely as the semantic and syntactic structures of the second language allows the exact contextual meaning of original” (ibid).

In the same regard, Ghazala (1995:5) adds more methods of translation as follows:

1. Semantic versus communicative translation. Semantic translation emphasizes the exact reproduction of the original text's meaning, focusing on words and phrases, while communicative translation prioritizes conveying the message to the target audience in a way that



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feels natural and culturally relevant. Semantic translation looks to keep elements of the source language's structure and style, while communicative translation aims for clarity and effectiveness in the target language, ensuring that the translation resonates well with the audience while potentially sacrificing the original text's nuances.

2. Formal versus dynamic translation. Formal translation emphasizes a word-for-word rendering aiming to preserve the original text's form and structure, with dynamic translation, which prioritizes conveying the meaning and intent of the original while adapting it to the cultural and linguistic context of the target audience. Formal translation tends to focus on accuracy and fidelity to the source text, while dynamic translation allows for greater flexibility and creativity, looking to evoke similar responses and emotions in the target readers as those elicited by the original work.

3. Non-pragmatic versus pragmatic translation. Non-pragmatic translation tends to focus on fidelity to the source text's form and meaning without considering the target audience's needs or context, often resulting in a literal and potentially inaccessible rendition. In contrast, pragmatic translation emphasizes the communicative purpose of the text, prioritizing effectiveness, and relevance for the target audience, which may involve adaptations in style, tone, and structure to ensure that the translation resonates culturally and contextually.

4. Non-creative versus creative translation. Non-creative translation focuses on accuracy and fidelity to the source text, often resulting in a more literal rendering that emphasizes content over form. In contrast, creative translation embraces artistic elements, allowing the translator to adapt the text for cultural relevance or emotional impact, thereby prioritizing the expressive qualities and aesthetic experience of the target language. This distinction underscores the versatility of translation as both a technical and an artistic endeavor, depending on the translator's intent and the desired effect on the audience.

Objectives of Evaluating Translation

Evaluating translation is crucial for upgrading the professional skills of the translators as well as improving the quality of the translation. Newmark (1988:181) proposes five objectives for evaluating translation:



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1. To improve the quality of translation.
2. To train translators.
3. To shed light on translation in particular times and subject areas.
4. To help with interpreting the work of great writers and translators.
5. To show semantic and grammatical differences between the two languages.

Problems of Translation

According to Ghazala (2008:17) a translation problem is “any difficulty which makes us stop translating to think about it.” In the words of Nord (2005), a translation problem is: “The issues that form challenges to all translators who are working on a particular language combination and ‘translation difficulties’ as the challenges that face the individual translator due to their education, experience or cultural background”.

Commenting on the problems of translation, Bastin (2000:236), argues that the problems of translation have two main categories:

1. Meaning-based errors related to problems in source text analysis.
2. Language-based errors related to inadequate competence in the source and/or target languages. Nord (1991: 151) divides the translation problems into four categories:
 1. Text-specific translation problems. It defines text-specific translation problems as challenges arising from the distinct qualities and functions of various texts. These issues can include cultural references, genre traditions, stylistic elements, and the expectations of the intended audience.
 2. Pragmatic translation problems. Pragmatic translation problems are those that develop due to the context and intended communicative purpose of a text rather than language differences.
 3. Cultural translation problems. Cultural translation problems are challenges that arise when translating materials from diverse cultural backgrounds. These challenges include the difficulty of transmitting cultural allusions, idioms, and customs that may not have direct parallels in the target language, which can result in misinterpretations or loss of meaning.
 4. Linguistic translation problems. Linguistic problems that arise during the translation process, such as syntax, semantics, and pragmatics.



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As far as English –Arabic translation problems are concerned; Abu-Salem and Chan (2006:22) assert that: “English-Arabic translation problems can be traced to the features of Arabic such as right-to-left orientation, the multiplicity of scripts, frequent omission of vowels, and complex morphological structure”.

In a nutshell, it is very clear that the problem of translation can be understood as any obstacles or hindrances that the translators might encounter because of the many reasons such as difference of features between the source language (SL) and the target language (TL) in terms of linguistic, cultural, pragmatic or other aspects.

Types of Translation

Catford (2000:20-26) characterizes different broad types or categories of translation in terms of extents, levels, and ranks:

Full translation

The TL text material replaces full translation in which the entire text is submitted to the translation process, in other words, every part of the SL text.

Partial translation

Partial translation in which part or parts of the SL text are left untranslated including the following types:

- (a) Total translation, in this type, all the levels of the SL are replaced by the TL material. This kind of translation is misleading because the total replacement of every single part is not replaced by equivalent at all levels.
- (b) Restricted translation means the replacement of a source language textual material by an equivalent target language textual material at only one level. The translation is performed only at the graphological or phological level, or at only of the two levels of grammar and lexis.

Bounded translation

This type the attempt is made to select the target language equivalent at the same rank e.g. word-to-word or morpheme to morpheme.

Free Translation

This type is always unbounded in case that equivalences shunt up and down the ranks scale, but tend to be at the higher ranks, which are sometimes between larger units than the



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sentence. In other words, in free translation the translator has freedom to express and reproduce the message of the original text in the translator's own way or style. The translator can render the meaning and structure of the source language into target language by using different structures, but the target language should be equivalent with the source language.

Literary Translation

Literary translation deals with literary works including poetry, drama, novels, or plays. Literary translation is considered as one of the most difficult types of translation because translators deal with very unique language that requires certain skills and knowledge as Halliday et al. (1964:130), put it: “A feature of literary register is that more than in any other use of language, the translator has to look beyond the sentence boundaries to guide him in the choice of equivalents”.

According to Harvey (2000:2) the literary expressions include the “notions, institutions and personnel which are explicit to the SL culture.” In other words, apart from the textual elements, the translators of literary works should take the cultural and social contexts of both the source language (SL) and the target language (TL) into account while translating literary texts.

Literary Translation Procedures

According to Graedler (2000:3), there are four major procedures in translating literary and cultural expressions as follows:

1. Making up an unfamiliar word.
2. Explaining the meaning of the SL expression instead of translating it.
3. Preserving the SL term intact.
4. Opting for a word in the TL, which seems like or has the same "relevance" as the SL term.

Definition of Poetry

According to Merriam Webster's Collegiate Dictionary (1997:898) poetry is: “Metrical writing, the production of a poet and writing that formulates a concentrated imaginative awareness of experience in language chosen and arranged to create a specific emotional response through meaning, sound and rhythm.” Nair (1991:93) defines poetry as “an imaginative rendering of a poet's feelings and experiences.” Like Nair, Ruskin (1866:10) holds the view that poetry is “the imaginative representation, through the medium of language, of true grounds for

the noble emotions”. Supporting this view, Shelley (2010:975) sees poetry as “the expression of the imagination”. Savory (1968:86) defines poetry as “the art of employing words in such a manner as to produce an illusion on the senses, the art of doing by words what the painter does by colors”.

All these definitions show that poetry creates an imaginative reality that is completely different from the surrounding reality. In doing so, poetry employs a connotative language with certain rhetorical devices such as simile, metaphor, and hyperbole. Aravindan (1982) puts it: “poetic language does not seek to describe reality, but to recreate it – it deals more directly with man’s immediate lived experience in the world and thus “opens new possibilities for him”.

Poem

According to Shklovsky (1917/1956:22), a poem “is a work created ‘artistically’ so that its perception is impeded, and the greatest possible effect is produced through the slowness of the perception”. Meanwhile, Coleridge (1817) defines a poem as “that species of composition, which is opposed to works of science, by proposing for its immediate object pleasure”.

Shelley (2010:325) points out that a poem is: “the very image of life expressed in its eternal truth...poetry is a mirror which makes beautiful that which is distorted.” Bonnefoy (1992: 187-188), claims that: “A poem, a certain number of words in a certain order on the page, is a form, where all relation to what is other and finite to what is true- has been suspended. [...] The poem is a means, a spiritual statement, which is not, however, an end.

Types of English Poetry

According to Chaparral poets (n.d.), Klein and Krisber (2010), there are forms which are specific to English and others to other languages. These are as follows: -

- a) Open: A poetic free form which is not regular in elements as rhyme, line strength and metrical form.
- b) Closed: A poetic form subject that has a fixed structure and pattern.
- c) Blank Verse: Unrhymed iambic pentameter. Shakespearian plays are written in this form.
- d) Free Verse: The lines which do not have a rule or a given pattern or structure. It is up to the poet to figure out the variables as what fits each poem.
- e) Couplet: A pair of lines which are rhymed; it is the shortest stanza.



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- f) Quatrain: A four-line stanza, or a grouping of four-line verses.
- g) Fixed Form: It is a poem following a given pattern of meter, rhyme, scheme, stanza form, and refrain form.
- h) Ballad: It is a narrative poem written in a series of quatrains where iambic tetrameter alternates with iambic trimeter. It deals with popular legends, and it is suitable for singing.
- I) Concrete Poetry: It concerns the poems that are printed on the page forming a recognizable outline that is related to the subject which intends to convey or extend the meaning of the words. The essence of concrete poetry lies behind its appearance on the page rather than the meaning of words.
- j) Epigram: It is a satirical couplet or quatrain that carries an aphoristic humorous thought or event.
- k) Epitaph: It is a brief statement and especially a poem that is found in the memory of someone deceased used as a tombstone inscription, but nowadays it has lost its intention of funeral as it is often humorous and witty.
- l) Limerick: It is a humorous form of five verses.
- m) Lyric: Its name is derived from the Greek word for lyre. It is originally designed to be sung. It is the most often modern form which is used where an emotional element predominates. In fact, lyric poems evoke the recall of similar emotional experiences in the reader's mind.
- n) Ode: A lengthy lyric poem typically of a serious or meditative nature and having an elevated style and formal stanza structure.

Arabic Poetry

Arabs consider poetry as significant records for their traditions, wars, social and political makeup. In this regard, Allen (2000:65-66) maintains that: "Arabic poetry has always been regarded as the *dīwān al- 'Arab* (the repository of the Arabs), a resort in times of sorrow and happiness, of defeat and victory, an expression of the Arab people's cultural ideals and greatest aspirations".

According to IbnSallam al-Jumahi, (wd: 1 /41), Arabic poetry "in the pre-Islamic era, was the record of the Arabs' knowledge and the authentic source which they depended on, took from and referred to". Arabs also used poetry to approve their cultural, linguistic, and social



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supremacy and dominance among the Arab tribes as well as over other nations as Badawi (1976:14) puts it:

“The Arabs have always prided themselves on their poetry, which they regarded as their greatest and most congenial mode of literary expression. For a long time, they could not conceive of any terms in which to express their experiences other than those supplied by their own poetic tradition. Until the end of the nineteenth century, we find even those writers who were familiar with western literature expressing their firm conviction that Arabic poetry was superior to western poetry in all aspects and can therefore learn nothing from it.” Similarly, Alan Jones (1994:1) notes that: “The poetry of a tribe was something that helped to differentiate it from other tribes. It was a projection into words of the life of the tribe, its solidarity and its aspirations, its fears, and its sorrows....” He also adds that:

“Poetry had a quality not owned by a tribe's possessions. Land, camels, goods, and chattels, even members of the tribe could be seized or destroyed by enemies, but if the collective memory survived, so would the tribe's poetry.” In the same line, Philip K Hitti (cited in Anwar, 1969: 5, Chejne): claims that: “No people in the world manifest such enthusiastic admiration for literary expression and are so moved by the word, spoken, or written, as the Arabs. Modern audiences in Baghdad, Damascus and Cairo can be stirred to the highest degree by the recital of poems, only vaguely understood, and by the delivery of orations in the classical tongue, though it be only partially understood. The rhythms, the rhyme, the music, produce on them the effect of what they call lawful magic.”

Nicholson (2013: 72) states that: “Classical Arabic poetry is rooted in the life of the people, that insensibly moulded their minds and fixed their character and made them morally and spiritually a nation long before Muhammad welded the variously conflicting groups into a single organism, animated, for some time at least, by a common purpose”. The modern poet Adonis (1990:30) points out that:

“Rhyme was the basic element which distinguished pre-Islamic Arabic poetry from the poetry of other peoples. Neither in Aramaic, Syriac, Hebrew, or Greek was it considered an essential feature of poetry in the way it was for the Arabs. Because of this, the ancient Arabic critics

supported that the structure of pre-Islamic prosody was not an imitation of that of any other nation but was exclusive to the Arabs”.

Maling (1973: 12) claims that: “al-Xalil's system of circles is not only a simple, elegant, and insightful analysis of the meters, but it provides the only basis for an adequate metrical description of Arabic verse”.

Major Themes of Classical Arabic Poetry

Dahami (2019:23) argues that "Arabic poetry, especially that of the pre-Islamic era, with its rich tradition, is one of the significant influences on the Arab world." Nicholson (2013: 73) suggests that "the concept of poetry as an art evolved later; the pagan sha'ir [poet] served as the oracle of his tribe, their leader in times of peace and their hero in times of war." Jones (1994: 2) finds the main genres of classical Arabic poetry as follows:

- a) Madih (Eulogy)
- b) Ghazal (Love)
- c) Ritha (Elegy)
- d) Hija' (Satire)
- e) Waṣf (Description)
- f) Fakhr (Self-glorification)
- g) Hikma (wise sayings')

Poetry Translation

The issue of poetry translation has been a controversial and disputed subject within the field of translation studies. Scholars argue that poetry translation is one of the most difficult types of translation as Newark (1988: 162) argues that poetry translation is "the most testing type of translation". Similarly, Safe (2012:12) states that poetry translation “is considered the highest form of translation”. While Newmark (1988:70) supports that “the translation of poetry is the field where most emphasis is normally put on the creation of a new independent poem and where literal translation is usually condemned.” Whilst other scholars argue that poetry cannot be translated. Miremadi (1995:33), claims that the translation of a poem as “tasteless as a stewed strawberry.” Similarly, Al Jahiz (776-868/2003, Trans. by Jackson 1984: 101), asserts that: “The translator cannot do what the poet says because of the characteristics of [the] latter’s meanings,



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realities of his doctrines, minutes of his precise briefs, and the secrets of his limitations. Hence, he cannot be faithful at all [...] poetry cannot be translated and should not be transferred because when rendered, it lacks rhyme, beauty, and exclamation, contrary to prose". Likewise, Wilss (1982:31) points out that: "Every translator is doomed to be done in by one of two stumbling blocks: he will either stay too close to the original, at the cost of taste and the language of his nation, or he will adhere too closely to the characteristics peculiar to his nation, at the cost of the original. The medium between the two is not only difficult, but downright impossible." Similarly, Lefevere (1975:99) points out that most poetry translations as "unsatisfactory rendering[s] of the source text" because they do not really capture the essence of the original poem". Dryden (Dryden 1808 as cited in Venuti 1995: 38-42), who argues that, supports this view: "No man is capable of translating poetry, who, besides a genius to that art, is not a master both of his author's language, and of his own. Nor must we understand the language only of the poet, but his thoughts, and of expression." Lander (2001:97) puts it differently arguing that:

"Translating poetry well is so difficult as to be called impossible by most experts, the late John Ciardi referred to translation as the 'art of failure' and yet we go on trying, sometimes with remarkably reduced degrees of non-success. If literary translation is itself a leap of faith, poetic translation puts that faith to the severest of all tests."

Characteristics of Good Poetry Translation

Newmark (1989:165) maintains that "a successful translated poem is always another poem". Gwilym (1942:71) claims that good poetry translation is:

"The translator could live again the mood of the poet, feeling as it was back through the written... If the most desirable quality in a translation is that it should be a vital, living thing, to be, as we say, "poetry," it is also true that language lives because of the feeling which vivifies it."

Poetry Translator

According to Lefevere (1975: 42), the task of poetry translator is "to make the (ST) available as a literary work of art".

De Beaugrande (1978:102) asserts that the translator of poetry must have "poetic translation competence," which encompasses strategies of "reading, interpreting, expressing, and



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compensating.” Katan (1999:126) asserts that “a successful mediator must be consciously aware of the importance of both text and context, which means both the words and the implied frames.” In the same vein, Nida (1964:13) states that “the role of translator is to facilitate the transfer of the message, meaning, and cultural elements from one language into another and create an equivalent response to the receivers.” Landers (2001:99) argues that poetry translator “must possess a poetic sensitivity, even if he or she has never written a line of original poetry.”

Similarly, Safi (1997: 63) asserts that “the translator must have literary competence, which is primarily demonstrated through their familiarity with the rhetoric and prevailing aesthetic standards of the target language culture.” Alvarez & Vidal (1996: 4) support that the translator is “a rewriter who determines the implied meanings of the TT and who also, in the act of rewriting, determines the meaning of the original”. Scholars such as Raffel (1991:88) went further to claim that “bluntly, the translator of poetry must himself be a poet.” Ghazala (2008:12), argues that: the translator can go: “Outside texts and out of contexts, behind and beyond words and phrases, looking for the spirit, or the message. He can translate something the way he understands it. His way of understanding is confined by text and context variable to great extent.” These definitions highlight the importance of the poetry translator having a strong understanding of both the source language and the target language, particularly in relation to linguistic, social, political, and cultural contexts. Additionally, the translator must have a sense of poetry.

Objectives of Poetry Translation

According to Nida and Taber (1969:205) the major objective of translating poetry is to make a 'similar effect as the original by claiming that: “The message is conveyed by means of dynamic translation, conveying the total meaning or content of a discourse; the concepts and feelings which the author intends the reader to understand and perceive”. According to Raffel (1988:13), translation of poetry is classified into four broad types based on different targets of the audiences as follows:

a). Formal translation. A formal translation emphasizes careful adherence to the source text's structure and language, putting linguistic accuracy ahead of poetic characteristics or creative interpretation. This approach often compromises the rhythm and flow of the original poetry in



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favor of keeping precise meaning and grammatical integrity, resulting in a translation that may feel stiffer or less expressive while trying to preserve the originals substance as faithfully as possible.

b) Interpretive translation. Interpretive translation prioritizes understanding the underlying meaning and emotional resonance of a document over rigidly adhering to its precise phrasing. This strategy aims to express the original work's intent, tone, and cultural context, allowing the translator to create a version that feels authentic and approachable to the target audience while keeping the core of the source material. Interpretive translation combines integrity to the original with creative expression, making it ideal for literary writings like poetry.

c) Expansive translation. Expansive translation is a procedure that goes beyond a simple representation of the source text. This form of translation often includes aspects or interpretations that improve the meaning or emotional impact for the target audience. While broad translation may favor inventiveness and relatability over strict adherence to the source text, it aims to capture the core of the original in a way that is more effective with readers in a diverse cultural or linguistic context.

d) Imitative translation. Imitative translation aims to imitate the form and structure of the original text while expressing its meaning. This approach aims to preserve the aesthetic elements of the source text, such as rhythm, rhyme, and general poetry sense, even if it means compromising literal correctness in the translation. Imitative translation aims to create an updated version that closely resembles the original artistic expression.

Methods of Poetry Translation

Holmes (1988:70) outlines the following methods for translating poetry:

- a) Mimetic form, which is commonly referred to as "preserving the structure of the original."
- b) Analogical form, which replaces the source language's poetic tradition with a target language's poetic tradition that serves a similar purpose.
- c) Content-derivative form or organic form, which allows the translation to develop its own poetic structure based on the original's semantic content.
- d) Deviant form or extraneous form, which does not derive from the original poem at all,



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and the target text is rendered in a form that has no connection to the structure or content of the source text.

Raffel (1988) classifies the methods of poetry translation in the following manner:

- a) Formal translation, which is for scholarly rather than literary purposes. It deals with scholarship work including examining, classifying, and comparing. So, the formal translators go for a literal translation of the original, which means an exact reproduction of literary form.
- b) Interpretive translation, which targets a general audience that reads for literary purposes. To serve this audience, the translators try to still be faithful to the original poetic features such as the sequence of images, the rhythms, and the tone. The primary objective is to produce something equivalent in the target text, which can be regarded as quality poetry and effectively convey the impact and essence of the source text.
- c) Expansive (or “free”) translation is intended for readers who prefer to read something new rather than classic or old. It provides the translator with the freedom to do whatever they like with the original in their own individual style, thus ignoring the poet’s intention.
- d) Imitative translation is intended for an audience that is more interested in the style of a particular translator than in the original work of the source text poet.

Strategies of Poetry Translation

Lefevre (1975: 20) suggests seven strategies for translating poetry as follows:

1. Phonemic translation. This is done by mimicking the sounds of the source language into the target language.
2. Literal translation refers to a verbatim translation, where the words and structure of the source text are directly transferred into the target language.
3. Metrical translation. This is when the translators reproduce the meter of the source language (SL).
4. Poetry into prose. This involves changing a source's meaning, syntax and communicative value.
5. Rhymed translation. This involves translating or transferring the rhyme and meter of the original poem.



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6. Blank verse translation. It refers to translators finding proper equivalent words in the target language that are of the same semantic value.

7. Interpretation. The content (meaning) of the source language text is preserved, but the form (language) is changed.

Methodology of the Study

Introduction

This section outlines the procedures used in the study, including population and samples, data collection tools, and methods for data collection and analysis.

Study Design

The study utilized the descriptive-analytical method to achieve its objectives.

Sample

The study targeted postgraduate diploma students in translation at the Translation and Languages Centre, Faculty of Education-Hantoub, University of Gezira. The sample comprised 10 randomly selected students from a total of 22 postgraduate diploma students in batch (7).

Tools for Data Collection

Two tools were used for data collection: a diagnostic test administered to the students and a questionnaire distributed to 10 staff members at the Translation and Languages Centre and the Department of English, Faculty of Education-Hantoub, University of Gezira.

Content of the Test

The test consisted of eight classical Arabic poetic verses, designed to assess students' challenges in translating poetry.

- **Figures of Speech:** Questions 1 and 10 examined difficulties in translating Arabic figures of speech.
- **Poetic Structures:** Questions 2 and 9 assessed challenges with poetic structures.
- **Understanding Poetry:** Questions 7 and 8 investigated students' ability to understand classical Arabic poetry.
- **Lack of Equivalence:** Questions 3 and 4 addressed the issue of equivalence in translation.
- **Cultural Boundaries:** Questions 5 and 6 focused on cultural challenges in translation.



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Validity of the Test

The test was reviewed by three associate professors at the Translation and Languages Centre and the Department of English, Faculty of Education-Hantoub, University of Gezira. Their feedback was incorporated to enhance the test's validity.

Reliability of the Test

Cronbach's Alpha was used to measure test reliability, with a sample size of 10 participants.

- **Number of Items:** 10
- **Cronbach's Alpha:** 0.70
- **Stability Test:** 0.84

The results indicated that the test items were internally consistent (70%) and stable (84%).

Content of the Questionnaire

The questionnaire consisted of 10 statements with four response options: Strongly Agree, Agree, Disagree, and Strongly Disagree.

- Statements explored issues such as the difficulty of translating classical Arabic poetry, challenges with poetic structures, figures of speech, cultural boundaries, and equivalence.
- Two open-ended questions addressed additional problems faced by students and effective methods for overcoming these issues.

Validity of the Questionnaire

Face validity was ensured by presenting the questionnaire to three associate professors. Feedback was incorporated to improve clarity and relevance.

Reliability of the Questionnaire

Due to the small sample size (10 respondents), statistical reliability testing was not conducted. However, the questionnaire's established validity supported its use in the study.

Procedures for Data Analysis

Data was analyzed using the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) to calculate frequencies and percentages. Results were presented and discussed in tables.

Data Analysis and Discussion

Introduction

This part focuses on presenting the data gathered through the diagnostic test and questionnaire, which were analyzed using the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS).

The study's hypotheses will also be addressed in relation to the results obtained.

Results of the Test

The following tables present the results derived from the performance of translation students in translating classical Arabic poetry into English. Each table corresponds to a specific question in the test.

Table (4-1-1-1) Translating Arabic Figures of Speech into English

Item	Correct		Incorrect		Total
	Frequency	Percentage	Frequency	Percentage	
Poetic verse (1)	0	0%	10	100%	100%
Poetic verse (10)	0	0%	10	100%	100%

Table (4-1-1-1) reveals that none of the participants (100%) were able to accurately translate the first poetic verse, and all participants (100%) also did not translate the tenth poetic verse correctly. These results indicate that most translation students encounter challenges in translating Arabic figures of speech into English.

Table (4-1-1-2) Problems of Translating Arabic Structures into English

Item	Correct		Incorrect		Total
	Frequency	Percentage	Frequency	Percentage	
Poetic verse (2)	2	20%	8	80%	100%
Poetic verse (9)	0	0%	10	100%	100%

Table (4-1-1-2) shows that 20% of participants accurately translated the second poetic verse, while the majority (80%) were unable to translate it accurately. Additionally, none of the participants (100%) managed to correctly translate the ninth poetic verse. These findings indicate that most translation students struggle with translating Arabic structures into English.

Table (4-1-1-3) Lack of Equivalence

Item	Correct		Incorrect		Total
	Frequency	Percentage	Frequency	Percentage	
Poetic verse (3)	2	20%	8	80%	100%
Poetic verse (4)	1	10%	9	90%	100%

Table (4-1-1-3) shows that 20% of participants successfully translated the third poetic verse, while 80% were unable to do so. Similarly, only 10% of participants accurately translated the fourth poetic verse, while 90% failed. These results clearly prove that a lack of equivalence is a significant challenge faced by most translation students.

Table (4-1-1-4) Cultural Boundaries

Item	Correct		Incorrect		Total
	Frequency	Percentage	Frequency	Percentage	
Poetic verse (5)	0	0%	10	100%	100%
Poetic verse (6)	1	10%	9	90%	100%

Table (4.1.1.4) reveals that none of the participants (100%) were able to accurately translate the fifth poetic verse. Additionally, only 10% successfully translated the sixth poetic verse, while 90% did not do so. These findings suggest that most translation students face challenges related to cultural boundaries.

Table (4-1-1-5) Understanding Arabic Poetry

Item	Correct		Incorrect		Total
	Frequency	Percentage	Frequency	Percentage	
Poetic verse (7)	0	0%	10	100%	100%
Poetic verse (8)	4	40%	6	60%	100%

Table (4-1-1-5) proves that none of the participants (100%) were able to accurately translate the seventh poetic verse. In contrast, 40% successfully translated the eighth poetic verse, while 60% did not do so. These results highlight that understanding classical Arabic poetry is a significant challenge for most translation students.

Analysis of the EFL Teachers' Responses to the Questionnaire

In this section, the results of the questionnaire were analyzed and discussed. Each statement of the questionnaire is displayed on a table.

Table (4.2.1) Most Students of Translation Encounter Problems in Translating Classical Arabic Poetry into English

Options	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Strongly agree	6	60%
Agree	2	20%
Strongly disagree	0	0%
Disagree	1	10%
Neutral	1	10%
Total	10	100%

Table (4.2.1) reveals that 80% of participants chose either "Strongly Agree" (60%) or "Agree" (20%), signifying that translating classical Arabic poetry into English is a common challenge for most students. Additionally, 20% selected "Neutral" (10%) or "Disagree" (10%), while none (0%) opted for "Strongly Disagree." These findings underscore that most students encounter challenges with this type of translation.

Table (4.2.2) Poetry Translation is the most Difficult type of Translation.

Options	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Strongly agree	3	30%
Agree	6	60%
Strongly disagree	0	0%
Disagree	0	10%
Neutral	1	10%
Total	10	100%

Table (4.2.2) shows that 90% of respondents chose either "Strongly Agree" (30%) or "Agree" (60%), confirming that poetry translation is considered the most difficult type of translation. Meanwhile, 10% selected "Neutral," and none (0%) chose "Strongly Disagree" or

"Disagree." These results show that most translation students view poetry translation as the most challenging.

Table (4.2.3) Students of Translation Encounter Problems in Translating Arabic Structures

Options	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Strongly agree	60	60%
Agree	4	40%
Strongly disagree	0	0%
Disagree	0	0%
Neutral	0	0%
Total	10	100%

Table (4.2.3) reveals that all respondents (100%) selected either "Strongly Agree" (60%) or "Agree" (40%), showing that most translation students face difficulties in translating Arabic structures. None of the respondents (0%) chose the options "Strongly Disagree," "Neutral," or "Disagree."

Table (4.2.4) Lack of Equivalence is a Problem Encountered by Students of Translation

Options	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Strongly agree	2	20%
Agree	4	40%
Strongly disagree	0	0%
Disagree	3	30%
Neutral	1	10%
Total	10	100%

Table (4.2.1) shows that most participants (80%) selected "Strongly Agree" (60%) or "Agree" (20%), showing that most translation students face challenges in translating classical Arabic poetry into English. Meanwhile, 20% of respondents chose "Neutral" (10%) or "Disagree" (10%), and none (0%) selected "Strongly Disagree." These results confirm that most students encounter difficulties in translating classical Arabic poetry into English.

Table (4.2.5) Translating Arabic Figures of Speech is a Problem Encountered by Students of Translation

Options	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Strongly agree	3	30%
Agree	6	60%
Strongly disagree	0	0%
Disagree	1	10%
Neutral	0	0%
Total	10	100%

Table (4.2.5) reveals that most respondents (90%) selected "Strongly Agree" (30%) or "Agree" (60%), showing that translating figures of speech is a challenge faced by translation students. Meanwhile, 10% of respondents chose "Disagree," while none (0%) selected "Strongly Disagree" or "Neutral."

Table (4.2.6) Translating Cultural Boundaries are Problems Encountered by Students of Translation

Options	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Strongly agree	4	40%
Agree	6	60%
Strongly disagree	0	0%
Disagree	0	0%
Neutral	0	0%
Total	10	100%

Table (4.2.6) shows that all respondents (100%) selected either "Strongly Agree" (40%) or "Agree" (60%), highlighting that translating cultural boundaries presents a significant challenge for most translation students. In contrast, none of the respondents (0%) chose the options "Strongly Disagree," "Neutral," or "Disagree."

Table (4.2.7) Understanding Classical Arabic Poetry is a Problem Encountered by Students of Translation

Options	Frequency	Percentage
Strongly agree	1	10%
Agree	6	60%
Strongly disagree	0	0%
Disagree	0	0%
Neutral	3	30%
Total	10	100%

Table (4.2.7) illustrates that most respondents (70%) selected the options "Strongly Agree" (10%) and "Agree" (60%), showing that understanding Arabic poetry is a common challenge for most translation students. Meanwhile, none of the respondents chose "Strongly Disagree" (0%), "Neutral" (30%), or "Disagree" (0%).

Table (4.2.8) Poetry is Untranslatable

Options	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Strongly agree	0	0%
Agree	0	0%
Strongly disagree	4	40%
Disagree	5	50%
Neutral	1	10%
Total	10	100%

Table (4.2.8) reveals that none of the participants (0%) selected the options "Strongly Agree" or "Agree." Instead, the majority chose the following: 40% "Strongly Disagree," 10% "Neutral," and 50% "Disagree." These findings indicate that most participants believe poetry is translatable.

Analysis of the Teachers' Responses to the Open-ended Questions:

1. What are the other problems encountered by students of translation in translating classical Arabic poetry into English?

The participants highlighted additional challenges faced by most translation students when translating classical Arabic poetry into English, which can be categorized

as follows: 80% of respondents agree with the statements outlined in the questionnaire, while 10% emphasize that a lack of practical training in poetry translation is a significant challenge for many students.

2. What are the effective methods or strategies do you suggest overcoming the problems encountered by most students of translation in translating classical Arabic poetry into English?

The study reveals that 80% of respondents believe that students of translation face difficulties in translating classical Arabic poetry into English. 70% suggest consulting experts and literary dictionaries for assistance. 80% believe more practical courses in classical Arabic poetry translation are necessary. 60% believe reading about classical Arabic poetry is necessary to improve translation performance. 50% agree that students need to be familiar with Arabic and English culture, and 50% believe they should be equipped with the right literary strategies and techniques to translate classical Arabic poetry into English.

Testing Results and Hypotheses

The following section discusses the hypotheses in relation to the results:

Hypothesis One

Most students of translation encounter problems in translating classical Arabic poetry into English

With reference to EFL translators' responses in the table (4.2.1), which shows that (80%) of participants agree that most students of translation encounter problems in translating classical Arabic poetry into English, while (20%) of respondents have chosen the options: (0%) none "Strongly disagree", (10%) "Neutral" and (10%) "Disagree". Thus, this first hypothesis is proved valid.

Hypothesis Two

Arabic figures of speech are considered a problem encountered by students of translation in translating classical Arabic poetry into English.

This hypothesis is confirmed by the test's responses in the table (4.1.1.1), poetic verses (1) and (10) in which (100%, 100%) successively, students of translation did not choose the exact equivalence correctly. Added to that, EFL teachers' responses in the questionnaire as table

(4.2.1) shows that (80%) of participants agree that most students of translation encounter problems in translating Arabic figures of speech when translating classical Arabic poetry into English. While (20%) of participants have chosen the options: (0%) none “Strongly disagree”, (10%) “Neutral” and (10%) ‘Disagree’.” Therefore, this hypothesis is proved valid.

Hypothesis Three

Students of translation encounter problems in translating Arabic structures when translating classical Arabic poetry into English

The verification of this hypothesis is obvious from translation students’ test, table (4.2.3) poetic verses (2), and (9) in which (80%, and 100%) successively show that translation students encounter problems in translating Arabic structures when translating classical Arabic poetry into English. Besides, table (4.2.3) in the questionnaire that shows that (100%) of the participants agree students of translation encounter problems in translating Arabic structures when translating classical Arabic poetry into English. Thus, the hypothesis is supported.

Hypothesis Four

Lack of equivalence is a problem faced by most students of translation in translating classical Arabic poetry into English.

This hypothesis is verified by the students’ test, table (4.1.1.3) shows (80% and 90%) of the participants were not able to translate the sentences correctly. The hypothesis is also supported by the questionnaire’s result, table (4.2.3.6), in which (60%) of the subjects agreed that lack of equivalence is one of the problems that experienced by students of translation in translating Arabic poetic texts into English. Thus, the fourth hypothesis is strongly supported.

Hypothesis Five

Translating cultural boundaries are problems faced by students of translation in translating classical Arabic poetry into English.

This hypothesis is verified by the translation students’ test, table (4.1.1.4), (100% and 90%) show that students of translation were not able to translate the verses correctly. The hypothesis is also supported by the questionnaire’s result, table (4. 2.6), in which (100%) of the subjects asserted that translating cultural boundaries is a problem that faced by students of translation in translating classical Arabic poetry into English. Hence, the fifth hypothesis is valid.



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Hypothesis Six

Understanding classical Arabic poetry is a problem experienced by students of translation in translating classical Arabic poetry into English.

This hypothesis is verified by the translation students' test, table (4.1.1.5), (100% and 60%) show that students of translation were not able to translate verses correctly. The hypothesis is also supported by the questionnaire's result, table (4.2.7), in which (70%) of the subjects agreed that understanding classical Arabic poetry is a problem faced by students of translation in translating classical Arabic poetry into English. Therefore, the sixth hypothesis is valid.

Conclusion

The study aimed to examine the problems encountered by students of translation in translating classical Arabic poetry into English. Data were collected using two tools: a questionnaire distributed to 10 EFL staff members from the Translation and Languages Centre and the Department of English, Faculty of Education-Hantoub, University of Gezira, and a test designed for 10 postgraduate diploma students of translation, batch (7), at the Translation and Languages Centre, Faculty of Education-Hantoub, University of Gezira.

Findings

Based on data analysis and discussions, the study reached the following findings:

1. Translation students face challenges with equivalence when translating classical Arabic poetry into English.
2. Translation students have difficulties understanding classical Arabic poetry.
3. Translation students encounter challenges when translating Arabic sentence structures in classical poetry into English.
4. Translation students face difficulties translating culturally specific terms in classical Arabic poetry into English.
5. Most translation students experience various problems in classical Arabic poetry translation.
6. Translation students need more courses focused on translating classical Arabic poetry.

Recommendations



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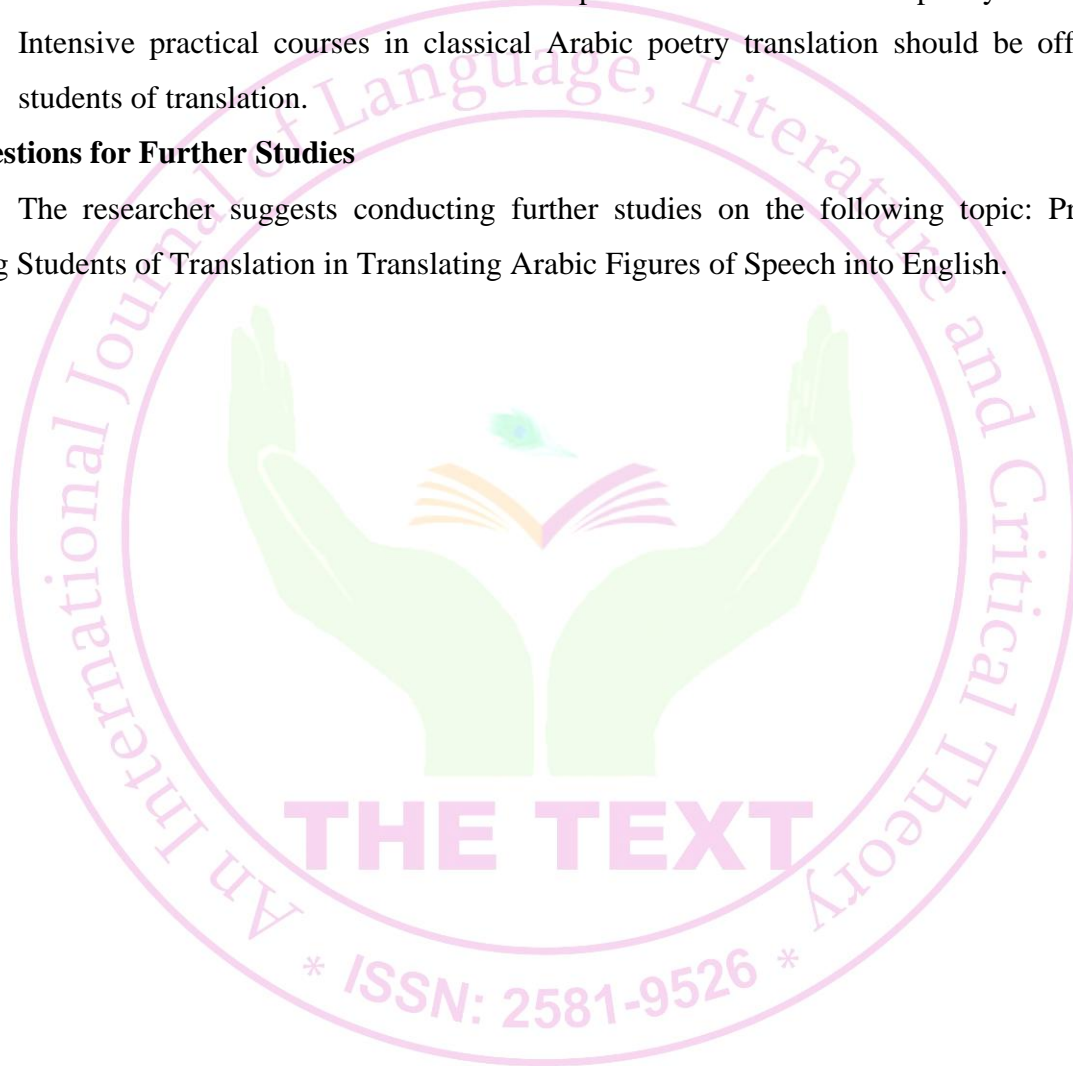
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To address the problems faced by students of translation when translating classical Arabic poetry into English, the study recommends the following:

1. Students of translation should consult experts in classical Arabic poetry translation and use literary dictionaries.
2. Students of translation should have more exposure to classical Arabic poetry.
3. Intensive practical courses in classical Arabic poetry translation should be offered to students of translation.

Suggestions for Further Studies

The researcher suggests conducting further studies on the following topic: Problems Facing Students of Translation in Translating Arabic Figures of Speech into English.





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Appendix I

Test

Translate the following classical Arabic poetic verses into English:

1. أَتْلَهُوْ وَأَيَّامَنَا تَذْهَبُ وَنَلْعَبُ وَالْمَوْتُ لَا يَلْعَبُ

.....

2. إِذَا قِيلَ أَيُّ النَّاسِ شَرُّ قَبِيلَةٍ أَشَارَتْ كَلْبٍ بِالْأَكْفِ الْأَصَابِعُ

.....

3. مَعَلَّتِي بِالْوَصْلِ، وَالْمَوْتُ دُونَهُ إِذَا مِتُّ ظَمَانًا فَلَا تَزَلِ الْقَطْرُ

.....

1. قَامَتْ تَظَلِّلَنِي مِنَ الشَّمْسِ نَفْسٌ أَعَزُّ عَلَيَّ مِنْ نَفْسِي

.....

2. فَإِذَا رَزَقْتَ خَلِيقَةً مَحْمُودَةً فَقَدِ اصْطَفَاكَ مُقْسِمُ الْأَرْزَاقِ

.....

3. خَيْلٌ صَبِيحًا وَخَيْلٌ غَيْرُ صَائِمَةٍ تَحْتَ الْعِجَاجِ وَأُخْرَى تَعْلُكُ اللَّجْمَا

.....

4. أَرَانَا إِذَا أَضْمَرْنَاكَ الْبِلَادُ نُجْفَى وَتُقَطَّعُ مِنَّا الرَّجْمُ

.....

5. وَقِيلَ هَلْ أَبْصَرْتَ مِنْهُ يَدًا تَشْكُرُهَا قَلْتِ وَلَا رَاحَةَ

.....

6. كَيْفَ أَنْتَ قُلْتُ: عَلِيلٌ سَهْرٌ دَائِمٌ وَخُرْنٌ طَوِيلٌ

.....

7. طَرَقْتَ الْبَابَ حَتَّى كُلِّ مَتْنِي فَلَمَّا كَلَّ مَتْنِي كَلِمَتْنِي

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Appendix II

Questionnaire

Dear Teachers of Translation

The researcher would be grateful if you could answer the questions below.

Your answers will help in providing the data required for dissertation entitled: “Problems Encountered by Students of Translation in Translating Classical Arabic Poetry into English.”

Choose the option you think is the most proper.

	Statement	Strongly agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly disagree
1	Most students of translation are encountered by problems in translating classical Arabic poetry into English.					
2	Classical Arabic poetry translation is the most difficult type of translation					
3	Students of translation are faced by syntactic problems in translating classical Arabic poetry into English.					
4	Lack of equivalence in translating classical Arabic poetry into English is a problem experienced by students of translation in translating classical Arabic poetry into English.					
5	Translating Arabic figures of speech is a problem encountered by students of translation in translating classical Arabic poetry into English.					
6	Cultural boundaries are problems experienced by students of translation in translating classical Arabic poetry into English.					
7	Understanding classical Arabic poetry is a problem faced by students of translation in translating Arabic poetic texts into English.					
8	Classical Arabic Poetry cannot be translated.					

9. According to your experience, what are the other problems that are faced by the students of translation in translating classical Arabic poetry into English?

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10. What do you suggest improving the performance of the students of translation in translating classical Arabic poetry into English?