

Difficulties of Translating Al Baradduni's* Poetry into English Due to Sound Devices and Tension between Form and Content

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معضلات في ترجمة شعر البردوني إلى الإنجليزية

ملخص

يعتبر الشعر من أصعب الأجناس الأدبية ترجمة وذلك لتفرده بسمتي الشكل والإيقاع الصوتي، ولما كانت اللغات على اختلاف كبير في الأساليب الشعرية، كان من المتوقع أن يواجه مترجم الشعر معضلات كثيرة عند ترجمته لقصيدة ما من لغة إلى لغة أخرى. وتتضمن هذه المعضلات : الحفاظ على التأثيرات الصوتية، وما ينجم عنه من توتر بين المحافظة على شكل القصيدة أو مضمونها، و ترجمة التعبيرات المجازية إلى ما يقابلها في اللغة الأخرى، و ترجمة المدلولات الثقافية و ترجمة التعبيرات الإيحائية . وتصبح هذه الصعوبات أكثر تعقيدا كلما كانت اللغتان المنقول منها والمنقول إليها متباعدتين من حيث الأصل، كاللغة العربية والإنجليزية. ولذلك تظهر هذه الصعوبات في المجالات الأربعة المذكورة آنفا بشكل كبير.

وقد قامت الدراسة على تحليل عينة عشوائية تكونت من ثلاثة عشر مقطوعة شعرية، اختيرت من بين المقاطوعات الشعرية لسبع قصائد مترجمة للبردوني. وخلصت الدراسة إلى أنه بالإمكان ترجمة الشعر الكلاسيكي الجدد إلى الإنجليزية مع وجود اختلاف في قوة الترجمة التي قد يتوصل إليها المترجمون لاختلاف قدراتهم الإبداعية. إلا أن هناك خسارة في المعنى لأمناص منها بسبب الاختلاف بين اللغة المصدر واللغة الهدف في الأمور الأربعة السابقة الذكر. لذا اقترحت الدراسة بعض الحلول العملية التي يمكن أن يلجأ إليها المترجم عند مصادفة أحد هذه المشاكل عند ترجمة الشعر.

و استعرضت الدراسة طرائق ترجمة الشعر التي اقترحها منظرو الترجمة، ووجدت أنه رغم اختلاف المسميات لهذه الطرائق طبقاً لمقترحها إلا أن جميعها تدور حول ثلاث طرق رئيسية وهي الطريقة التي تركز على التأثيرات الصوتية في الترجمة، والطريقة التي تركز على نقل المحتوى المعنوي للقصيدة، والطريقة التي تركز على الإبداع في

الترجمة، من حيث الـتـيـان بترجمة تشبه في مضمونها القصيدة الأصلية. لكن قد تختلف عنها في المعنى والشكل. و لتحقيق توازن بين كون المترجم أميناً في نقله لمعنى القصيدة وإضافة الطابع الشعري على ترجمته، اقترحت الدراسة استراتيجية وسطاً بين هذه الطرائق الثلاث يكون فيها المترجم إلى حد ما أميناً من حيث نقله للقصيدة الأصل، مع محاولة خلق تأثيرات صوتية إيقاعية تضيف على الترجمة صفة وروح الشعر . وقد سميت هذه الاستراتيجية الترجمة الإبداعية.

Introduction

Taking into consideration that no two languages are similar even if originating from the same language family, the

translation act can never be described as an easy task. It is an act of approximation and compromise. This fact is emphasized by many translation scholars such as Nida (2000:126) who points out that the total impact of a translation may be reasonably close to the original, but not identical. Vanderauwera (1985:198) argues that literary translation is considered problematic due to the fact that the source language (henceforth SL) literature is trying to gain a place in the target language (henceforth TL) literature, where the two literary bodies belong to two divergent environments. Newmark (1988:162) points out that literary translation is an extremely challenging type of translation due to the importance of each element in the text; the word as well as the sentence or the line in poetry. It is fairly true that among literary genres, poetry is the most difficult to translate due to the very specific nature of this genre. It is the form of the poem and the internal and external music created by the sound devices in each verse that hold the words tightly and meaningfully in a very amazing way similar to a necklace where beads hold by string. Suppose that the poem was translated into prose, the beads of the necklace would be broken out and separated, causing the beauty of the necklace to vanish away. In this spirit, Newmark (1998:114-15) argues: Within literary language, poetry has the additional primary feature of a prescribed form, which is normally translated as a priority, often comprising meter, rhythm, stress and rhyme, all of which force importance onto each single word; signally, poetry cognitively and linguistically is more dense than literary prose, and therefore the most difficult and rewarding of all forms to translate.

Poetry Translatability

The undecided statement concerning poetry translation may emerge from the fact that poetry has a very specific nature which is absent from other literary genres definitely, its form, i.e., the internal and external (rhyme, rhythm, assonance, consonance, parallelism, among others) that hold the verses in a way that please the listener as well as the reader.

Al-Jahidh (1982: 54) states that poetry is untranslatable. He asserts:

والشعر لا يستطيع أن يترجم و لا يجوز عليه النقل، و متى حول، تقطع نظمه،
و بطل وزنه، و ذهب حسنه

Poetry is untranslatable and should not be transferred. If it is translated, its form would be distorted, its meter and beauty would be lost and its rhetoric and effect would vanish.

Like Al-Jahidh, Jakobson (2000:118) holds a pessimistic view of the issue in question. He claims that in poetry, verbal equations become a constructive principle of the text and that such transference between languages is impossible from a linguistic point of view but a creative transference is possible. He asserts:

Whether its rule absolute or limited, poetry by definition is untranslatable. Only creative transposition is possible.

Bassnett in Bassnett and Lefevere (1998:62) states that many writers have struggled to define the difficulties of poetic translation. To emphasize this idea; she (ibid) quotes Shelly's (1820) remarks concerning the issue in question:

It were wise to cast a violet into a crucible that you might discover the formal principle of its colour and odour, as to seek to transfuse from one language into another the creations of a poet.

Bassnett (ibid: 62) comments on the above quotation saying that it might be understood as an indication that poetry is impossible to translate. However, it implicitly demonstrates the other way around if it is read in another way. She states that the imagery used by Shelly (violet) refers to a change and a new growth. It is not an imagery of lost and decay.

Holmes (1970:95-7) provides four approaches to render the formal properties of poetry. The first one is "Mimetic" where the translator reproduces the form of the original in the target language. This strategy is only applicable when there are shared formal conventions between the SL and the TL poetry which might enable the translator to use a form the target audience is familiar with. Nevertheless, Holmes (1970:95) argues that since a verse form is language specific, "no verse form in any one language can be entirely identical with a verse form in any other, however similar their nomenclatures and however cognate the language".

In translation, the impacts created on the SL and the TL audiences could never be equal in their effectiveness. However, a so-gifted and a competent translator might be able to compensate for the loss in meaning brought about by the divergent poetic styles of the SL and the TL. Thus, he could raise the effectiveness of the impact his translation may create on the TL receptors. This can be done through creating a natural native-like rendition of the SL poem.

Nida (2000:131) states that there is a great focus of attention paid to formal elements (rhythm, meter, assonance, etc) when translating poetry than prose. Hence the translator should not ignore the crucial factor of translation, the response of the receptor, which is considered fundamental in any evaluation of translations. He asserts:

The resolution of the conflict between literalness of form and equivalence of response seems increasingly to favor the latter, especially in the translating of poetic materials. (p.131)

Accordingly, the translator should tackle the translation stylistically rather than linguistically. Word-for-word or literal translation may render the poem aesthetically unnatural and unacceptable. On the contrary, if a great attention is paid to stylistic features such as sound devices, figures of speech, among others, the translation would appear more natural and acceptable. Hence, the translator should compensate for the stylistic features of the SL poem by creating those features the TL audience is familiar with when reading poetry. Nida (2000:139) puts it concisely:

The translation of poetry obviously involves more adjustments in literary form than does in prose, for rhythmic forms differ far more radically in form, and hence in aesthetic appeal. As a result, certain rhythmic patterns must often be substituted for others.

The present researchers believe that, if a translator is able to aesthetically and creatively translate the SL poem by adapting it into the culture of the TL, the final product would suffer no deformation. However, loss in meaning is inevitable.

Statement of the Problem and purpose of the study

The present researchers, who translated Arabic poetry into English, have observed through personal experience that translating poetry is both a challenging and a thorny task either in trying to maintain sound devices and poetic structure (form) or in maintaining figurative language, culture-bound expressions and emotive expressions (content or message). Moreover, previous studies were found insufficient,

particularly in treatment of translating neoclassical Arabic poetry into English and maintaining the sound devices.

The present study aims at investigating the dilemma of compensating for the sound devices and tensions between form-content, leaving other dilemmas for further studies. Furthermore, it aims at proposing applicable strategies to overcome this dilemma as well as coming up with adequate strategies for translating Al-Baradduni's poetry into English. The study focuses on the analysis and discussion of a random sample of some stanzas extracted from some translated poems written by Al-Baradduni.

Review of the Related Literature

Poetry has been viewed as the most sacred literary genre when it comes to translation. Linguists and translation scholars have different views about poetry translation. Different strategies of poetry translation have been suggested by different scholars. For instance, Linfield (1994:121-46) comments admiringly on Hatim and Mason's (1998: 15) views concerning that poetry can be judged "according to what the translator set out to achieve, instead of some notional criterion of what qualifies as good translation of poetry". He also proposes three relevant translation strategies: gloss, free imitation and recreation. *Gloss* refers to a translation designed to help the reader to understand the original by giving the original poem together with a prose translation. *Free imitation* of the SL poem is where the translator deliberately departs from the original and reduces any cultural and historical discrepancies between the SL poem and the TL receptors. However, using *free imitation* might cause great deviation from the intended meaning of the SL poem and the final product

might be a new poem different totally from the SL. *Re-creation* seeks to provide the TL reader with an experience as similar as possible to the translator's experience of the original poem. Linefield (1994:144) concludes that though it is impossible to capture the whole meaning of the SL poem, its encapsulated communicative meaning can be transferred if the translator recognizes how something is said and follows the configuration in the SL text as closely as the TL permits, and if he could justify his lexical, structural and stylistic choices.

Two of Linefield's (1994) strategies, specifically *free imitation* and *re-creation*, may be regarded as more applicable to poetry translation than *gloss translation*. This is due to the fact that the final product of these two strategies is poetry rather than prose where sound devices are absent and no aesthetic enjoyment can be felt and derived from it as in poetry.

Mumayiz (1998) devotes the introduction in his study to valuable issues concerning translating Arabic poetry in general and classical poetry in particular into English by taking *Abu-Alaa' al- Ma'arri's* poetry as a case study. He argues that any translator of Arabic poetry needs to be familiar with the two main approaches of literary translation; *the literal* and *the idiomatic* (p.5). He (1998:40-41) also proposed three steps to be followed when translating Arabic poetry into English. Firstly, the translator should obtain a poet's manual and rhyming dictionary which help in providing him with the principal meters of English verse and glossary. For instance, if the rhyme scheme ends with *ved*, the rhyming dictionary under *ved* gives one-syllable words such as: caved, laved, paved, raved, etc and under two-syllable; behaved, enslaved, repaved etc. Secondly, he should render the meaning of the poem into prose and paraphrase it. Thirdly, he should place the "message" of the Arabic lines into

English and choose what form is most appropriate, for example, couplet or quatrain?

One of the remarkable anthologies of modern Arabic literature in English translation is Jayyusi's (1988). The literary genres dealt with in this anthology are poetry, drama and short stories from Saudi Arabia, Yemen and the rest of the Gulf States. Among the Yemeni poets whose poems are translated into English is Al-Baradduni. His seven poems; (selected from different collections) *End of Death*, *The Kindness of the Enemy*, *Between two Voids*, *Between the Knife and the Killer*, *Answers to One Question*, *Treachery of Words* and *Longing* are translated by different translators. The method used in translating these literary genres in this anthology follows PROTA's principles (project for translation from Arabic) where the text is given to a competent bilingual translator who enjoys great sensitivity to literature, then to English-speaking poets and writers (according to the genres of the selection) who after that carry out creative modifications for the translated version and rephrase it according to their own method of writing, without being influenced by the Arabic text.

The following three strategies of translation: *annotation*, *Metrical translation*, *Rhymed translation* are relevant to the present study. *Annotation* is used when confronting untranslatable elements, either linguistic or cultural. For instance, the poems which are full of word play of words constitute translation dilemmas. Consequently, explanatory notes are needed; otherwise translation would fail its purpose. For instance, the following two verses by al-Mutanabbi (a famous 9th century Arab poet) are translated into English by Mumayiz (1998:80), using this

strategy:

لو كنت بحرا لم يكن لك ساحل أو كنت غيثا ضاق عنك اللوح

خشيت منك على البلاد و أهلها ما كان أنذر به قوم نوح نوح

Shoreless you would be if you were a sea

If a cloud, the air unable to bear ye

Country and people of you I could warn

Of that which only Noah could foresee

The first name نوح “Noah” in the second verse is a modifier of the word قوم “people” while the second is the doer of the warning. The translator opts for omitting the former “Noah” and keeping the latter so as to disambiguate the meaning and ease the comprehensibility of the two verses. However, he needs also to write a footnote about the cultural element “Noah”.

Metrical translation means to imitate the meter of the SL assuming that the TL readers are interested in learning about the meter of the SL poem. Below is an example quoted from Nicholson (1987: xiv) who translated the following verses by Al-Muttanabi. These lines are in the *Tawil meter* which consists of eight feet, four in each hemistich:

أقيموا/ بني أمي/ صدور/ مطيكم // فاني/ إلى قوم/ سواكم/ لأميل
فعولن/ مفاعيلن/ فعول/ مفاعلن // فعولن/ مفاعيلن/ فعولن/ مفاعلن

akimu / bani ummi / sudura / matiyikum//

u — — / u —

— — / u — u / u — u — //

fa'inni/ 'ila

kaumin/ siwakum/ la'myalu.

u — — / u —

— — / u — — / u — u — //

Arise, O/ my mother's sons, / and breast with/ your steeds
the night,

For truly/ the love I bear/ is kinder/ to some less kin

Rhymed translation means to add constraints of rhyme and meter. Translators who use this strategy think that it can recreate the musical quality of the SL poem. Consider the poem below by Al-Baradduni which is translated by the researchers putting the Arabic verses in the form of a *couplet* with the rhyme *aa, bb, cc*, and creating a balanced rhythm. The intended meaning is retained, yet some loss is inevitable.

في الطريق

وحده يحمل الشقا و السنين	لا معين وأين يلقي المعينا
وحده في الطريق يسحب رجليه	ويطوي خلف الجراح الأنيبا
متعب يعبر الطريق و يمضي	وحده يتبع الخيال الحزينا

Al-Baradduni (2002: 32)

On the road

Alone shouldering misery with years' load.
No helper he can find in his untrodden road.
Alone in the road dragging his legs,
Folding moans beyond his wounds.
Exhausted he passes the road and goes away.
Alone tracing grieved imagination in.

The dilemmatic issue in poetic translation becomes salient when the translator has to choose what to prioritize form or content. The balance or the compromise between these two facets of the poem reflects how competent and creative the translator should be. If the translator manages to maintain both facets and end with a minimum loss, his translation would be natural, creative and aesthetic. In this spirit Newmark (1988:165) asserts:

Whether a translator gives priority to content or manner, and, within manner, what aspects - meter, rhyme, sound, structure – is to have priority, must depend not only on the values of

the particular poem, but also on the translator's theory of poetry.

Dickins, Hervey and Higgins (2002) devote a brief section to *rudiments of English and Arabic versification* where it is asserted that sound effects in poetry present specific translation challenges for they are language specific. Moreover, they furnished an example of classical Arabic poetry along with its suggested translation to illustrate the difference between classical Arabic poetry and English poetry in many respects, such as meter, feet and rhyming, among others. This example is a poem by Al- Imam Al-Shafi'i entitled *da'i al aiyaama taf'al maa tachaa'u* (lit. let days do what they may do). The suggested translation comes out in two different surface structures, but the deep structure is the same. The first structure is in classical Arabic where each verse consists of two hemistiches (*sadir and 'ajiz*) while the second is in an English form of a stanza.

دع الأيام تفعل ما تشاء وطب نفسا إذا حكم القضاء
ولا تجزع لحادثة الليالي فما لحوادث الدنيا فناء

وكن رجلا على الأهوال جلدا وشيمتك السماحة و الوفاء

Let the days do what they will, and be of
good cheer when fate utters its decree.

Nor be troubled by the night's events; the
events of this world have no permanence

Be steadfast in the face of terrors; let your mark be
generosity and trust

Let the days do what they will,
And be of good cheer when fate utters its decree.
Nor be troubled by the night's events;

The events of this world have no permanence
Be steadfast in the face of terrors;
Let your mark be generosity and trust

Dickins, Hervey

and Higgins (2002: 94)

The first rendition seems unnatural because it does not stand out as an established form in English poetry. The typical English poem comes in stanzas, each of which consists of individual lines of verse while in classical Arabic poetry, the typical poem consists of lines of verse (sing. *bayt*, pl. *abyaat*) each of which consists of halves or hemistiches (sing. *shat'r*, pl. *ashtur*), which are separated by about six keyboard spaces. The meaning of the SL poem is conveyed idiomatically. However, sound effects are being sacrificed to preserve the content, i.e., there is neither rhyme nor rhythm in the TL poem. The second rendition is a natural one for an English audience for it is put in an English dress, though, as in the first rendition, the Arabic sound effects are absent. It seems that the second rendition seeks to acquaint the TL audience acquainted with the SL poetic form. Below is a suggested rendition of the previous extract.

Let days do whatsoever they are willing to do
Willing be when a judgment by fate comes true
Be not terrified with the night's misfortune
Permanent not they're in the world of human
Be a man of will when facing a calamity
Stick thy soul to tolerance and loyalty (The
researchers' translation)

Method

Sample of the Study

The sample of the study consists of thirteen stanzas selected randomly from seven poems by Al-Baradduni. Five of these poems were translated into English by Sargon Boulus, John Heath-Stubbs and Salma Jayyusi, and edited by Jayyusi (1988) in her anthology *The Literature of Modern Arabia: An Anthology* and the other two poems, sent to the present researchers by Altoma, were translated by Diana Der Hovanesian and Sharif Elmusa. Since some of the poems in their original full forms are of a considerable length, this study focused on a random sample of thirteen stanzas chosen from seven poems by Al-Baradduni according to the number of stanzas each poem consists of, as follows:

- 1- The shortest poem in the sample is discussed as a whole.
- 2- One stanza was randomly selected from the poems that consist of two stanzas.
- 3- Two stanzas were randomly selected from the poem which consists of three stanzas.
- 4- Three to four stanzas were randomly selected from the poems which are the longest among the poems in the sample.

The titles of the poems under study are:

- 1- آخر الموت End of Death (3 stanzas, no.2,6,7)
- 2- مروءات العدو Kindness of the Enemy (the whole poem)
- 3- بين ضياعين Between Two Voids (stanza no. 2)
- 4- بين المديّة والذابح Between the Knife and the Killer (stanza no. 1)
- 5- حنين Longing (2 stanzas, no. 1,3)
- 6- من منفى الى منفى From Exile to Exile (stanza no.2)
- 7- وردة من دم المتنبي A Rose from Al-Mutanabbi's Blood. (4 stanzas, no.1,5,23,25)

The researchers ended with thirteen stanzas to be discussed in relation to the dilemma of sound devices and tension

between form and content. From these stanzas, the researchers spot the verses that constitute problems to translate with reference to the dilemma the study investigate.

Data collection

The researchers collected the data from three sources. The Arabic versions of the poems were collected from two volumes containing the whole collections by Al-Baradduni. These two volumes were published by the *Public Corporation for Book Publication* (2002) in Yemen.

Concerning the English translation of the poems, five of them were collected from Jayyusi's *The Literature of Modern Arabia: An Anthology* (1988) and the other two were sent by Altoma (an emeritus professor at Indiana University) to the researchers via email.

Validation of Translation

To validate the translation and discussion and get reliable appraisal for comments on the translation of the poems under study, the researchers sought recommendations of a group of seven referees who are specialized in translation, English and Arabic literature. Besides, to check the naturalness of the suggested translations, they discussed them with a native speaker of English and modified them.

The referees were kindly requested to comment on the translation of the study's sample in terms of the stylistic devices discussed. The Arabic versions along with their translations and the researchers' suggested translation were

given to those referees and they were requested to answer the following questions:

- 1- Are the translations of the following poems composed in good English?
- 2- Does the language of the translated poems seem poetic and expressive?
- 3- If you have to choose one English version as a rendition of the Arabic verses, which one will you choose and why?

Data Analysis

Guided by the proposed questions of the study, the researchers analyzed the thirteen stanzas and discussed them in light of the dilemma of sound devices and tension between form and content which involves five stylistic features: rhyme, rhythm, assonance, alliteration and parallelism.

The researchers adopted a contrastive method and an analytical approach illustrating differences between Arabic and English in terms of the stylistic devices, discussing to what extent the translators were able to compensate for the loss brought about by these differences and discussing the strategies adopted by the translators of the study targeted verses. Moreover, they provided their own suggested translations at the end of the discussion of each example.

Discussion and Analysis

To translate poetry or not to translate, that is the question! This hot debate has been argued about a lot bringing to the surface different views of being against or for the issue in question.

Before delving into the discussion and analysis of the translated poems under study, it is useful to group all the strategies suggested concerning poetry translation in the

following diagram according to their similarities. These strategies are categorized into three groups, namely: (1) *Sense-centered strategies* which focus on transferring the literal meaning of the SL poem at the expense of sound effects, (2) *Sound-centered strategies* that focus on transferring the sounds of the SL poem at the expense of meaning, and (3) *Re-creation strategies* which aim at introducing an experience similar to that of the SL poem (deviation may occur in meaning and form to suit the traditions of the TL poetry)

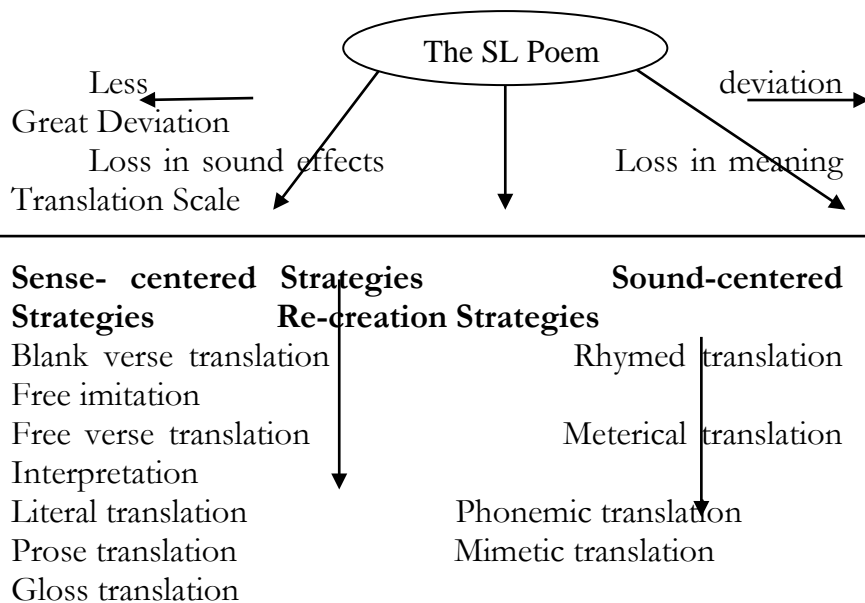


Diagram (2) Major Strategies of Poetry Translation

The above diagram illustrates the three major strategies of poetry translation. Firstly, there are *Sense-centered* strategies in the left extreme, where a great deal of attention is paid for rendering the sense of the SL poem at the expense of sound

effects. Secondly, *Sound-centered* strategies come in the middle of the extreme, where great focus is paid towards compensating for or imitating the sound effects of the SL poem while neglecting its content. Thirdly, the *Re-creation* strategies come on the right extreme, where the translator tries to adapt the SL poem into the TL poetic traditions and interpret it according to how he experiences it. He might deviate a little or more from the content of the SL poem. Whenever we move towards the right in the translation scale, the deviation in meaning increases as the translator aims at re-creating a new poem out of the SL one. On the other hand, when moving towards the left, the translator tries to stick to the intended meaning of the SL poem. The various strategies that come under the major ones are ordered according to their applicability for poetry translation. Whenever we move down, these strategies become less applicable for poetry translation.

Sound devices and tension between form and content

Musical effects such as rhyme, rhythm, assonance, alliteration, among others constitute the soul of the poem while content constitutes the body. Thus, if the translator separates the soul from the body by rendering the content and ignoring the musical effects, his rendition will be plain, ineffective and lifeless. The translator's task becomes more arduous when dealing with poetic language that is full of music and sound effects, such as Al-Baradduni's. Khadadah (2002: 38) states that "Al-Baradduni is one among the distinguished poets who used music in Arabic poetry. He adds that the music in Al-Baradduni's poetry is a flooding river at one time, and at other times a stormy sea in which, in both times, his poetic voyage in a journey full of splendid

imagination.” Therefore, the translator should adopt suitable strategies to compensate for the inevitable losses in meaning brought about by the divergent norms of using sound devices in the SL and the TL poetry.

For the sake of clarity, the Arabic poems along with their translation are introduced. Each Arabic sound device is defined and a brief account focuses on how it is compensated for in the translated poems. The aim is to focus on differences between the SL and the TL in using these devices on the one hand and to show to what extent the strategies of the translators are successful in compensating for sound effects in the SL poem on the other. The definitions of Arabic sound devices (المحسنات البديعية اللفظية) are quoted from Al-Hashidi (2006:101-104). From these sound devices, five are implemented below on the translated samples. These include alliteration, rhyme scheme, rhythm, assonance and parallelism.

Al-jinaas in Arabic refers to the similarity between two words in pronunciation and their difference in meaning. It comes in two types: *perfect* and *imperfect* (ناقص و تام). The *perfect* (polysemic) refers to the similarity between two words in (1) orthography, (2) pronunciation, (3) numbers of letters and (4) their distribution in the words. In the Qur’anic verse: { ويوم { yawma taqumu ssaaʕah, youqsimu al-mujrimuuna ma labiʔu yaai ra saaʕah } means {On the Day that the Hour (of reckoning) will be established, the transgressors will swear that they tarried not but an hour}, there is a *perfect jinaas* where the first word (الساعة) *al-saaʕah* refers to the Doomsday while the second one means an hour. Contrastively, the *imperfect jinaas* refers to the difference between the two lexical items

There are two other types of jinaas: (1) *derivational jinaas* as in the Prophet's Hadith referring to certain Arab tribes: (غفار { yifaar } (غفر الله لها وأسلم سالمها الله ، و عصية عصت الله ورسوله yafara Allahu lahaa, wa asslam salamaha Allah, wa ʕasiyah ʕasat Allaha warasuluh}, and (2) *jinaas al-mushaf*, in which the two lexical items share the form, the number of letters and their distribution, yet differ in pronunciation. An example of this type is the Prophet's Hadith: بشروا ولا تنفروا، يسروا ولا تعسروا (baffīru wala tunaffīru, yassīru wala tuʕssīru). Now, let us consider the following stretch:

(1) مروءات العدو
يخوفني بالذهب و القتل ناظم علي
وهل لي ما أخاف عليه؟
إذا رام نهبي لم يجد ما يرومه
وان رام موتي فالمصير إليه
إذا سل روعي سلني من يد الشقا
وخلصني من شره بيديه
و أطلقتني من سجن عمري فقاتلي
عدو، مروءات الصديق له
Al-Baradduni (2002:310)

The Kindness of the Enemy

This man, who is my enemy,
Has threatened death or robbery.
Should he rob me, he will find
I own nothing- I won't mind.
Let him kill me- very well!
He'll free me from the prison-cell
Which I called life. So, in the end
My foe will prove a generous friend.

(Translated by Boulus and Heath-Stubbs
in Jayyusi,1988:57)

In the Arabic version of the poem above, the poet made a good use of *jinaas*. For instance:

- 1- In the first verse علي and عليه (derivational *jinaas*)
- 2- In the second verse إن رام / إذا رام (perfect *jinaas*)
- 3- In the third verse سلني / سل (derivational *jinaas*)

Almost *alliteration* in English gives the same sound effect that *al-jinaas* gives in Arabic. The translators in example (1) were successful, to a great extent, in compensating for this sound device (*jinaas*). They produced alliterations in some verses in the TL poem. For instance, in the first verse, there is alliteration in the words *man* and *my* which directs the reader's attention to the relationship between the poet and that man (his enemy). There is alliteration in the sixth verse: *free* and *from* and another one in the last verse: *foe* and *friend*. The former emphasizes the meaning of the poet's seeking to be released from his agony while the latter emphasizes the meaning of contradiction between those two people (foe and friend).

Qafiyah and Saja'

Neoclassical Arabic poetry comes generally in a single rhyme which is called *qafiyah* (also called *saj'a* in prose). The *qafiyah*'s counterpart in English, rhyme scheme comes in variable sound-endings. Each verse in the Arabic poem consists of two hemistiches (*sader* and 'ajiz). Sometimes, the two hemistiches share the same sound-ending. This sameness is called in Arabic *Saj'a* (السجع). This device is more recurrent in prose than in poetry. Consider Al-Mutanabbi in the following:

فَنَحْنُ فِي جِذْلٍ وَالرُّومُ فِي وَجَلٍ وَالْبِرُّ فِي شَغْلٍ وَالْبَحْرُ فِي خَجَلٍ

Fanabnu fī jathalin wal rumu fī wajali

Wal barru fi fuylin walbahru fi Xajali

We're in pleasure, Romans in dread
The land is afire, the sea is timid. (the
researchers' translation)

In neoclassical Arabic poetry, *qafīyah* (rhyme scheme) tends to be unified either in stanzas that make up the whole poem, i.e., each stanza has a rhyme scheme different from the other stanzas in the poem, or all the stanzas of the poem have the same rhyme scheme. Al-Baradduni's poetry tends to follow the two styles.

In the Arabic version of poem (1), the *qafīyah* is unified in all lines as it falls on the sound /h/ "هاء". The researchers succeeded in creating a rhyme scheme for the translated poem by making each two lines rhyme the same. They adopted the English form of couplet. The first two lines end with /i/, the second two lines end with the consonant cluster /nd/ preceded by the long vowel /ai/, the following two lines end with the sound /l/ preceded by the short vowel /e/, and the last two lines end with the consonant cluster /nd/ preceded by the short vowel /e/. So the English translation of the Arabic poem above was musically composed and hence, it might be naturally accepted by an English ear.

As for *assonance* which refers to the similarity in vowels that are followed by different consonants, the translators also were skillful to produce it in some verses in the poem. For instance, in the second line, we find the short vowel /e/ in the words *threatened* and *death* which is followed by the consonants /t/ and /θ/. Moreover, in the fifth and the sixth lines, there is assonance in the words *him* and *kill* which have

the same vowel /i/ followed by different consonants /m/ and /l/.

As for rhythm, which is maintained in the Arabic verses, it is almost absent from the English translation as the beats or the number of syllables in the lines that come in sequence, differ except for the third and the fourth verses which are almost similar in the number of syllables.

Al-Muwazanah "Parallelism"

Both *Parallelism* in English and *Al-Muwazanah* in Arabic refer to similarity between two sentences in structure. Moreover Ibin Al-Atheer (cited in Al-Hashidi, 2004:104) defines *Al-Muwazanah* as the rhythmic similarity between the words in the sentences which come sequentially. It comes in poetry when the two hemistiches (*sader* and '*ajjaz*') of each line are similar in rhythm. Consider this line of verse by Al-Mutanabbi:

فأحجم لما لم يجد فيك مطمعا و أقدم لما لم يجد عنك مهربا

Fighting you, he does forbear,
When fearing you're not his peer.
Then facing you, he does venture,
When finding no escape or shelter. (the researchers'
translation)

In the Arabic poem (1), there are many aesthetic parallelisms that significantly contribute to the overall meaning of the poem. All of these parallelisms have the form of *conditional clause* which is called in Arabic *الشرط وجوابه*, such as:

إذا رام نهبي لم يجد
ما يرومه

و إن رام موتي فالمصير إليه
إذا سل روعي سلني من يد الشقا
وخلصني من شره بيديه

Should he rob me, he will find

I own nothing - I won't mind

Let him kill me - very well!

He will free me from the prison-cell

These three parallel conditional clauses are translated into English in a way that maintains the rhyme but at the expense of the content. The strategy adopted here is *Sound-centered; rhymed translation* for the researchers scarified the sense of the poem to create a rhyme scheme in the TL poem. The rendition of these parallel clauses is incongruent with their meaning in the Arabic poem. The translation of the verse *و إن رام موتي فالمصير إليه* which parallels completely with the previous verse *إذا رام نهبي لم يجد ما يرومه* is skipped. The Arabic parallel clauses start with the same verb that carries the condition *رام* (targeted) and the result of this condition is the poet's carelessness about what might be done to him by his enemy. This parallel structure has its own significance. It definitely contributes to the overall meaning of the poem- the complete carelessness about life.

To sum up the translation is to some extent successful in producing a natural and aesthetic English rendition of the Arabic poem. It adopted a blend of strategies: *adaptation, recreation* along with *rhymed translation*. It also adopted the style of English couplet where each two verses rhyme the same. Besides, it creates a new form different from the SL by taking the title and the content as a point of departure. It does not

part with the poet's intended meaning (frustration and carelessness towards life). The overall idea of the poem and the general atmosphere are retained in the TL. However, few meanings were sacrificed as the translators sought to produce a regular rhyme scheme in each two verses (*aa bb cc dd ee*). The deviation can be seen in the translation of the first hemistich of the first line which is translated as *has threatened death or robbery*. The Arabic verse says *death and robbery* not *death or robbery*. Also the second hemistich in the second line is skipped in the TL poem, though it is so crucial to the overall atmosphere. It emphasizes the meaning of carelessness towards life. Another point that is worth mentioning here is the title of the poem which was translated as *The Kindness of the Enemy*. It does not match the meaning of the Arabic title; however, it is so attractive and effective as it carries contradiction and sarcastic tone. The word *kindness* does not match the word *بروءات*. This word, in fact, radiates a halo of connotations. In Arabic, it collocates with the word *شهادة*. Both of them designate the Arabian morals of relieving the needy, rescuing the weak and the help-seeker. The word *succour* may better suit this context because an enemy may give *succour* from the poet's point of view if he does not keep torturing him for a long time and kills him at once.

Below is the researchers' suggested translation:

Enemy's Succour

He threatens me with robbery and murder.
I've nothing to struggle for, oh avenger,
I'm penniless, if you are a robber.
You can end my life, if a murderer.
If you tear out my soul,
You'll release it from its cage of misery.
You'll do no harm at all,

Except relieving me from your agony.
Then, when freeing me from life's prison.
I will confirm, friend's succour, you own.

(2) بين المدينة والذابح
راحل منه اليهدربه
شارد أضيع من راحله
بعضه يسأله عن بعضه

Al-Baradduni رده أحير من سائله

(2002:694)

Between the Knife and the Killer

The pass in front him leads back to him;
More than the traveler is the road confused;
One half of him asks of the other. Comes
An answer, more than he who asked, bemused.
Translated by Boulus and Heath-Stubbs in Jarryusi (1988:59)

In the Arabic extract (2), the poet produces a great deal of sound effects, both internally or externally. The *qafiyah* falls on the sound "هاء" and there is *saja'* in the two verses as each hemistich in each verse ends with the same sound "هاء". This very sound is also intensely inserted in the words of each verse: منه، اليه، راحله، يسأله، بعضه، رده، سائله، and it is not repeated haphazardly. It emphasizes the idea of being "تائه" "lost" and totally confused in life. There is *derivational jinas* in the words: يسأله/سائله and *jinaas mushaf* in the words: بعضه/دربه and the words: سائله/راحله.

The translators might be successful in conveying in English the intended meaning and re-creating the general atmosphere of the Arabic poem. There is something similar to *alliteration* in the bilabial sounds /p/ and /b/ that come at the beginnings of the words *pass* and *back* though there is

aspiration in the former. The repetition of the pronoun *him* in the first and the third lines also creates some internal music that emphasizes the alienation of the persona the poet talks about. The translators adopted *Re-creation strategy* by approaching the meaning as much as they could and adapting the verses to the quatrain form with the rhyme *abcb*. However, the title was not rendered adequately. The word *killer* does not match the expressive Arabic word “الذابح”. The word *killer* is emotionally neutral as it implies killing the victim without specifying the tool the killer uses. The word *butcher* may suit the context better for it collocates with the word *knife*. Below is a suggested translation of the same extracted verses where the translation tries to compensate for the sound /هاء/ when repeating lexical items that indicate confusion and embarrassment such as question-giver, replier, answer, and questioner. Besides the suffix (er) which is used as a rhyme scheme in the last four verses indicates that the person the poem talks about is alone in an empty circle where his actions go from him to back towards him for there is no recipient but himself.

Between the Knife and the Butcher

Ending his trip, he got,
But to his beginning spot.

The road stumbles more than the traveler.
He's both the question-giver and replier.

There comes an answer,
More confusing than the questioner.

(3) وردة من دم المتنبي
من تلظي لموعه كاد يعمى كاد من شهرة اسمه لا يسمى

جاء من نفسه اليها وحيدا راميا أصله غبارا ورسم
حاملا عمره بكفيه رمحا ناقشا نهجه على القلب وشما
خالعا ذاته لريح الفيافي ملحقا بالملوك والدر وصما

By Al-Baradduni (2002:965-973)

A Rose from Al-Mutanabbi's Blood

His fame stole his real name.

Alone, he rose from himself to himself
creating his own roots. The past is dust.
He carried his life in his hands like a spear.
He carved a route, his way, on hearts,
abandoned himself to the desert winds,
putting fate and kings to shame.

Translated by Der Hovanessian and

Elmusa in Altoma (1993:158)

Extract (3) describes a great figure in Arabic literature, *Al-Mutanabbi*. The translators ought to have briefed the TL audience about him to facilitate comprehending the poem, especially that the title is translated literally. If the translators did not write a footnote about the persona of the poem, no communicative value would be derived from their translation.

When examining the Arabic extract, a lot of sound devices can be figured out, namely:

- 1- The *qafiyah* (rhyme scheme) falls on the vowel sound /a/.
- 2- Except for the last line, there is *saja'* in all the lines of the extract.
- 3- There is *imperfect jinaas* in the words: (يعمى/يسمى) and (وصما/يسمى/اسمه) and *derivational jinaas* in the words: (وشما).
- 4- There are parallel structures (*Muwaḥḥanah*) in the second hemistich of the second line and the two hemistiches of the

third and the fourth lines. All these hemistiches start with the present participle form *ناقشا / خالعا/ملحقا اسم الفاعل / (راميا/حاملا)*. These parallel structures are very functional as they add a lot to the musical harmony of the poem. Semantically, they glorify the figure of the poem as they focus on the agent (doer) of the action rather than the action itself.

Concerning the form of the translated poem, it is rendered as a single stanza which has neither regular rhythm nor rhyme scheme. However, the translators succeeded to create some sound effects as follows:

- 1- There is *assonance* in many words in the poem: name/ fame, where the vowel sound /ei/ is followed by the consonant /m/, alone/rose, where the vowel sound /əu/ is followed by different consonants in these words: /n/ and /z/. In the words past/dust where the consonant cluster /st/ in both words is preceded by different vowel sounds /æ/ and /ʌ/, and the words fate/shame where the vowel sound /ei/ is followed by different consonants /t/ and /m/.
- 2- There is *alliteration* in most of the verses presented in the pronouns *his* and *himself* (his/his, himself/himself, he/his/hands, he/his) which emphasize the personality of Al-Mutanabbi, the figure of the poem. Also there is alliteration in the words life/like where they start with the lateral sound /l/ which is followed by the same vowel /ai/ then different consonants /f/ and /k/.

To evaluate the translation of extract (3), it seems that the translators adopted a *Sense-centered* strategy, i.e., *blank verse translation* along with *re-creation*. They maintained the general idea of the SL poem. However, they skipped some ideas; for instance, the two hemistiches of the first line were contracted

into single line. This may be due to the fact that they have a similar sense, yet they need to be represented, because each hemistich emphasizes the other and adds a lot to the aesthetic value of the poem. The other lines were doubled in the TL, i.e. each line in the SL poem was reproduced by two in the TL poem. On the other hand, the translators added some ideas such as: *creating his own roots* which might come as a result of the translators' interpretation of this idea in the second line.

All in all, the translators were successful to some extent. Yet they scarified many musical effects such as, rhyme, rhythm and parallelism to preserve the content of the SL poem. Below is a suggested translation of the above extract by the researchers where they tried to create some sound effects the above translation fell short of, however, they interpreted some lines and added some meanings to naturalize the rendition:

A Rose from Al-Mutanabbi's Blood

His blazing brightness was about,
Driving him with no eyesight.

His ever worldwide fame,
Has erased his real name.

None offered him supports.
Leaving behind his race a mere story.
Only through his own efforts,
he mounted the peak of glory.

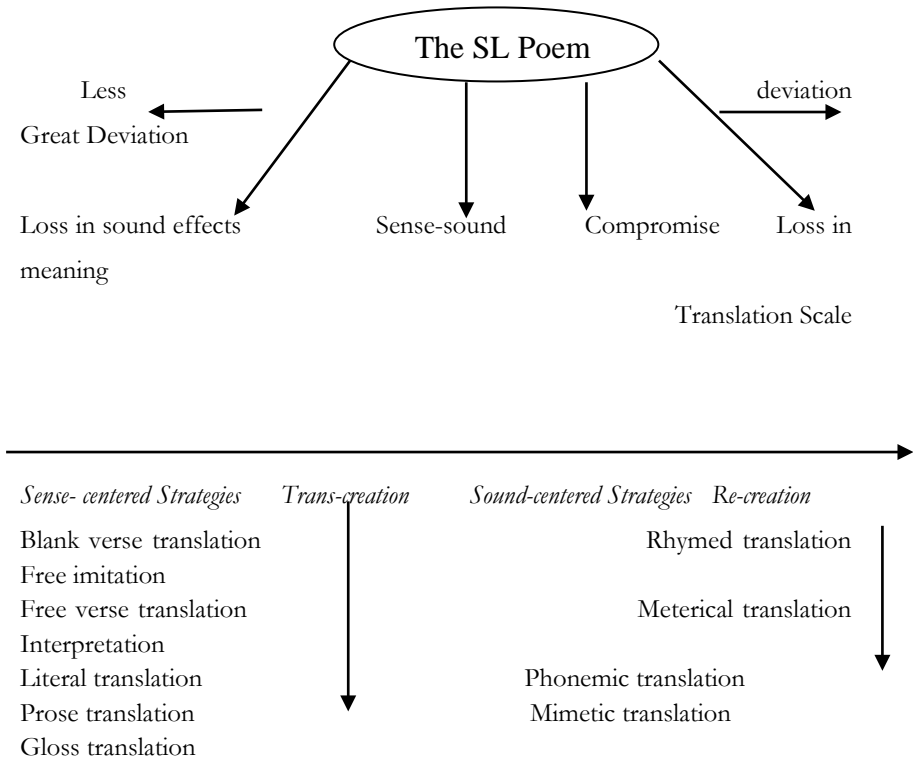
Holding his life, a spear in his hands.

Carving his route deeply in hearts.

Offering his soul to the desert's winds.

Stamping shame, on fate and kings.

Having discussed the dilemma concerning sound devices and the tension between form and content, a strategy could be suggested here to balance the tension between these two facets of the poem. This strategy could be termed *Trans-creation* where the translator should be faithful to the meaning as much as possible but never risks the musical and sound effects so as to preserve the content. There might be a slight deviation from the intended message but it is inevitable. Hence, idiomaticity should be presented in the final product of rendering the SL poem to guarantee naturalness and acceptability. In short, *literal translation* whether it is in the form of prose translation, free verse or blank verse is not applicable for translating neoclassical Arabic poetry into English. This is due to the fact that this type of poetry is charged with intensity in emotions and music. The following diagram illustrates the strategy of *Trans-creation* which comes in the middle of the translation scale. The first syllable *Trans* in this strategy indicates being faithful to the meaning since translation's ultimate purpose is to transfer meaning from one language into another. The second syllable *creation* demonstrates the fact that the translator should compensate for the sound devices of the SL poem.



***Diagram (3) Trans-creation (Strategy of Sense-sound
Compromise)***

From what has been said so far, a conclusion can be reached concerning the translation of neoclassical Arabic poetry. Definitely, it is translatable though there is an inevitable loss when transferring such poetry into English, this cannot support the fact that poetry is a sacred untouchable genre and hence untranslatable. Here, we subscribe to Bassnett (1991) who argues:

The positive imagery of translation as energy-releasing, as freeing the linguistic sign into circulation, as transplanting, as reflowering in an enabling language is a long way removed from the negativity of Frost and the pundits of untranslatability.(p.78)

To sum up, there is no clear-cut answer concerning the fact that to what extent a poem can be transplanted adequately and find a place in another language.

Conclusions and Recommendations:

In translating neoclassical poetry such as Al-Baradduni's, literal translation might fail to represent adequately the fully-fledged musical verses of Arabic poetry. Blank or free verse translation would be artificial, plain and lifeless, hence form and sound effects should be compensated for.

The dilemma concerning the tension between form and content has been investigated and the translation can be better solved by adopting a strategy of a sense-sound compromise where the translator tries as much as he can to end up with a minimum loss in meaning and compensate for the sound effects of the SL poem.

From what has been said concerning the issue of translating Al-Baradduni's poetry, the present study furnishes the following recommendations:

Theoretically speaking, since translating poetry in general is arduous, the translator of poetry might experience many obstacles during the translation process. Therefore, he should acquaint himself with translation theories concerning this issue. Likewise, he should be acquainted with various strategies of poetry translation so as to choose the ones that suit his purposes.

During conducting the present study, the researchers observed that most of the poetic works translated were from other languages into Arabic. Only recently, a good number of anthologies of Arabic poetry have been published in English translation. The researchers recommend that translating Arabic poetry, especially classical and neo-classical poetry into English for they might be the most difficult to translate, yet the most merited.

Since the present study is confined to prosodic features it encounters in rendering Al-Baradduni's poetry into English, the researchers recommend conducting other studies concerning metaphoric, emotive and other stylistic problems.

***Al-Baradduni (1929-1999)** is considered Yemen's most famous contemporary poet and literary historian. He published 12 collections of poetry and several books of criticism. Much of his poetry involves Yemeni (and Arab) social and political issues. His collections include *City of Morrow*, *From Belqees Land*, *Journey to the Green Days*, and *A Time without Quality* among others.

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