Problems in Translating English Journalistic Texts into Arabic: Examples from the Arabic Version of *Newsweek*

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1. Introduction

This paper investigates the problems encountered in the translation of English journalistic texts into Standard Arabic (henceforth SA). The analysis presented in this study clearly shows that the most common problems in journalistic translation are attributed to: (a) the inappropriate selection of the equivalent TL word or expression, (b) the inability to observe the syntactic and stylistic differences between the SL and the TL and (c) the translated text may contain violations of some TL rules.

By drawing the attention of translators to the translational problems that await them, we can immensely enhance the quality of the output text. There is another reason for our interest in the translation of journalistic texts: translation is regarded by purists "as a bigger menace to the purity of Arabic language than that of the Colloquial dialects." (Abdelfattah 1996:134); for instance, journalistic translation may pave the way for foreign-language influence on SA in "the domain of syntax, style, and lexicon" (Abdelfattah 1996:134). Thus most of the changes that occur in the style and structure of Arabic occur through the Arab journalists who are familiar with European languages, especially English and through the Arab translators who render English journalistic texts into Arabic. As Holes (1995:255) puts it,

> Today, more than ever, it is in the language of the press, Television and radio that external influences on Arabic are most obvious, and constant exposure to this ‘media MSA’ seems to be having reaching effects on the vocabulary, grammar and phraseology of the Arabic used by educated Arabs in many other contexts written or spoken.

Thus Arabic passive sentences in which the agent is explicitly expressed are said to be the result of literal translation. Khafaji (1996:27) points out
that “Modern Standard Arabic, as used in the mass media and some modern literary works, has noticeably come to tolerate such passive sentences”. Similarly, the nominal structure, especially in Arabic journalistic language, is gaining ground at the expense of the verbal structure. (cf. Abdelfattah 1996:134).

Several studies have dealt with translational problems that face Arab translators. As pointed out above, Khafaji (1996) has shown that English passive verbs pose a major problem for the English-Arabic translators. This is because s/he “would be confronted with the task of having to convert a large number of passive verbs in his English source text into other linguistic forms if [s/he] were to produce a normal Arabic text, free of translation interference.” (p. 19). Belhaaj (1997) has dealt with two other types of problems encountered by Arab students in translating English texts into Arabic or vice versa: interlingual and intralingual problems. For example, he shows that English relative clauses have different properties than their Arabic counterparts and thus constitute a real challenge to the translator. Al-Qinai (1998:284), on the other hand, discusses the problems associated with “the transliteration characters used in rendering names and proper nouns in both English and Arabic”. Abdul Rahman (1998:71) deals with the problems encountered by translators in rendering “a polysemous lexical item in the SLT [Standard Language Text] where he has to figure out its right sense as dictated by the context and give it an acceptable equivalent in TLT [Target Language Text]”. Al-Najjar (1998:90) has attempted to “explore a major translational problem: lexical translation of source language signifiers for which no receptor-language equivalents exist”. Asfour (2000) studies the problems that arise in translating English poetry into Arabic. Although all these studies tackle (English-Arabic) translational problems in various situations, none of them sheds light on the problems faced by professional translators of journalistic texts. This study aims to fill this gap.

2. Materials and Method of Research

This paper does not rely on made-up sentences (cf. Shunnaq 1998); nor does it draw from translational problems encountered by college students (cf. Belhaaj 1997) or by a single translator (cf. Asfour 2000). Rather, it focuses on the problems faced by professional translators or practitioners in their attempt to translate a journalistic text from English into Arabic.

Most of the data used in this paper have been collected over several
weeks from the *Newsweek* magazine, which weekly appears in two versions: an English version and an Arabic one. The Arabic version, which is issued in Kuwait by Daar al-Watan, is a selectively translated version of the U.S.-based English version, which appears a day earlier. The Arabic version is actually translated by the joint effort of professional translators at Daar al-Watan. Therefore, the corpus is more or less representative of the problems encountered by Arab journalistic translators.

I first read the English article in the English version and then its translation in the Arabic version. Having collected and identified the problems and pitfalls in translation, I verified my findings by showing the translated parts to some professors of Arabic language. Almost all of them found problems with the Arabic renderings of the SL texts. Some even suggested better ways for overcoming these problems. I then attempted to examine these problems with the purpose of classifying and explaining them.

In identifying translational problems, we have to pay attention to the concept of equivalence, which is an integral part of translation (cf. Belhaaj 1997:104). In the words of Farghal and Shunnaq “we cannot think of translation without taking equivalence into consideration” (1998:4). The translator may resort to three types of equivalence: formal, functional or ideational equivalence. Firstly, formal equivalence “seeks to capture the form of the SL expression” (ibid., p.5). Secondly, functional equivalence “seeks to capture the function of the SL expression independently of the image utilized by translating it into a TL expression that performs the same function” (ibid.). As Shunnaq (1998:34) puts it, “[P]roducing functional equivalence (=FE) in translating certain Arabic texts into English constitutes main problems to Arab translators”. Finally, ideational equivalence “aims to convey the communicative sense of the SL expression independently of function and form” (Farghal and Shunnaq 1998:5). It is always easier for a translator to resort to the formal equivalent of the SL words or expressions than to search for functional or ideational equivalents.

Sometimes, the translator unintentionally opts for a TL word or expression that is absolutely unrelated to the meaning of the SL word or expression; therefore, I call this phenomenon ‘wrong equivalence’. We will expound on this phenomenon in the ensuing section.
3. Wrong Equivalence

The translator may go for a word or expression believing that it is equivalent to the SL word or expression. Sometimes, s/he may miss the target by picking out the wrong word or expression.

Some problems in the TL text are attributed to words with similar phonological properties in the SL. Such problems are considered interlingual, as in the following example from the study corpus:

- White house sources say, Chiney hopes to persuade Bush to let him chair the “principals” committee, where cabinet-level secretaries hammer out options for the president (Newsweek 19 Feb. 2001, p.3)

In this instance the translator has wrongly rendered the word “principals” as (instead of the true meaning of the word (i.e. ). This problem is attributed to the confusion between the words ‘principals’ and ‘principles’, which happen to be synophones; they are similar in their phonological structure.

Sometimes the SL expression may have two TL equivalents; for example, the TL may have two adjectives with different semantic domains that can function as equivalents to one adjective in the SL: one adjective used with persons, and the other with non-persons. Consider the following example:

- Yasser el-Sirri, a slight wiry man with a full beard, was genial and relaxed (Newsweek 19 Feb. 2001, p.1)

The word ‘genial’ in English is defined as “having cheerful or friendly character or manner” (Longman Dictionary of Contemporary English (henceforth LDCE)). As the definition indicates, this word can be used to
modify persons and non-persons, as in ‘a genial man’, ‘a genial manner’, and ‘a genial weather’. But the Arabic word بديع can only be used with non-persons; كن ولدود can be used as in ....... Furthermore, the word ‘relaxed’ is mistranslated as بيدود، which sounds awkward; it should be rendered as ....... Thus all these interlingual problems indicate that an inappropriate word of the TL is selected as a formal equivalent to the SL counterpart.

In some contexts the translator may fail to grab the semantic difference between two words or expressions in the TL. Consider the following example from the study corpus:

- Quintin Oliver, who headed the “Yes” campaign to ratify the 1998 Good Friday Agreement, dismisses the attacks as the desperate acts of dissident factions intent on blowing up the peace. (Newsweek 26 Feb. 2001, p3)

The word ‘ratify’ which means “to make (an agreement, a treaty, etc.) officially valid by signing it” (Oxford Advanced Learner’s Dictionary (henceforth OALD)) is improperly translated as إسـرایل, which refers to an agreement that has not been ratified. The SL word ‘ratify’ should be rendered as تصدیق إفرار, which refers to ‘ratified agreements or treaties’.

In other contexts the translator may fail to grasp the difference between two semantically similar words in the SL: cf.

- Under the glass on Freeh’s desktop, along with snapshots of his wife and six kids, is a photo of the late Cardinal John O’Connor. (Newsweek 5 Mar. 2001, p.41).

Note that in the above example the translator has been intrigued by the
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semantic similarity between ‘late’ and ‘former’ but s/he does not care to examine the points of difference between the two words; for example, there is a difference between ‘a former president’ and ‘a late president’. Thus the expression ‘late Cardinal’ should not be rendered as الكَرَّدِينَال الراحل as in the above translation. Rather, it ought to be

... for Cardinal O’Connor has recently died.

Some translational problems may be triggered by SL words or expressions as used in a particular context. The SL word or expression may be polysemous, viz., with several meanings. If the translator does not carefully examine the context and figure out the right sense, s/he is more likely to understand the SL word/expression differently, and hence, fail to employ the right TL equivalent. Such problems are characterized as interlingual. The following examples from the study corpus illustrate the type of problem at hand:

1. Those who have worked closest with Powell do not see him as a strategic thinker, and while a gifted motivator, he has made misjudgments that could have ruined other, less-celebrated careers. (Newsweek 5 Mar. 2001, p.15).

- أولئك الذين عملوا عن قرب شديد مع بول لا يعترضون مفكرًا استراتيجيًا. وعلى الرغم من موهبته في حفر الآخرين، فإنه مسؤول عن حالات من سوء التقدير لعلها كانت تخطئ سيرة أشخاص آخرين أقل شهرة منه. (تقرير من لман 6 مارس 2001م، ص.12).

The translator, being inattentive to the semantic difference between SL and TL words or expressions, has rendered the word ‘careers’ as ..... سورة. . According to the OALD, the SL word ‘career’ has several meanings: meanings: (1) profession or occupation with opportunities of promotion, (2) progress through life, and (3) quick or violent movement. In his attempt to render this word into Arabic, the translator has opted for the second, rather than the first, meaning. If s/he had more carefully examined the context in which the word is nested, s/he would have rendered it as ..... وظائف. Notice further that the translator, prompted by the word ‘other’, has mistranslated the entire expression: the meaning of the SL text does not refer to other people with less important careers but refers to ‘other less-celebrated careers’ which should be rendered as ..... مهن أو وظائف ذات أهمية أقل.
2. The greatest immediate threat to American physical security remains that of Russia’s “loose nukes”. (Newsweek 5 Mar. 2001, p.4)

The word ‘loose’ has several meanings in English: “1 freed from control 2 not firmly fixed 3 not fastened together 4 not organized strictly 5 (a) physically slack; not tense (b) not tight 6 not compact or dense” (OALD).

It seems that the translator has ignored all these meanings except the last one, which motivated him/her to render the word as ....... This meaning is not compatible with the context. It should better be rendered as .......

Occasionally, the translator may fail to check the denotative meaning(s) of the SL word or expression in a dictionary. This would lead him/her to select a TL word or expression whose meaning is unrelated to the meaning(s) of the SL word or expression. Below are some representative examples extracted from the study corpus:

1. He seems warm, easygoing, free of rancor. (Newsweek, 5 Mar. 2001, p.16)

In the above example the translator has rendered the word ‘easygoing’, whose dictionary definition is “relaxed in manner; placid and tolerant” (OALD) or “not easily upset or worried” (LDCE), as ............ , which is far from the intended meaning. The Arabic equivalent of this word is ............

2. Why is Powell so admired? His military record, while admirable, hardly accounts for the scope of his appeal. (Newsweek 5 Mar. 2001, p.19)

The expression ‘accounts for’ has several denotative meanings: (a) explain the cause of something; (b) destroy something or kill someone; (c) to make up a particular amount or part of something (OALD). This
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phrasal verb is rendered as بتكلفـا in the above TL text. None of the bilingual dictionaries (e.g. Al-Mawrid, and Al-Mughni Al-Kabir) has considered بتكلفـا as equivalent to the SL expression 'account for'. The context requires that this phrasal verb be translated as ... . In addition, the word إعجاب in this rendering is mentioned twice: The first is used as a formal equivalent of the word ‘admirable’; the second appears as a wrong equivalent of the word ‘appeal’ which should be rendered as ... .

3. Her husband, sitting a few feet from the witness stand, then leapt on the cop and pummeled him in the back. (Newsweek -5 Mar. 2001, p.34)

The word ‘pummeled’, which means “hit or strike repeatedly with the fists” (OALD), is inappropriately translated as .... .

Some examples in the study corpus indicate that the translator may sometimes fail to recognize the actual function of a word in the SL text. For example, a word may function as an adjective modifying a noun in the SL text but the translator may treat it as if it were an adverb modifying a verb. The following example from the study corpus is self-evident:

- While ordinary Albanians enthusiastically buy and sell entire arsenals, (Arben) Rakipi (the Prosecutor General) is a lonely representative of the rule of law. (Newsweek 26 Mar. 2001, p.22)

Note that the translator has rendered the word ‘ordinary’, which modifies the noun ‘Albanians’ in the SL text, as .... , which is a manner adverb modifying the verb (يشترى) in the TL text. This rendering has in fact distorted the meaning indicated in the SL; it ought to be ....... في الوقت الذي يشترى في الألبان العاديين أو البسطاء. Note also that a comparison
between the above texts reveals that the translator has ignored the word ‘sell’. s/he has not rendered it into Arabic.

4. Types of Equivalence

Of the three types of equivalence (i.e. formal, functional, and ideational), the translator(s) of the Newsweek articles heavily rely on formal equivalence. The analysis and the comparison of the SL texts and TL texts clearly show that the translator(s) has/have adopted the literal translation approach, which explains the overuse of formal equivalence as a major strategy in translation. Below is a brief discussion of the three types of equivalence. Examples from the study corpus will be cited to support the discussion. Each example will be followed by brief comments.

4.1 Formal equivalence

A translator may select a formal equivalent of the SL word or expression. This equivalent word or expression may turn out to be inadequate in the TL text such that the translation lacks naturalness. Thus most of the problems prompted by formal equivalence are necessarily interlingual in nature. The nine examples that follow explicate the issue at hand:

1. The greatest immediate threat to American physical security remains that of Russia’s “loose nukes”. (Newsweek 5 Mar. 2001, p.4)

In the TL text, the formal equivalent of the phrase “American physical security” is employed, namely. ... which sounds unnatural in this context. A functional equivalent of this word would sound more natural: ... 

2. By the end of the month, US Secretary of State Colin Powell will be traveling all through the Middle East, with stops scheduled in Kuwait, Israel, Egypt, Jordan and Saudi Arabia. (Newsweek 19 Feb. 2001, P.19)
Here literal translation is obviously at work. The translator is keen to translate all words in the SL text, even those words that do not help the meaning in the TL. Thus s/he should have left the word ‘scheduled’ untranslated since the meaning of this word can be inferred: there are no official tours without prior arrangements. Also the word ‘stops’ has been literally translated as (a formal equivalent of ‘stops’) which could be replaced by a functional equivalence.

3. He insisted that all his work in Britain disseminating information from various militant Islamist groups is transparent. (Newsweek 19 Feb. 2001, P. 20)

This is an awkward translation: the phrase ‘all his work’ is literally translated as: جمع عمله; it should have been rendered as دوره, which is a functional equivalent of the SL phrase. The latter part of the subordinate clause should be.

4. Smooth, genial and efficient, he soon learned the fundamental rule of bureaucratic infighting: information is power. (Newsweek, 5 Mar. 2001, p.16.)

The word ‘infighting’ is defined (in LDCE) as “unfriendly competition and disagreement between members of the same group or organization”. OALD, however, provides two meanings for this word: "1 (in boxing) fighting in which the opponents are very close to or holding on to each other. 2 fierce competition between rivals (e.g. involving intrigue, betrayal etc.).” The translator must have had the first meaning of the word (as in OALD) in mind when s/he rendered it as اقتتال in the TL text, which can be considered as a formal equivalent of the SL word. A functional equivalent is far more revealing in this context which focuses on administrative matters.
5. He was willing to contemplate the use of American force to drive out the Iraqi strongman. (Newsweek 5 Mar. 2001, p.16)

The word *strongman* is defined in the *American Heritage Dictionary of the English Language (AHDEL)* as “1. A powerful, influential political figure who exercises leadership and control by force. 2. One who performs feats of strength, as at a circus.”. The SL text indicates that the word ‘strongman’ is a euphemism for dictator. The translator has given a formal Arabic equivalent of this term, that is, *الرجل القوى*, which lacks the connotative nuances of the original term in the SL. A functional equivalent might have been more appropriate: الدكتور ...

6. The reason for Powell’s hurried trip is that international sanctions against Iraq are crumbling. (Newsweek 5 Mar. 2001, p.14)

The word *hurried* is a formal equivalent of the SL word ‘hurried’. But this word is obsolete for it is quite often used in Colloquial Arabic. A better formal equivalent can be used: المسرعة ...

7. When their father, an Army officer, was dying of gangrene contracted from frostbite, he sent them to stay with an uncle. But the uncle had hardly enough food to feed his own family, and ultimately, he put them on a train to the Chinese border, telling them they had a better chance of surviving there. (Newsweek 5 Mar. 2001, p.31)

The word ‘hardly’ in ‘had hardly’ is literally translated as *بصعوبة*، which has contributed to the distortion of meaning in the TL text ....... يملك
Thus a formal Arabic equivalent of this word is injurious to the meaning. A functional equivalent may prove to be more effective ....

8. President Vladimir Putin, himself a former colonel in the now defunct KGB, has revived the fortunes of Russian intelligence agencies. (Newsweek 5 Mar. 2001, p.46)

Here the translator, under the pressure of formal equivalence, has rendered the word 'fortunes' as حظوظ، which is weird in this text. A functional equivalent of this term can adequately improve the situation. This term is آمال.

9. Her husband, sitting a few feet from the witness stand, then leapt on the cop and pummeled him in the back. (Newsweek 5 Mar. 2001, p.34)

Note that the translator has ignored the formal equivalent of the term 'feet'. Instead s/he used a functional equivalent which does not reflect the exact meaning of the SL expression: s/he has treated 'feet' and 'rows' as synonyms, which they are not. The husband could have been sitting in the front row which was a few feet from the witness stand. The translator, by rendering the word 'feet' as صفوف has actually distorted the meaning.

Dependence on formal equivalence as a strategy in the translation of SL collocations may result in unnatural TL sentences and expressions. According to Farghal and Shunnaq (1998:123), "[t]he literal translation of some English collocations into Arabic or vice versa may produce unnatural and sometimes comic effects". Consider the following eight instances that occurred in the study corpus:

1. It all started with a few pigs on a British farm in Essex. But by last week outbreaks of foot-and-mouth disease had been reported as far afield as Argentina, the United Arab Emirates and Saudi Arabia (not to mention
The translator has employed the formal equivalent of the expression *not to mention*, which hardly reflects the intended meaning: it gives the impression that France is not among the countries that have been hit by the epidemic disease. What is required here is a functional equivalent such as…….

2. But couldn't Mori at least have handled the spin a bit better than by asking reporters whether they expected him to carry a TV set to the golf course to stay in touch? His leadership may be about to take its final plunge. (Newsweek 26 Feb. 2001, p.3)

The word 'plunge' by itself is defined as “*downward movement or dive or jump into water*” (LDCE). But the idiomatic expression *take the plunge* means in English “*take a bold decisive step*” (OALD) or “*decide finally to do something*” (LDCE). Thus a formal Arabic equivalent of this expression is not appropriate: the phrase *take its final plunge* has been literally translated as ….

3. The Bush administration didn't want to plunge in, but the region has become dangerously destabilized. (Newsweek 5 Mar. 2001, p.17)

The SL verb 'plunge' is defined in the *LDCE* as “*to move, fall, or be thrown suddenly forwards or downwards*”. Thus the translator, keeping this meaning in mind, has rendered it as ….
pinpoint the meaning of the phrasal verb ‘plunge in’, which is defined as “to start talking, doing sth etc. quickly and confidently, without worrying” (LDCE). This rendering is a further example of formal equivalence. But the TL expression does not collocate with the word المشكلة. A better functional Arabic equivalent to be used in this text is... الخوض في...

4. Barak lost because the situation is impossible. We reached the stage where we could virtually touch peace and at the same time a Jew was being murdered every day. Yael Dayan, a Labor Party lawmaker. (Newsweek 19 Feb. 2001, p.11)

- لقد خسر باراك لأن الوضع مستحيل. لقد بلغنا مرحلة كان بوسعنا تحقيق أن ننسى السلام إلا أنه في الوقت نفسه كان يتم قتل يهودي يوميا. ياييل ديان، مشرعة من أعضاء حزب العمل. (تينوزويك 20 فبراير 2001م، ص10)

Here a multi-word unit is literally translated: the unit ‘touch peace’ is rendered as ... يلمس السلام. Although this rendering faithfully observes the image presented by the SL expression, it does not effectively fit into the TL text; the functional equivalent of this expression in Arabic is ...... حقق السلام.

5. The secretary of State is an American hero. But a hard look at his vietnam-haunted past reveals many misjudgments in a long career. (Newsweek 5 Mar. 2001, p.14)

- وزير الخارجية بطل أمريكي. غير أن نظرة صارمة على الماضي الحائض بالشياح فيتنام تكشف عن كثير من حالات سوء التقدير في سيرته الطويلة. (تينوزويك 6 مارس 2001م، ص11)

The phrase ‘hard look’ is rendered as نظرة صارمة، which is inappropriate in this context. This rendering might be acceptable in a different context such as... فلما رفضت نظر إليها نظرة صارمة. But the above context requires that this phrase be rendered as...... نظرة مدفقة. It is axiomatic that the pitfall is prompted by the fact that the translator did not take the meaning of the words in context. Similarly, the phrase ‘long career’ refers to the period during which the hero worked for the army and it does not refer to his whole life span. The formal equivalence supplied by the translator
seems to be inappropriate in this context. A more appropriate phrase that conveys the intended meaning is ...

As Powell himself has acknowledged, “There is no fixed set of rules for the use of military force. To set one up is dangerous”. (Newsweek 5 Mar. 2001, p.16).

The translator here has used the formal equivalent of the phrase ‘fixed set of rules’ (قواعد ثابتة من القواعد), which has produced an unnatural translation. It would have been more effective to resort to functional equivalence...

In the past five years Britain's farmers have suffered the wrath of the elements (biblical foods last autumn), a herd of mad cows (BSE) and, now, an outbreak of hoof-and-mouth disease. (Newsweek 5 Mar. 2001, p. 5)

The phrase ‘a herd of mad cows’ is rendered as ... This rendering is inappropriate for it ignores the intended meaning of the SL expression. Note that the word ‘herd’ collocates with animals such as cows, elephants but it does not collocate with diseases. Thus the translation ought to be something like ...

The phrase ‘hoof-and-mouth disease’ is rendered as .... This should be so in view of the fact that the less complex word precedes the more complex one in conjoined Arabic
8. The hearings did not come easily. Prime Minister Ehud Barak initially praised the performance of the police in northern Israel and resisted calls for an official inquiry. (Newsweek 5 Mar. 2001, p.34)

The phrase ‘resisted calls’ has been given a literal meaning, namely ‘مضرع الدعوات’. The word 'مضرع' cannot collocate with ‘دعوت’ in the TL text. This explains the inappropriateness of the translation. A functional equivalence rather than a formal equivalence should be selected.

4.2 Functional equivalence

The data collected shows that the translator does not depend on functional equivalence as much as s/he depends on formal equivalence. Even in those situations where the functional equivalent of the SL expression is used, the expression employed turns out to be less adequate than other possible functional equivalents. The following is a representative example:

- Powel and Bush seek a strong U.S.-European alliance. But that will take a lot of diplomatic hand-holding (Newsweek 5 Mar. 2001, p.17)

The compound word ‘hand-holding’ is defined in the AHDEL as “Strong personal support and reassurance, especially that given to alleviate tension and anxiety”. The TL word ‘راعية’ seems to be a functional equivalent of the this word but there is perhaps a more appropriate functional equivalent of the SL word: الدعم أو المساندة.

4.3 Ideational equivalence

Since the translator(s) of the SL texts under discussion...
generally resorted to literal translation, ideational equivalence was utilized in just in few cases. The following is an example:

- In his memoir, Powell recalled that he told Albright that GI’s were “not toy soldiers to be moved around on some sort of global game board.” (Newsweek 5 Mar. 2001, 17)

Here the translator has opted for an ideational equivalence where s/he should have used a formal equivalent. Note that the word ‘memoir’ refers to “written record (esp important) usu based on personal knowledge” (OALD) or to “[a]n account of the personal experiences of an author” (AHDEL); therefore, it should have been rendered as مذكراته.

5. Managing in Translation

According to Farghal and Shunnaq (1998:118) “journalistic texts may either opt for monitoring the situation (saying what is happening) or else managing it (saying what fits their wishes about what should happen)”. Monitoring occurs if the translator does not interfere by evaluating the material s/he is translating or if s/he is involved and biased in his or her translation. Managing can also be defined as those cases where the translator opts to leave out some material in the text without translation, especially, if such material is against his or her religious, cultural or ideological beliefs.

In journalistic materials, “a news editor or translator can manage through certain strategies” (Farghal and Shunnaq 1998:119). A careful examination of the SL and TL texts under discussion shows that translators tend to use monitoring as a major strategy. But they resort to managing as an alternative strategy in a few contexts: cf.

1. Some police states, like Egypt, have ruthlessly efficient counter operations. (Newsweek 19 Feb. 2001, p.20)
Here the translator is not being faithful to the SL text. S/he has managed the text by ignoring certain items: e.g. the noun ‘police’ and the parenthetical expression, (‘like Egypt’). It seems that the translator has intentionally left out the evaluative term (‘police’), which has unfavorable connotations. Also, he/she does not want to associate Egypt with such states.

2. The Iraqi leader’s surging popularity across the Arab world, and his clear determination to rebuild Iraq’s military strength, are uncomfortable reminders that victory in Desert Storm, while glorious, was hardly final. On the contrary: the war’s outcome looks messier than ever. (Newsweek 5-2001, p.14)

The word ‘leader’ could be rendered as قائد, which is a formal equivalent in this context. However, the translator has opted for زعيم which is an emotive word; it carries connotations that are not present in the more neutral word ... قائد. The term زعيم may indicate that the man is popular and beloved among his people. Thus the translator seems to be managing in his or her translation.

6. Asyndetic Linkage

An examination of the study corpus indicates that the translator(s) of the study corpus has/have rarely used a coordinating conjunction to tie a new paragraph to a preceding one. Nor has/have he/they employed it to link sentences within the same paragraph. In the following extracts, the Arab translator has asyndetically rendered the SL sentences into Arabic, that is, without using coordinating particles such as wa. The following two examples are self-explanatory:

1. Powell and Bush seek a strong U.S.-European alliance. But that will take
a lot of diplomatic hand-holding. Some Europeans want an autonomous defense force; the administration and congress say that plan threatens NATO. Along with the Russians, many Europeans oppose national-missile defense; the Bush administration is gung-ho for it. (Newsweek 5 Mar. 2001, p.17)

This text is handled via the literal translation approach. If we examine the SL text, we note that there is no wa-like particle (except for but in the second sentence) to link the English sentences. This property of English is faithfully observed in the Arabic rendering: Arabic sentences are not linked by any coordinating conjunction. The translator ought to have used a coordinating particle such as wa and fa.

2. His job, he said, was to revive a “rudderless, drifting, demoralized” National Security Council. (Newsweek, 5 Mar. 2001, p.16)

Note that the expression ‘he said’ appears after the NP ‘his job’. In the TL text this expression appears at the beginning of the sentence. The adjectives in the SL text are asyndetically linked. In the TL text, only the last unit is preceded by the coordinating conjunction (wa) but note that the coordinates in the Arabic text are not all adjectives. The first unit is a prepositional phrase, the second is an adjective, and the third is a prepositional phrase. The coordination of syntactically different words has made the sentence sound unnatural.

7. Grammatical Problems

The grammatical problems that arise in the translation of English texts into Arabic include verb agreement, adjective agreement, and superfluous prepositions, and constituent order. All of the grammatical problems identified in the corpus are intralingual: they are attributed to the target language (i.e. Arabic). Below is a brief discussion of these error-types that occurred in the data.
7.1 Verb Agreement

Consider the following example from the study corpus:

- “It's a lot like Kournikova at a Grand Slam tournament: she arrives with great fanfare, attracts lots of attention, then does nothing.” Wired
  Newswriter Michelle Lindley. (Newsweek 26 Feb. 2001, p.11)

In this translation, ‘Kournikova’ is treated as a male person: the verbs do not have the gender morpheme -ت; the verb تفعل does not have the prefix تا- which indicates feminine gender. These problems are not attributed to the SL for the subject pronoun ‘she’ in the source text already indicates that ‘Kournikova’ is a female person. Thus these are cases of intralingual errors.

7.2 Adjective Agreement

Unlike English, Arabic requires the adjective to agree in number and gender with the sentence element it modifies. If there is no agreement between these elements, the sentence is ungrammatical, as in the following example that occurred in the study corpus:

- Massive stockpiles of enriched uranium and plutonium—the critical ingredient in a nuclear weapon—are literally lying around in poorly guarded facilities. (Newsweek 5 Mar. 2001, p.4)

The word مرمي is quite inappropriate as an adjective; the TL sentence is ungrammatical because the agreement rule is not observed, viz., the predicative adjective مرمي which is singular and masculine, does not agree in number and gender with the modified element مجموعات.
is plural and feminine. A more appropriate word is ....

7.3 Superfluous Prepositions

The sentences of the TL text sound unnatural if a preposition is superfluously inserted: cf.

- I promised them I would try. I spent many sleepless nights wondering if I was doing the right thing. (Newsweek 5 Mar. 2001, p.31)

- لقد وعدنا عدنا بأنني سأحاول. لقد قضيت العديد من الليالي من دون نوم أتسائل عما إذا كنت أقوم بالعمل الصحيح. (نوروز 6 مارس 2001، ص 31)

The expression من دون نوم has rendered the TL sentence ungrammatical. This is due to the preposition مــــــ، which is redundant in the TL text. Thus, one way to fix this problem is to render the adjective 'sleepless' as بلا نوم.

7.4 Word Order

Any translator who does not take the structural differences between English and Arabic produces nothing but unnatural and odd texts. Below are some illustrative examples:

1. While ordinary Albanians enthusiastically buy and sell entire arsenals, Rakipi is a lonely representative of the rule of law. (Newsweek 26 Mar 2001, p.22)

- في الوقت الذي يشتري فيه الألمان بشكل عادى ويكيل حام كـ كل أنواع الأسلحة، يعتبر (أوين) راكي (المدعي العام) الممثل الوحيد لسلطة القانون. (نوروز 27 مارس 2001، ص 16)

The above translation violates the structure of Arabic by placing the manner adverbs (بشكل عادى ويكيل حام) between the subject and the direct object. As stated by Khalil (1999:240) "in Arabic such adverbs occur finally". Thus the first SL clause must be rendered as ............
2. Behind the exaggerated fears about China lies an error that persists in our world view. (Newsweek 5 Mar. 2001, p.4)

Note how unnatural this translation is: the literal rendering of the SL sentence is quite inappropriate here. This text should be rendered as:

3. Inside the crowded hearing room at the Supreme Court in Jerusalem, emotions were stretched taut. (Newsweek 5 Mar. 2001, p.34)

A comparison of SL and TL texts shows that the adverbial ‘inside the crowded hearing room at the Supreme Court in Jerusalem’ appears at the beginning of the sentence. Although this structure is appropriate in English, it is frowned upon in Arabic: the rhythmic principle is violated in such a way that the heavier element comes first instead of coming later in the sentence. Thus the output is the result of literal translation. Now, compare this translation with the following:

4. Under the glass on Freeh’s desktop, along with snapshots of his wife and six kids, is a photo of the late Cardinal John O’Connor. (Newsweek 5 Mar. 2001, p.41)

The principle of information organization, which determines word order in Arabic, is not observed in this translation. Literal translation is at work here since identical units occupy the same position in both texts: SL and TL; for example, an adverbial unit in the SL text ‘under the glass on Freeh’s desktop’ is carefully placed in the initial position in the two texts. Similarly, the main clause is relegated to the final position in both
texts. The situation can be improved upon if we reverse the position of these units in the TL text in such a way that the new information is placed at the end of the sentence whereas the old or knwn information is put at the beginning of the sentence: Cf.

- وتوجد صورة للكاردينال الراحل جون أوكوكر إين جانب صورة فتوتغرافية لزوجته وأبنائه السنة تحت لوقحة زجاجية موضوعة على مكتب فريه.

5. Now, in a major power grab, White house sources say, Chinon hopes to persuade Bush to let him chair the “principals” committee, where cabinet level secretaries hammer out options for the president. (Newsweek 19 Feb. 2001, p.3)

The translation, being literal, is distorted is almost unintelligible: the translator here observes the order of the units as they appear in the SL; for example, the source sentence begins with an adverb ‘now’ followed by the prepositional phrase ‘in a major power grab’. The main clause follows this prepositional phrase. This order is preserved in the translation, which results in a rather odd sentence One way to deal with this problem would be to render the SL text as follows:

- تقول مصادر البيت الأبيض إن تشني يأمل في إحكام قبضة على السلطة من خلال إقامة الرئيس بوش للسماح له....

6. Last week’s airstrike on Iraq did more than infuriate the enemy; they angered friends who were not consulted, including Egypt, Jordan and NATO ally Turkey. (Newsweek 26 Feb. 2001, p. 3)

The phrase which is the result of literal translation is odd; it should be... This is because the constituent is the ‘known’ entity, which should precede the expression that describes what is informationally ‘new’. 
7. Those of us who had hoped that Turkey was within months of seeing an end to its decades-old scourge of runaway inflation are bitterly disappointed. (Newsweek 5 Mar. 2001, p.22)

The use of literal translation has made the translator inattentive to the principle of information organization such that the output text is almost unintelligible. A better way to translate the above text is to use ideational equivalence:

8. Conclusion

Of the three types of equivalence, the Arab translators of English journalistic texts (i.e. Newsweek) have heavily relied on formal equivalence in rendering single as well as multi-word units into Arabic. Little use, however, has been made of functional and ideational equivalence. The overuse of the strategy of formal equivalence in English-Arabic translation has given rise to a multitude of lexical, syntactic, collocational and idiomatic problems in the TL text. Literal translation has also given rise to problems related to cohesion.

Notes

1. In the words of Newmark 1988 (cited in Belhaaj 1997:136), literal translation is considered “legitimate and highly operative procedure in translation practices”. This statement is, however, effective if the two languages involved in the translation process are semantically and syntactically similar. Otherwise, this approach can produce unacceptable results.

2. The term ‘journalistic text’, as used in this paper, refers to “the writing of news reports and editorials” (Abdelfattah 1996:129)

3. Farghal and Naji (2000:55) make a distinction between translational mistakes and translational miscues. Translation mistakes “result from conscious decision-making while the translator is not aware of the fact that s/he is committing a mistake”. In contrast, translational miscues “are due to an accidental and/or
subconscious phenomenon that involves minimal decision-making while the translator is not aware of the fact that s/he committing a miscue”.

4. Shunnaq (1998) discusses the problems that translators face in rendering Arabic texts into English. Such problems come in different types: lexical, syntactic, textual, cultural, etc. However, his study is not based on an authentic corpus.

5. As Belhaaj (1997:104) states, "determining the nature, possibilities, and limitations of such equivalence is, to a great extent, defining translation itself".

6. Abu Risha (1999:90) states that the word (genial) can be rendered as ماصب or إطلاق or ملام. It can also be rendered as . This type of problem, which involves “incorrect semantic association” is considered (cf. Belhaaj 1997:124) the third most recurring lexical error in the performance of the translator students he studied.

7. The expression (to ratify a treaty) is rendered as . (Abu Risha 1999:11)

8. I would like to thank professor Omar Saber Abdel-Galil, the dean of Faculty of Arts at Aswan, for suggesting this word to me.

9. Even in Cairene Egyptian Colloquial Arabic (cf. Gary and Gamal-Eldin (1982:29), the manner adverb follows the direct object but precedes the time/location

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