



Translation Strategies for Culture- Bound Expression in The Arabic Novel of Cities of Salt

Assistant Lecurer Omar Ali SALEH

College of Science, University of Tikrit

omar.saleh122@tu.edu.iq

Received Dec 10 2025

Revised Dec 11 2025

Accepted Dec 11 2025

Online Jun 1 2026

ABSTRACT

This study examines the strategies employed in rendering culture-bound expressions in in Abdulrahman Munif's novel *Cities of Salt* (1984) as translated into English by Peter Theroux (1987). Culture- bound expressions, which includes reference to Arabic social practices, tradition, religion and history, poses a great challenge to the translator due the absence of exact equivalent between the two languages. Drawing upon theoretical model of Pedersen's strategies of translation (2005), The study adopts a qualitative and descriptive approach. The study hypothesizes that Theroux employs a combination of TL and SL oriented strategies. To achieve this, twenty excerpts which contain a heavy cultural loaded expressions were selected from the ST along with English translation. They were analyzed to identify the strategies used in rendering cultural loaded expression. The study comes to conclusion that translating culture-bound expressions in *Cities of Salt* is problematic due to cultural gap between Arabic and English language. The translator's knowledge of the SL and TL culture is a must. Insufficient knowledge of the source-language culture leads to a loss of cultural specificity in the target language, thereby resulting in deficiencies in the translation. The study highlights the complexity of translating these expressions and the balance a translation should maintain between persevering the cultural identity of the SL and producing accessible and natural TL text.

Keywords: Translation strategies, literary translation, culture-bound expressions, Pedersen's Model, *Cities of Salt*, Abdulrahman Munif

دراسة في استراتيجيات ترجمة التعبيرات الثقافية في رواية مدن الملح

م.م عمر علي صالح
كلية العلوم، جامعة تكريت

الملخص عربي

تتناول هذه الدراسة الاستراتيجيات المتبعة في نقل التعبيرات المرتبطة بالثقافة في رواية عبد الرحمن منيف *مدن الملح* (1984) كما ترجمها إلى الإنجليزية بيتر ثيرو (1987). إن التعبيرات المرتبطة بالثقافة، والتي تشمل الإشارة إلى الممارسات الاجتماعية والتقاليد والدين والتاريخ العربي، تشكل تحدياً كبيراً للمترجم نظراً لغياب المكافئ الدقيق بين اللغتين. واستناداً إلى النموذج النظري لاستراتيجيات الترجمة عند بيدرسن (2005)، تعتمد الدراسة منهجاً وصفيًا وكيفيًا. وتفترض الدراسة أن ثيرو يوظف مزيجاً من الاستراتيجيات الموجهة نحو لغة المصدر (SL) ولغة الهدف (TL). ولتحقيق ذلك، تم اختيار عشرين مقطعاً تحتوي على تعابير ثقافية محملة من النص الأصلي مع ترجماتها الإنجليزية، ثم جرى تحليلها لتحديد الاستراتيجيات المستخدمة في نقل هذه التعبيرات. وتخلص الدراسة إلى أن ترجمة التعبيرات المرتبطة بالثقافة في *مدن الملح* تُعد إشكالية بسبب الفجوة الثقافية بين العربية والإنجليزية. وتؤكد أن إلمام المترجم بثقافة كل من اللغة المصدر واللغة الهدف أمر لا بد منه، إذ إن ضعف المعرفة بثقافة اللغة المصدر يؤدي إلى فقدان الخصوصية الثقافية في اللغة الهدف، مما يترتب عليه أوجه قصور في الترجمة.

الكلمات المفتاحية: استراتيجيات الترجمة، الترجمة الأدبية، التعبيرات الثقافية، أنموذج بيدرسن، مدن الملح، عبد الرحمن منيف



1. Introduction

Translation is often described as a bridge between cultures, enabling people from distant parts of the world to connect through language. In this context, language serves as the most essential element of global cultures, a versatile means of communication, transfer, and translation between individuals. It is thus a medium that transports people beyond their limited cultural and socio-political contexts. Translating a literary work has more than a communicative aim because form is as important as the content. The form sometime becomes more important as in poetry and drama.

Literary texts frequently utilize symbolic expressions that draw on cultural references, often related to religious, historical, or social aspects of human life. When engaging with literary pieces, it appears that expressions are connected to the originating culture. A dilemma emerges in rendering those "culture-specific expressions." Translating these expressions into a foreign language is a challenging task for translators. Yet it gets harder when both languages are linguistically and culturally different from each other.

While literature acts as a portal that presents a country's culture and existence to the global audience, Arabians literature plays an important role in reflecting their life. Among literature pioneers is Abdelrahman Munif who is one of the most influential modern Arab novelists and his five-volume saga "Cities of Salt" is considered a landmark in modern Arabic literature. It is saturated with references to Arab and Bedouin traditions, Islamic religious expressions and local custom. It includes idioms, proverbs, and culturally embedded metaphors that pose challenges for translation and thus provide a fertile ground for analyzing translation strategies.

2. The scope of the study

The study is limited to analyzing the strategies used in translating culture-specific expressions from Abdelrahman Munif novel "cities of salts" as translated by Peter Theroux. Since the novel is of five parts, the study will be confined to "Al-teeh" part. The focus of the study will be on expressions that are deeply rooted in Arab culture, religion, and social life, including idioms, proverbs, religious references, tribal customs, and metaphor.

3. Research Questions

The research questions of this study are:

- 1- Does the translator of the novel adopt a TT-oriented strategies or ST oriented ones?
- 2- What strategies does the translator opts for when rendering CBE into English?

4. Culture and Translation

The anthropologist Geertz (1973,89) defines culture as "a historically transmitted pattern of meanings embodied in symbols, a system of inherited expressed in symbolic forms by the meaning of which men can communicate, perpetuate, and develop their knowledge about and attitude towards life". Newmark (1988, 94) defines culture as "the way of life and its manifestations that are peculiar to a community that uses a particular language as its means of expression".

After defining culture, which is variously defined and conceived, a brief translation definition is needed to understand the relationship between translation and culture. To begin with, Catford (1965,20) views translation

as “the replacement of textual material in one language (SL) by an equivalent textual material in another language (TL)”. Furthermore Newmark (1988,5) adds that translation “ is rendering the meaning of a text into another language in the way that the author intended the text.”. In addition, translation, earlier, is characterized by its emphasis on linguistic elements with an attempt on the translator to bring in a translation that is close in terms of form and content. However, translators realize that any text and/or works cannot be translated in isolation from its culture. Pym (2004,1) defines it as “a cross-cultural communication. Translation is not merely the act of conveying a message from one language to another; it is, in fact, a form of problem-solving where the translator navigates between different cultures. Therefore, literary translation, in general and our case study, is no exception.

5. Culture-bound expressions

Newmark (1988,96) says that culture- bound expressions comprise material, social, and ecological cultures. They include political, religious, social, artistic, gestural, and behavioral norms. Moreover, cultural expressions can be found in proverbs, collocations, phrasal verbs, and figures of speech such as metaphors. In a narrow sense, Franco Aixelá (1996,58) defines Culture bound expressions as “those textually actualized items whose function and connotations in a source text (ST) involve a translation problem in their transference to a target text (TT)”.

Baker (1992,21) offers a wide definition, as “abstract or concrete source language concept” which is unfamiliar in the target culture and relate to “religious belief, a social custom, or even a type of food”. Leppihalme (2011, 126) notes that “culture specific expressions refer to the concepts of a specific source culture which do not have exact equivalent expressions in a specific target culture. Although these terms and definitions provided for CSIs vary, the underlining idea reflecting is the emphasis that CSIs are specific to the culture of SL relative to another specific culture. According to Persson (2015,1) defines them as “concepts that are specific to a specific culture. These concepts can refer to domains such as flora, clothes, housing, work, leisure, politics, law, and religion, among others”.

6. Cultural expressions as translation problem

According to Whorf (1940,120), Translation problems arise because each culture and consequently, each language, is tied to its unique collection of words, literary forms, rhetorical techniques, vocabulary, diction, lexicon, and writing formats. During translation, we often encounter numerous terms and phrases that do not exist in the target language and whose meanings are typically associated with the source language. Similar, Larson (1984,432) says that culture plays an important role in the course of the translation. Unless a translator has a strong foundation of the culture of both languages, S/he is most likely to fail in grasping the implied meaning. translators' cross-cultural awareness and understanding of how languages work is required.

Radford (2002,308) states that "many of the concepts with which we operate are culture-bound, in the sense that they vary considerably from culture to culture and depend for their understanding upon socially transmitted knowledge, both practical and propositional.". These ideas that are "highly codable" in some languages but not in others can be seen as a significant translation challenge that requires the translator to put in extra effort in order to familiarize readers with the culture of the source language. Culture-bound expressions are the hardest

and most challenging to translate, according to Teilyano (2007, 16), she emphasizes that "because the two languages have different meaning subsystems and cultures, the difficulty arises from the problem of finding adequate target language equivalents for terms conveying culture-sensitive notions in the source language.". The most difficult task is determining the appropriate equivalency for these expressions, as the translatability of culturally-specific expressions relies on the viability of the TL equivalents at both denotative and connotative meaning levels.

6.1 Strategies of Translating Culture specific items

Many scholars suggest various procedures for translating culture-bound items. Ivir (1987,37) suggests seven strategies for the translation of cultural terms: "literal translation, definition, borrowing, addition, lexical substitution, omission, and lexical creation". He adds that combinations of strategies rather than a single one are required for "optimum transmission of cultural translation".

Gaber (2005) offers five methods for translating culturally specific expressions, with a primary focus on identifying the appropriate "equivalency" and identifying the more understandable term in the TL culture. He suggests the following methods:

- A. Finding an appropriate TL's "cultural equivalent".
- B. Functional translation: the use of an equivalent function in the source language by the translator
- C. Paraphrasing: the translator explains the meaning of an SL word or phrase in the target language
- D. Glossing: it is the process by which the translator defines the cultural expression by adding more details about it to the text or in a footnote
- E. Borrowing: The translator takes a word or phrase from the source language and transforms it into Arabic.

Six strategies are proposed by Balfaqeeh (2009, 9–10) to address the challenge of translating culturally bound expressions, depending on the type of expression. First, without adding any additional information, the translator may just offer the literal equivalents. Furthermore, the translator might literally translate and offer some extra details. Third, the translator has the ability to paraphrase the phrase. Fourthly, if available, the translator may translate using the TL equivalent. Fifth, the phrase may be taken from the TLC. Lastly, the expression can be removed.

7. Methodology

The present study adopts a qualitative and descriptive approach to examine the strategies employed in rendering culturally specific items in *Cities of salt*'s novel. Since the novel is consisting from five parts, "Al-teeh" is adopted in the study. The novel was written by Abdulrahman Munif on 1984 and was rendered into English by Theroux (1987). The study doesn't seek to quantify data, but rather to analyze the cultural features of the text within its context.

It draws upon established model of translation strategies (Jan Pedersen 2005) as theoretical foundation. This framework provides analytical tools for categorizing the strategies used. Detailed explanations of the adopted model are outlined in the section that follows.

7.1 Pedersen's model of strategies of translation

Jan Pedersen (2005) model is deemed as the most comprehensive one for translating culture bound expressions. Pedersen proposes six strategies that are classified into ST-oriented strategies and TT-oriented strategies. The ST-oriented strategies are

1. Retention happens when the culturally bound term is fully or partially translated into the target language (complete retention) or TL-adjusted. Since the ST term is fully rendered to the TT, it is the most faithful strategy to the ST. This method primarily applies to noun translation. Since the translator is faithful to the spirit of the ST as well as each and every letter, retention could be considered the "strategy that displays the most fidelity towards the ST. (Pedersen, 2005,4)
2. Specification: it occurs when the culturally bound term is left untranslated and is subsequently indicated by adding more information. It is separated into addition and completion. This may be accomplished by addition or explicitation. Explaining a shortened name or acronym or making an implicit meaning explicit are two examples of explicitation. This can happen when translating names or acronyms by adding the first or last name to make the meaning clearer (Pedersen, 2005,4). When the translator clarifies something that is latent in the ST, it is called addition.
3. Direct translation: Common names and institution names are translated using this method (ibid,5). It is translated word for word, split into calques, and then shifted. Calque is a form of exotism that translates literally and intact.

As for the TT- oriented strategies, they are:

1. Generalization: Generalization (superordinate term or paraphrase) is the process by which a culture-bound term is expressed less specifically in the TT than in the ST. Stated differently, a more general term is created from the ST expression. Both hyponyms and hypernyms are used in this context. Hypernyms are used in addition, whereas hyponyms are used in generalization. This is comparable to addition. (ibid, 6).
2. Substitution: Substitution (situational or cultural) occurs when a TT culture-bound term is used in place of a SL culture-bound term
3. Omission: it occurs when a term that is culturally specific to the ST is not rendered to the TT.

8. The analytical aspect

8.1 Data analysis

The present study seeks to examine the translation strategies employed by Peter Theroux in rendering culture-specific items in Abdulrahman Munif's novel *Cities of Salt*. For the purpose of analysis, twenty excerpts that are heavily laden with culture-specific references have been selected as the corpus of the study, alongside their corresponding English translations by Theroux.

SL text (1)

إذا ما كان ذبح لسيارته لازم نبعثلو دم واحد من هالكلاب

Translation

"If we don't wreck his trucks, we'll let him see the blood of one of those dogs"

Analysis discussion:

It seems that the translator misunderstands the meaning of the sentence and hence mistranslates it when he renders “ذبح لسيارته” into “wreck his trucks” the example is well-known and widely practiced by Bedouin. It is about an old tradition when men buy a new car, they Slaughter a sacrifice as a gesture for a good luck and blessing. The translator has tried to make a slight adaptation in the TL therefore; he uses the strategy of retention to render it.

SL (2)

منازل عامرة ودايمة

Translation

Beautiful and lasting residences.”

Analysis and discussion:

In the above expression, the translator fails to convey the meaning. He couldn't find an exact equivalence which can achieve the same function of the SL. Therefore, he makes a slight adaptation by rendering “عامرة” into “beautiful”. It is clear that retention strategy is used to convey the meaning.

SL (3)

الخير بالجايات، والجايات أكثر من الراجحات

Translation

“The best is yet to come and we'll have more odors”

Analysis and discussion:

This expression is widely used in Iraqi culture to denote that future holds better opportunities, and what has passed does not compare to the good and blessing ahead. Here, the translator couldn't find the exact equivalence for this CBE, so he renders it to similar phrase that is familiar to the TL audience often a transcultural that something that the TT reader can recognize. Therefore, a substitution strategy employed to convey the meaning. It is clear that the word “الراجحات” were omitted from the translation.

SL (4)

إذا كبر ولدك فخالوه

Translation

“If your boy grows up, give him a brother”

Analysis and discussion:

The Arabic proverb emphasizes the importance of shifting from a parental, authority-based relationship to a more peer-like, supportive one as a son matures. The translator maintains the meaning of proverb by a synonym strategy. The translator uses a near equivalent words and phrases to convey the meaning. Therefore, a substitution strategy employed in rendering the CBE.

SL (5)

" نأكل التراب، ونقدم للضيوف أولادنا لكن لا نرضى ان نهز رؤوسنا مثل العبيد لكل كلمة يقولونها" ..

Translation

“We can eat dirt and offer our very children to our guests, but we cannot nod our heads like slaves at every word they say”

Analysis and discussion:

The first expression is used to denote a metaphor of enduring the hardship and suffering. The phrase “ نأكل التراب” rendered literally into the TL. In English, “eat dirt” exist, but it is less common. The second phrase is indicating the generosity and hospitality of Arabs. Similarly, the phrase was also rendered literally (a direct translation strategy). The translator stayed very close to the SL. The result of his translation is understandable translation, although might sound too shocking without a cultural background.

SL (6)

" الامريكان أولاد الحرام ما من وارهم إلا التعب ووجع الرأس، هم باللحم وجماعتنا على العظام ما تحصل"

Translation:

“These American sons of bitches are nothing but trouble and bad news. We'll never see any good from them. They'll get the meat, and we'll get whatever bones they care to throw us”.

Analysis and discussion:

Here, two CBE in example. In the first underlined phrase, falls under Substitution strategy Pedersen’s model, because the translator adapted the insult to a target-language equivalent with similar offensive impact. The second above cultural phrase expresses that Americans all they bring is trouble and problems. However, the CBE “وجع الرأس” (headache) and the phrase “التعب” for bad news were substituted with a natural English phrase (“trouble and bad news”) that delivers the same communicative function for TL readers.

SL(7)

" يا ابن هذال، أنت شيخ الوادي، أنت أعقل من فيه، ولازم تعرف ان الحكومة تتعامل مع الناس بالناموس أو الدبوس"

Translation

“Ibn Hathal, you are the sheikh of this wadi. You are its most intelligent man, so you must know that the government deals justly with people-but it knows how to use force as well”

Analysis and discussion:

Here, two underlined phrases of CBE in the excerpts. The word “شيخ” rendered into “Sheikh”. The term carries both cultural and social meaning: tribal and religious leader. The SL item is kept in TL with minimal adaptation. Therefore, retention strategy is employed in rendering the word. In addition, the translator renders “النابوس أو الدبوس” into “justly with people-but it knows how to use force as well“. Instead of keeping the original metaphor “law or stick”, the translator opts to communicate the pragmatic meaning in a natural English. the translator substituted it with a TL expression that conveys the same contrast between justice and force.

SL (8)

"وإذا ردت تحمر عينك، فما كل الناس تخاف العين الحمراء، وحننا جينا نقول لك ما شافت عينونا"

Translation

“If you want to redden your eye, remember that not everyone is afraid of a red eye. We have come to tell you what our own eyes have seen”

Analysis and discussion:

The underlined sentence is a well-known and used saying in Iraqi tradition. Metaphorically, it means that showing the anger or threat doesn't scare everyone. The translator chose to render "تحمّر عينك" into "redden your eye". It is clear that the translation is conducted literally (hence, direct translation strategy) which results in unusual phrase in English. It keeps the SL, but English readers may not grasp the intended meaning of figurative sense (showing anger or threat). A substitution strategy could have worked better as in the following proposed translation: "If you want to be rough with people, remember that not everyone fears roughness".

SL (9)

والله يا أولاد الشرموطة قيل ما أموت لاخوض في دمكم

Translation

"By God, you fucking sons of whores, before I die, I'll take a bath in your blood!" he shouted at them"

Analysis and discussion:

The underlined phrase is strong threat metaphor that connected with revenge and violence. The Arabic verb "اخوض" means to wade (often with liquid) in Arabic was rendered into "take a bath". The Arabic metaphor is substituted by a different and powerful metaphor in English to convey the same meaning. The translator has replaced the Arabic metaphor with an English one of similar violent effect. It ensures the threat is culturally comprehensible for the TT readers.

SL(10)

الله يبشرك بالخير يا وليدي

Translation

God bless you, boy.

Analysis and discussion:

The Arabic phrase is about bringing good news. The phrase "الله يبشرك بالخير" was substituted with a common English blessing "God bless you". Therefore, the strategy of substitution is employed. It is worthy to note that function of is SL text is preserved in the target, but the culture image of "glad tidings of goodness" is lost. In addition, the word "يا وليدي" is translated into "boy". The rendition is a generalization, it conveys the meaning, but fails to convey the affectionate tone.

SL(11)

وكلي الله يا سارة... الزمن طويل!

Translation: "Trust in God, Sarah. Time is long!"

Analysis and discussion:

The phrase "وكلي الله" is a common Arabic expression meaning "trust in God. The translator renders the idiomatic expression into a natural TL expression using a substitution strategy. The function is preserved and the expression is adapted for TL readers. In addition, the "الزمن طويل", an idiom meaning "there's still plenty of time and that patient is needed." It was rendered into "time is long". It is clear that a direct translation strategy is used however, it keeps the metaphorical structure and meaning.

SL(12)

صحيح من قال... من خلف ما مات

Translation: whoever said, 'whoever has a children never dies'.

Analysis and discussion:

The above sentence is an Arabic proverb meaning leaving descendants keeps one's legacy or memory. The phrase "صحيح من قال" was simplified and rendered into "whoever said". The translation conducted by a generalization strategy where the TL keeps the function. In addition, "من خلف ما مات" was rendered into "whoever has a children never dies". The proverb is literally translated but still communicates the intended meaning. It keeps the sense readable for the English readers.

SL(13)

دوك يا جوف الليل

Translation: "Midnight! Take this! "

Analysis and discussion:

The expression is an Arabic metaphorical expression. It is used commonly when someone wants to do an action like shouting in gun or singing a son. Thus, he renders "دوك" into "take this". The SL action is adapted into a TL expression that conveys the same action intended. It is clear that a substitution strategy is used. In addition, "يا جوف الليل" means at mid of night in Arabic. The translator rendered it with "Midnight!", a TL word that indicate to the night but is much simpler and natural for English readers. It is a generalized strategy of translation where "midnight" keeps the action and time, but metaphorical richness is reduced. A substituted strategy could have worked better as in "dead of night". It is used to refer to intense darkness and stillness.

SL(14)

إذا أقبلت لالبخت، يا ابوثويني، يا بضع الدجاجة على الوتد.

Translation: "With luck, Abu Thweiny, a hen can lay eggs on a tent peg!"

Analysis and discussion:

The above example is a well-known Arabic metaphor. It means that when luck with you, even the impossible can happen. The translator renders "البخت" into "with luck". He has done so by substituting the it into simple equivalent in the TL. In addition, he renders the second part literally thus a direct translation strategy is adopted. However, it seems worth noting that meaning isn't usual in English. The cultural meaning me not be clear to the TL readers. A more explanatory translation using specification could have worked better. Thus, the following translation is proposed: With luck, Abu Thweiny, the impossible can happen, like a hen laying eggs on a tent peg!"

SL(15)

يا وضحه، شعلان بعده ما رجوع، وفواز يريد يسافر، حضري له الزهاب

Translation:

"Wadha, " Miteb would say to his wife, "Shalan still hasn't come back from his travels and Fawaz wants to set off. Get his things ready to go"

Analysis and discussion:

The mentioned sentence contains one culturally loaded term. "الزهاب" refers to provision of water, clothes and food for a travel. However, the translation used a generalized word "things" to translate the word. It is important

to note that the use of a general term has led to a losing the specific cultural sense of provision for a travel journey. However, a better translation would be by using the specification strategy as in the proposed translation: Get his supplies ready for the travel.

SL (16)

اربط الدهماء تحت ذيك النخلة

Translation: Tie the horse under that tree.

Analysis and discussion:

Arabs used to name their horses with different names taken from their environment as a kind of linkage with their environment and to express their admiration for the beauty of their horses. The name Dahma, means darkness or deep black which is the color of the sky during night when the sky is out of star. However, the translator generalized the term “الدهماء” into a broad TL term. It led to losing cultural specificity. Hence, the translation communicates the basic meaning, but omits cultural details like the specific horse type.

SL (17)

هل وردت الحلال؟

Translation: Did you water the animal?

Analysis and discussion:

Here we have a CBE which is “الحلال” rendered into “animal”. The Arabic term refers to livestock in general. But given the novel, and the only animal mentioned in that context is the horses. The translator reduces specific cultural meaning to a general one. i.e. generalization strategy.

SL (18)

أول الغضب جنون واخره ندم... يا ابن هذال

Translation: “You'll cause anger, but then the regret will be your own, Ibn Hathal”

Analysis and discussion:

It's a well-known Arabic proverb warning against uncontrolled anger. The translator substitutes the proverb with natural TL, a warning that carries similar meaning. It seems that translation is clear and natural in English, but literary style isn't kept.

SL (19)

هذه ديرتنا، يا ابن راشد، نعرفها، نعرف رجالها وحزومها نعرف خيرها ومطويها

Translation

“This is our village, Ibn Rashed. We know it, we know its men and its heart and everything about it”

Analysis and discussion:

The sentence is full of cultural loaded terms. First, the word “ديرتنا” means homeland, tribal land or our native place in the SL. It is more than just “a village”, the word used to translate the SL one. The culturally loaded term replaced with a broad TL word. It is clear that a generalization strategy employed to convey the meaning. However, a closer and culturally rich translation can be “our homeland”. In addition, the translation of “حزومها” into “its heart”. It is clear that a big shift in the translation occurred. The SL word means alliance, supporting group. Translating the word means that the meaning is substituted by cultural adaptation. It is changed to

something understandable, but not equivalent. A better translation can be “its supporter”. Moreover, the word “مطاويها” which means “ its news and hidden stories is rendered into “everything about it”. However, the TL reduces the cultural richness into “everything about it”. Although it has conveyed the intended meaning, but lost the cultural weight of the term. Instead, it can be translated into “ its tales and its hidden story”. Here, the cultural weight is kept as well as the meaning.

SL (20)

نامي يا بنت الحلال، نامي والصبح رباح

Translation: “Get some sleep, girl-everything will be fine in the morning”

Discussion:

In the above example, the phrase “الحلال” was omitted in the TL version and was generalized by “girl” in the TL version. The culturally loaded phrase was replaced with a neutral, natural TL equivalent. In addition, “the phrase “الصبح رباح” was rendered into “everything will be fine in the morning”. The pragmatic meaning of was conveyed by using a substitution strategy that clarifies the phrase to TL readers. After analyzing the data according to the model adopted in the study, the researcher sought to answer the research questions:

The first research question investigates the strategies employed by the translator when rendering CBEs into English. As shown in Table 1, the most frequent strategies are substitution (38%) and generalization (25%). Regarding the second question, which compares source-text- and target-text-oriented strategies, the findings reveal a clear preference for target-text-oriented strategies. These strategies account for 69% (22 instances) of the total, indicating a dominant tendency toward the target text orientation. In order to know the frequencies and the percentage of translation strategies used in the selected CBE data, the following table is devoted for this purpose:

NO.	Translation strategy	The frequency	The percentage
1.	Retention	3	9%
2.	Direct translation	6	19%
3.	Specification	1	3%
4.	Generalization	8	25%
5.	Substitution	12	38%
6.	Omission	2	6%
Total		32	100%

Table (1) the frequency and the percentages of the translation strategies

9. Conclusion

In light of the analysis conducted, this study set out to examine the strategies used in translating culture-specific expressions in Cities of Salt and has drawn several important conclusions. The study comes to conclusion that translating culture-bound expressions in Cities of Salt is problematic due to cultural gap between Arabic and English language. The results of the analysis substantiate the hypothesis and demonstrate its accuracy. The analysis reveals that the translator employs a combination of both SL oriented strategies and TL oriented ones,

with an inclination towards TL oriented strategies such as generalization and substitution. These strategies are favored over source-language-oriented ones. The analysis reveals that Theroux relied heavily on the substitution and generalization strategies to make the meaning of these expressions accessible for TL readers. However, Insufficient knowledge of translator in the source-language culture leads to a loss of cultural specificity in the target language as in the translation of “الدهماء” into a board term “horse”, thereby resulting in deficiencies in the translation.

The research highlights the complexity of translating these expressions and the balance a translation should maintain between persevering the cultural identity of the SL and producing accessible and natural TL text. This findings of the study contributes to the overall understanding of practical application of translation strategies. It provides insights into the challenges involved in achieving an effective translation of Arabic-English cultural expressions.

References

- Aixelá, J. F. (1996). Culture-specific items in translation. *Translation, Power, Subversion*, 8, 52–78.
- Baker, M. (1992). *In other words: A coursebook on translation*. Routledge.
- Balfaqeeh, N. (2009). *Strategies for translating idioms and culturally bound expressions within the human development genre* (Master's thesis). University of Birmingham.
- Catford, J. C. (1965). *A linguistic theory of translation*. Oxford University Press.
- Gaber, J. (2005). *A textbook of translation: Concept, method, practice*. University Book House.
- Geertz, C. (1973). *The interpretation of cultures* (3rd ed.). Basic Books.
- Ivir, V. (1987). Procedures and strategies for the translation of culture. *Indian Journal of Applied Linguistics*, 13(2), 35–46.
- Larson, M. L. (1984). *Meaning-based translation*. Bradford Publishing House.
- Leppihalme, R. (2011). Realia. In L. Van Doorslaer & Y. Gambier (Eds.), *Handbook of translation studies* (pp. 126–130). John Benjamins Publishing Company.
- Newmark, P. (1988). *A textbook of translation*. Prentice Hall.
- Pedersen, J. (2005). How is culture rendered in subtitles? In H. Gerzymisch-Arbogast & S. Nauert (Eds.), *Challenges of multidimensional translation: Proceedings of the Marie Curie Euroconferences MuTra: Saarbrücken 2–6 May 2005* (pp. 113–130). ATRC, Saarland University.
- Persson, U. (2015). *Culture-specific items: Translation procedures for a text about Australian and New Zealand children's literature*. <https://www.diva-portal.org/smash/get/diva2:850704/FULLTEXT01.pdf>
- Pym, A. (2004). Propositions on cross-cultural communication and translation. *Target*, 16(1).
- Radford, A., Atkinson, M., Britain, D., Clahsen, H., & Spencer, A. (2002). *Linguistics: An introduction*. Cambridge University Press.
- Teilanyo, D. I. (2007). Culture in translation: The example of J. P. Clark's *The Ozidi Saga*. *Babel*, 53, 1–21.
- Whorf, B. L. (1940). Science and linguistics. In L. Burke, T. Crowley, & A. Girvin (Eds.), *The Routledge language and cultural theory reader* (pp. 114–121). Routledge.