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| RESEARCH ARTICLE

## Compensation Strategies Use in EFL Students' Translation from Arabic into English

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| ABSTRACT

Several techniques and strategies are used in translating a source language (SL) into the target language (TL). The purpose of these techniques is to produce a successful translation. Compensation is one type of these strategies. This study aimed at investigating the use of compensation strategies by Saudi EFL students in translating Arabic texts into the English language. Specifically, it attempted to reveal the types of compensation strategies used in the students' target texts (TTs) and the most common types of compensation. Adopting content analysis, the study analysed six TTs produced by six students enrolled in a translation course in the summer term for the academic year 2021 in a Saudi public university. Results showed that the TTs contained all types of compensation. Results also revealed that compensation by splitting was the most common type. In second place appeared compensation in kind, compensation by merging, and compensation in place. The study recommended that translation instructors need to train their students extensively on compensation strategies to assist them in producing successful TTs.

| KEYWORDS

Compensation strategies, Translation, Target Text, Source Text, Meaning Loss

| ARTICLE INFORMATION

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### 1. Introduction

Translation is transferring of meaning from one language, the source language (SL), to another language called the target language (TL) (Baker, 1992 and Newmark, 1988). Ultimately, translators seek to convey the SL meaning in accordance with TL conventions. In addition, translators aim to assist readers in comprehending the translated texts (TTs). In this respect, translators confront the challenge of producing a successful translation, which they could achieve by using compensation strategies, among others.

Baker & Hochel (1998), Newmark (1988), and Dickins, Hervey & Higgins (2017) agree that compensation is a technique adopted by translators to make up for any translation loss that occurs in the TT. Dickins et al. (2017) point out that compensation is necessary for 'successful' translation. In addition, Ragab et al. (2021) suggest that compensation positively affects students' translation. Klaudy (2008) notes that compensation is the "best described lexical operation" (p. 1) to be used in translation. Nevertheless, there is a paucity of research investigating EFL student translators' use of compensation strategies in their translation. The purpose of this study, therefore, is to scrutinize the types of compensation used by Saudi translation students and the most common types in the TTs.

Thus, the study aims at answering the following research questions:

1. What type(s) of compensation strategies do Saudi translation students use?
2. What is the most common type of compensation in students' TTs?

## 2. Literature Review

Compensation is a technique used to reduce crucial loss of ST characteristics by resembling their impact in the TT via other modes employed in the TT (Dickins et al., 2017). Newmark (1988) states that compensation appears when we recompense for a loss in meaning, sound impact, metaphor, or pragmatic in a segment of a sentence in another part or an adjacent sentence. According to Klaudy (2008), compensation is an operation of lexical relocation through which we render a source text (ST) sense lost in the translation process in the TT in other places or methods. According to Dickins et al. (2017), it is necessary to be aware of “what loss [to] compensate for and how [to do so]” (p. 51). How to compensate cannot be isolated from other elements such as context, style, genre, and the purpose of the ST and the TT. These elements challenge translators with inexorable and undesirable concessions.

Compensation strategies are essential for both students and instructors. For the former, it is necessary for them to be accustomed to compensation strategies (Ragab et al. 2012). This is because they can use them to convey the target meaning when students are in shortage of enough linguistic items required for translation. The latter would use compensation strategies to assist their students in improving their translation skills (Ragab et al. 2012).

Compensation has several types. Agha & Nasser (2018) provide an extensive account of the various taxonomies of compensation. In addition, there are other compensation classification models. First, Baker (1992) introduced stylistic compensation. It refers to a recreation of the same impact in the TT through methods acceptable in the TL. Second, Harvey (1995) suggests three types of compensation: typological, linguistic correspondence, and typographical. Moreover, Harvey (1995) maintains that compensation can be parallel, contiguous, and displaced.

Being the most recent model, Dickins et al. (2017) model is one of the most important compensation classification models. This model has been the base of some studies, such as Nasution (2019), Putra (2016), Stiasih (2013), and Motallebzadeh & Tousi (2011). Dickins et al. (2017) propose that compensation is classified into four types. The first one is compensation in kind, which refers to a variation in kind amid the textual impact of an ST and the TT content. It has several forms, such as clarifying what is ambiguous in the ST or vice versa. Another subtype of compensation in kind is using parts of speech or syntactic structures which vary from those found in the literal translation. It is worth noting that these types of replacements are not limited to isolated words, but they stretch to cover phrases, sentences, or paragraphs. For example, in the following extract, the underlined part:

ST

.. كان مجاذيب السيدة حولهما كالنمل، وحين زغرِدت زبيدة ضاع صوتها في تمتمة الشيوخ وبسملتهم وزقزقة النساء ودوامات الذكر [..].

can possibly be translated as follows:

TT

“...and when Zubida let out a ululation.....”

Here the verb زغرِدت is translated into a noun (Dickins et al., 2017, p49). The second category of compensation is compensation in place. This type entails a transformation of the place of ST contextual impact to occur at a dissimilar place from that in the TT. To illustrate, this type appears in translating the following:

ST

ألبسيها وتعالى خوْفِي اخوتي الصغار فهم كالعفاريت

TT

“You can put it on and frighten my naughty little brothers” (p. 53)

The expression كالعفاريت, which appears at the end of the ST, occurs in the middle of the TT, taking a different place from that in the ST. The third compensation type is compensation by splitting, which is used to mark some ST features that have been stretched to become more elongated in the TT than in the ST. This can be illustrated as follows (Dickins et al., 2017, p54-55):

ST

..ولهذا بقي الجميع يتعاملون بحرص وحذر شديدين.

TT

Owing to this, their dealing with each other continued to be motivated by overwhelming greed and extreme caution.

The phrase بحرص وحذر شديدين containing three words in the ST is rendered into a five-word phrase in the TT. The last type of compensation is compensation by merging. This type works on long items in the ST, making them short in the TT. For example:

ST

..... طاولة مقلعة صغيرة، وكتب متناثرة على حصيرة من القش والقصب، وإبريق من الفخار مملوء بالماء.....

TT

... A small broken table, books scattered on a straw mat, a clay pitcher full of water... (p. 55).

حصيرة من القش that contains three words is translated into a two-word phrase.

### **2.1 Previous Studies**

Some studies investigated compensation use in translation. Nasution (2019) studied the types of compensation and the dominant one in Indonesian translation students' TTs when translating the Hobbit film. Nasution revealed that 111 cases of compensation occurred in the TTs. Additionally, the translators used three types of compensation which were compensation in kind, compensation by splitting and by merging. The study also found that compensation in kind was the dominant type since it accounted for (62.1%) of the total compensation types, followed by compensation by merging (24.3%) and compensation by splitting (13.6%).

Putra (2016) concluded that three types of compensation were used in the students' translation of idioms from English to Indonesian. These three types were compensation in kind, compensation by splitting, and compensation by merging. Stiasih (2013) noted that 51 examples of compensation existed in the TTs. The most occurring type of compensation in his participants' translation was compensation in kind (56.86%), compensation by merging (25.49%), and compensation by splitting (17.65%).

It is apparent from these studies that there is a paucity of research focusing on compensation strategies used in translating Arabic STs into English TTs. In addition, two of these studies focused on films as their ST, indicating limitations in the investigated genre. Attempting to fill in these gaps, the current study is an attempt to scrutinize Saudi translation students' use of compensation strategies, use of English as the TL, and use of the novel as the ST genre. This may contribute more information to the understanding of compensation, paying attention to differences existing between Arabic and English languages.

## **3. Methodology**

### **3.1. Design**

This study employed descriptive content analysis. Content analysis is a mode used to analyse spoken or written language (Yagiz, Aydin & Akdemir, 2016). The purpose of content analysis purpose is to transform language information for analysis and explanation (Tavakoli, 2012). This process results in converting quantitative data to qualitative one (Neuendorf, 2002). Tavakoli (2012) and Neuendorf (2002) note that content analysis can be classified into some types, including descriptive content analysis adopted in this study.

### **3.2. Materials**

Adopting the qualitative approach, the study utilized students' translation in response to an assignment in the Summer Term of 2021 at a Saudi public University. The researcher asked the students to translate extracts from the novel "Apartment of Freedom" by Algosai (1994). I selected six paragraphs, which ranged between 85 – 110 words in length, from the novel for that assignment. Each of the six students enrolled in the course ENG 3670 Translation from Arabic into English was given a paragraph to translate. The students are all Saudis who have studied three translation courses previously. The language of the novel is Arabic using the Egyptian and Gulf dialects.

### **3.3. Procedures**

After finishing the assignment, the students uploaded it into the Blackboard, the Learning Management System utilized in this university. After that, the instructor downloaded the TTs that were subjected to content analysis to spot the compensation strategies found in the six paragraphs. The TTs were assigned numbers from 1- 6. A careful examination of the texts was conducted to discover any existence of a compensation strategy. The compensation strategy found was enlisted in a table providing the paragraph number, serial number, ST, TT, and the type of compensation strategy (Appendix 1).

### **3.4. Reliability**

Reliability employment refers to the measurement ability to produce similar outcomes in various persistent attempts (Neuendorf, 2002), and it is essential for content analysis. This study adopted interrater reliability, which means the degree of correspondence between two or more coders (Neuendorf, 2002). The list of compensation strategies found in the TTs, Appendix 1, was submitted to a colleague, who teaches translation, to pass his judgment of the classification appearing in the Table. The interrater reliability revealed an agreement of 93%; that is, according to Neuendorf (2002) and Landis & Koch (1977), almost perfect

## **4. Results and Discussion**

The current study is sought to investigate the types of compensation strategies used and the most common types of compensation occurring in Saudi EFL students' translation. The following section presents the results.

### **4.1. Compensation types**

Regarding compensation types found in Saudi EFL TTs, Table 1 below presents the results.

**Table 1 Compensation Types Appearing in the TTs**

Compensation type
Splitting
Kind
Merging
Place

Table 1 shows that the Saudi translation students' TTs contain all types of compensation. These types are compensation by splitting, compensation in kind, compensation by merging, and compensation in place. These types of compensation cases appear in the varying distribution in the TTs. The presence of all compensation types in the TTs implies that the translators cater for creating a similar effect on the reader by the TTs. The result also indicates the translators' tendency to make the texts more familiar and natural to potential readers. Existence of compensation by splitting as the most common type may be due to SL nature. The Arabic language uses attached pronouns that, when translated into English, which does not have this feature, the translator is forced to translate pronouns separately from the nouns they are attached to. In addition, we may attribute the existence of the four types of compensation strategies in the TTs to some reasons. First is Algoasibi's style and diction in writing his novel. One instance is *هي منطلقه تتكلم الآن ومعتصمة بالصمت.....* he could have said, instead, *صامته*. To translate this example, the best way is to use the adjective *silent*, causing the use of compensation by merging. The second reason is word order differences between Arabic and English. In Arabic, adjectives always follow its noun, but in English, they can be attributive (preceding its noun) or predicative (following its noun). This results in compensation in place when translating Arabic into the English language. This is evident in translating the phrase *الدفع مشكلة محيرة*, which is translated into *payment, is a confusing problem* using compensation in place. The result of the current study contradicts those of Nasution (2019), Putra (2016), and Stiasih (2013), who found that three types of compensation strategies appeared in their TTs. These types were compensation in kind, compensation by merging, and by splitting.

#### 4.2. The most common Type of Compensation in the TTs

The TTs contain 39 compensation cases. There are (49%) cases of compensation by splitting, (31%) occurrence of compensation in kind, (13%) of compensation by merging, and (3%) of compensation in place, Table 2.

**Table 2. The Most Common Types of Compensation**

Compensation type	Frequency	%
Splitting	19	49
Kind	12	31
Merging	5	13
Place	3	7
<b>Total</b>	<b>39</b>	<b>100</b>

Table 3 below presents four examples of compensation by splitting.

**Table 3. Cases of Compensation by Splitting**

ST	TT
وقف <u>طويلا</u> عند شقة الأستاذ.....	....he remained outside Mr. Sharif's apartment <b>for a long time</b> ....
.... ثم الدقي.	..... <b>after that</b> Dokki.
....غسيل في بيوت الأغنياء، ونهاره قراءة في	Her day was washing in <b>rich people's houses</b> , and his was reading in <b>poor people's houses</b> ....
بوسع صاحب هذا (الشيء) أن <u>يسترجعه</u> بعد أن <u>أخرج</u> .	The owner of this thing <b>can get it back</b> after I <b>get out</b> .

In the first example, the ST *طويلا* is translated into a four-word expression in English, so a short expression in the ST is rendered in a longer one in the TT. It was not acceptable to translate the ST as "longly" in the TT. Thus, the translator resorted to a common expression in the English language. We can regard this same example as compensation in kind since the word *طويلا* is an adverb in Arabic, but the translator rendered it into the TT as a prepositional phrase. In the other examples, we find three of them containing one word, and they are translated into more than two-word expressions, Table 4.

Table 4. Cases of Compensation in Kind

ST	TT
..... شقة الأستاذ..... ..... في بيوت الأغنياء، ونهاره قراءة في بيوت	.....Mr. <b>Sharif's</b> apartment .....in <b>rich</b> people's houses, his was reading in <b>poor</b> people's houses...
قرار من رئيس الجمهورية بتأميم شركة.....	A decision from the president of the Republic to <b>nationalize</b> the.....
..... اضطربت مشاعره بعنف .....	His feelings were violently <b>troubled</b> .

The cases of compensation in kind appearing here involve a change in the ST word form into another one in the TT. In the first example, the phrase شقة الأستاذ (مضاف ومضاف إليه) is rendered as noun in the possessive case in the TT. In the second example, two nouns الأغنياء والفقراء are presented as adjectives in the TT, qualifying the noun people. In addition, in the third sample, the noun بتأميم is translated as a verb in the TT. Finally, the verb اضطربت in the ST appears as an adjective in the TT.

Table 5. Cases of Compensation by Merging

ST	TT
...ولم يكن من عادته أول الأمر أن يؤب إلى	<b>Initially</b> , it wasn't his habit to go to the room....
..... هي منطلقة تتكلم الآن ومعتصمة بالصمت..... ألقي القبض عليه.....	.....she was <b>silent</b> ..... .....arrested....
..... كلما ورد ذكر جمال عبد الناصر.....	...whenever Jamal Abdel Nasser was <b>mentioned</b> ....

In compensation by merging, a longer ST is translated in a shorter one in the TT. It is obvious from Table 5 all the STs contain two words, and they are translated as a one-word expression in the TT.

Table 6. Cases of Compensation in Place

ST	TT
قناة التخلص من الاستعمار والدفع مشكلة محيرة.	The <b>colonialism</b> disposal canal. Payment is <b>a confusing</b> problem.
..... فالويل من مشاكل التأشيرة والجمرك والسكن.	.....woe would be from the visa, customs, and housing <b>issues</b> .

Compensation in place occurs when an ST is placed in a location different from its original one in the TT. In the above table, the word الاستعمار is placed at the beginning of TT while it appears at the end of the ST. Similarly, the words مشكلة and مشاكل are in places other than in the ST, respectively. These findings show that this distribution of compensation types aims at enabling the TTs to create more sense. The results also imply that the translators seek to assist their readers in comprehending the TTs' meaning. In addition, the translators employ these compensation strategies to atone for any translation loss that might occur. Compensation can be one of the strategic decisions that translators make. These results are in contrast with what Nasution (2019) and Putra (2016) found. The former revealed that the most common type of compensation strategy was compensation in type (62%), followed by compensation by merging (24%) and compensation by splitting (13%). The latter stated that compensation in kind was responsible for 56.86% of the total number of compensation cases. This was followed by compensation by merging (25.49%) and compensation by splitting (17.65%).

## 5. Conclusion

Translation is an essential means of communication among nations. It allows for knowledge and culture transfer. Achieving effective translation is of paramount importance to translators. Thus, when training new translators, it deems necessary to equip trainees with the strategies and techniques enabling them to maintain the SL meaning while obeying the TL rules. Compensation is one of these strategies that translators need to apply in their TTs. Although compensation may appear unconsciously in the TTs, raising students' awareness of it is beneficial.

This study attempted to investigate the Saudi EFL students' use of compensation strategies in their TTs. The study employed a purposive sample to collect data and adopted content analysis. The results showed that the four types of compensation are employed in the TTs. To be precise, students used compensation in kind, compensation in place, compensation by merging, and compensation by splitting. Furthermore, the study revealed that compensation by splitting was the most dominant compensation technique. The second most common type of compensation is compensation in kind, the third one is compensation by merging, and the fourth is compensation in place. This could be attained by reflecting on students' TTs.

This study was not without limitations. It investigated relatively a few numbers of TTs to examine the use of compensation strategies. Additionally, the study focused on short TTs ranging between 85 – 110 words. Based on these pitfalls, the study recommends that further studies need to use more TTs to obtain more accurate results. The study also recommends that future research should concentrate on long discourse. Translation instructors need to raise their students' awareness of compensation strategies and the role they play in producing a successful translation. They must also offer extensive training on these strategies and discuss their use with the students highlighting their types and how they occur.

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Appendix 1

Compensation Cases

Text No	No.	ST	TT	Compensation Type
1	1	....أخذَه إلى أقرب بقالة....	They got closer to <u>the local food shop</u> ....	Splitting
	2	.....أخذَه إلى أقرب بقالة....	<u>They got closer</u> to the local food shop....	Splitting
	3	.....إلى أقرب بقالة.....	.....to <u>the local food shop</u> ...	Kind
	4	.... النيل أخيرا....	<u>Last not least</u> the Nile!	Splitting
	5	وقف طويلا عند شقة الأستاذ....	....he remained outside Mr. Sharif's apartment for a long time....	Splitting
	6	..... شقة الأستاذ.....	.....Mr. <u>Sharif's</u> apartment	Kind
	7	.... ويحنا عن رقم الأستاذ....	.....they <u>looked through</u> the directory	Splitting
	8	.... ثم الدقي.	.....after that <u>Dokki</u> .	Splitting
2	1	...ولم يكن من عادته أول الأمر أن يؤب	<u>Initially</u> , it wasn't his habit to go to the room....	Merging
	2	.... أن يؤب إلى الحجرة....	..... <u>go to</u> the room....	Splitting
	3	....هي منطلقة تتكلم الآن ومعتصمة	....she was <u>silent</u> .....	Merging
	4	ولماذا لم تكن تضعه ساعتها؟	....why she didn't put it <u>that time</u> ?	Splitting
	5	....غسيل في بيوت الأغنياء، ونهاره قراءة	Her day was washing in <u>rich people's houses</u> , and his was reading in <u>poor people's houses</u> ....	Splitting
	6	...بدأ يؤوب ساعة الظهر يريح جسده....	....he returned to <u>take a rest</u> in the afternoon.	Splitting
	7	.... في بيوت الأغنياء، ونهاره قراءة في	....in <u>rich people's houses</u> , his was reading in <u>poor people's houses</u> ...	Kind
3	1	قرار من رئيس الجمهورية يتأميم شركة....	A decision from the president of the Republic to <u>nationalize</u> the....	Kind
	2	إضطربت مشاعره بعنف .....	His feelings were violently <u>troubled</u> ..	Kind
	3	قد يراه رأي العين....	He <u>might</u> see him....	Kind
	4	.....شركة مساهمة مصرية.....	....an Egyptian <u>joint-stock</u>	Splitting
	5	قناة التخلص من الاستعمار	The <u>colonial</u> disposal canal.	Place
	6	وهو يتخيل نفسه مع جمال عبد الناصر في مدينة واحدة.	He imagines himself with Jamal Abdel Nasser in the <u>same</u> city.	Kind
4	1	والدفع مشكلة محيرة.	Payment is a confusing <u>problem</u> .	Place
	2	....ستبدأ حياتك....	....you <u>will start</u> your life....	Splitting
	3	لا خروج الا بدفع.	There is no exit only by paying.	Splitting
	4	ألقي القبض عليه.....	..... <u>arrested</u> ....	Merging
	5	.....يعاقب عليها القانون.	....a bribery <u>punishable</u> by law.	Kind
5	1	.....كلما ورد ذكر جمال عبد الناصر....	....whenever Jamal Abdel Nasser was <u>mentioned</u> ....	Merging
	2	كان الطلبة حريصين على استثارته....	The students were <u>keen</u> to evoke him	Kind
	3	....ويجد على السبورة باللغة الإنجليزية....	....and finds on the <u>blackboard</u> in English....	Merging
	4	....ويجد على السبورة باللغة الإنجليزية....	....and finds on the <u>blackboard</u> in English....	Kind
	5	...ويضعها على الطاولة أمامه:	And he puts it <u>in front of him</u>	Splitting
	6	بوسع صاحب هذا (الشيء) أن يسترجعه بعد أن أخرج.	The owner of this thing <u>can get it back</u> after I <u>get out</u> .	Splitting
	7	....بهدهو يتمشى مع سمعة....	....quietly <u>in line with</u> the reputation...	Splitting
6	1	هل سيفوز؟	Will he <u>win</u> ?	Splitting
	2	....فالويل من مشاكل التأشيرة والجمرك	....woe would be from the visa, customs, and housing <u>issues</u> .	Place
	3	هل كتبت الآية يا بعد كيدي؟	Did you write the verse my <u>beloved</u> ?	Kind
	4	....وهو يكتب بسرعة:	He <u>is writing</u> quickly:	Splitting
	5	الله يفتحها في وجهك يا أبوي.	God <u>bless you</u>	Kind
	6	تذكر دعاء أمه وهي تعانقه...	He remembered his mother's prayer when she <u>was hugging</u> him.	Splitting
Total	39			