| **RESEARCH ARTICLE**

Explicature in Translating Arabic Modern Fiction into English: Protraction and Interjection

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| **ABSTRACT**

This study aims at investigating 'explicature' as a quadruple norm in translating Arabic modern fiction into English on the basis of the translator's visibility. It is to show how explicature focuses on the author's background knowledge and appreciates the reader's language peculiarities by means of language catalysts in parentheses (i.e. interpolations). Four levels of explicature were found out: literal, formal, usable and liberal. Protracting and interjecting the potential reader's flow of attention, the translator's interpolations were obligatorily filling-out or specifying, optionally text-building or aesthetic, pragmatically local or global and technically inherent or revelatory. They could be modified by either full insertion, direct replacement, reverse replacement or full deletion. As the two medial types (formal and usable) are the most notable, this quadruple model of explicature is intended to be a distinct norm in translating texts of fiction across such two completely different linguistic systems and cultural backgrounds as Arabic and English.

| **KEYWORDS**

Explicature, equivalence, translator's interpolation, implicit/implication, explicit/explicitness, modern fiction.

1. Introduction

Explicature is a basic mode of thought in translation achieved by conveying the aesthetic and extra-linguistic features of the SL text (Borg, 2015; Murtisari, 2016). As a quadruple norm of equivalence, it is determined by the choice of strategy the translator makes on the basis of factors making up the translation situation. In this vein, explicature can be best defined as "the translator leav[ing] the writer alone as much as possible and mov[ing] the reader towards the writer" (Schleiermacher, cited in Venuti, 1995, p. 19-20) in relation to such notions as shifting and sincerity. Two methods of translation may be used in parallel: one sentence is semantically rendered while the other is communicative in the same text. Presenting an illusion of symmetry, the term of explicature, however, is only one of many goals the translator can set out to attain, among which is to semantically focus on meaning and communicatively on effect.

Arguing that there is no such thing as perfect equivalence, Pym (2007) stresses that equivalence is an equal-value relation. It can be optimum, partial… etc. and a translator is either confined to only using pre-existing equivalents or allowed to actively create his/her own ones (Bayar, 2007). In correspondence with Klaudy (1998/2008), this notion of confinement goes along with the obligatory kind of explicitation in translation as required by the syntactic and semantic language structures (cf. Pym, 2010) as the translator is almost blocked with a few choices. However, the nature of the translating process itself also triggers that of allowance (i.e. translation-proper explicitation) in connection with either the SL or TL text as the translator has larger choices. Almost all approaches to translation are continuums helping ideas be transferred literally or freely.

Equivalence might not be the best strategy if it does not necessarily produce a meaningful TL text. Dealing with proverbs, idioms and clichés, equivalence [...] is sought at the level of sense and not image" (Panou, 2013). A 'better' translation can result in non-equivalence (Kashgary, 2011) as affected by linguistic and cultural factors toward less untranslatable words, phrases, or expressions (cf. Haque, 2012). However, the usefulness of the concept of equivalence varies according to the stance of the translators concerned on what they regard as the virtues of equivalence itself (Panou, 2013). Coming to such linguistic typologies and cultural backgrounds as Arabic and English, quite different kinds of sentences and, hence, different kinds of translation problems. The translator might have little choice but to put together his/her own words or use a large number of linguistic variations.

In an intercultural communication, the receptor is almost the focus by resorting to domestication or explicature to the text's Skopos (Kim, 2015). According to Odero (2016), manipulating such resources is to find the equivalence of terms or expressions, which can be a matter of approximation rather than equation (cf. Kanani & Saidi, 2017). In fact, achieving explicature highly relies on the translator's decision to choose a suitable technique. It may be measured against the acceptability of the TL text, involving structural, semantic, and pragmatic correlations (Kyrychuk, 2018) along with the cultural differences with their special impact on explicature. By obligatory, optional, pragmatic or technical interpolations, having a latitude of expression for bringing the SL text into a synthesized one is still good for making plain archaic or misleading words/phrases (Hawamdeh, 2021).

On a related note, a translation is not to be restricted to the SL text but to the intended function, serving a range of communicative purposes (e.g., Vermeer, 1989; Toury, 1995). Explicature in this respect is functional or relative, yet to varying extents of explicature and acceptability. In a continuum of two extremes, Larson (1998) emphasizes sense-based equivalence to be idiomatic using the natural TL forms as it does not sound like a translation or unduly free adding extraneous information as it changes the SL meaning (p. 15-20). These subtypes of explicature might also apply to Klaudy's (1998/2008) model of explicitation as an essential property of translation. They could be treated by the translator's visibility as pragmatic or translation-proper. Therefore, the present study attempts to answer the following two questions:

1. What are the levels of explicature in translating fiction?
2. To what extent is the explicit or implicit meaning(s) maintained?

2. Research Method
The subject text of concern (ToC) was a bilingual reader titled *Modern Arabic Short Stories* co-translated into English by Ronal Husni & Daniel Newman (2008). Fictional narratives closely associated with socio-cultural factors and translating the same requiring a highly delicate amount of explicature represent the reason behind choosing this ToC. Dealing with translated works of art as part of their teaching processes, the researchers found the translator's visibility to almost trigger a special quadruplet of explicature in translation. Hence, they intended to apply this general finding to their undergraduate students in *Literary Translation*, knowing that 'explicature' is a continuum of two extremes: near/literal and far/liberal. Focusing on the equivalent effect of the translator's options for achieving explicature, the students observed 137 instances of translator's visibility.

A number of indicators contrasted the two texts to predict the explicature of the subject translations at the sentence level. As features that reflect how close or related the source and target sentences are, these indicators based themselves on both complexity and articulacy. The approach proposed for the purpose of the present study was a human assessment of explicature in translation to be possibly *formal* on two levels: one close to literality and the other to liberality. For the data analysis, the possible types of translator's visibility in the form of textual additions in parentheses (e.g. filling-out, text-building, contextual, translation-proper, interpretive... etc.) illustrating the same with appropriate examples were identified. Eventually, the level of explicature based on Point 1 above by translating the given texts of fiction (i.e., literal, formal, usable and liberal) and, hence, how the translator's visibility could be modified (by full insertion, direct/reverse replacement, or full deletion) were determined.

3. Explicature: A Special Quadruplet
As thoughtful as an account of fictional events has something to do with socio-cultural factors, the issue of equivalence can be highly delicate. In modern fiction as the meaning of a text seems to be shaped by another and, by virtue of further globalism, cultural mismatches are getting less, the translator's visibility triggers a special quadruplet of equivalence. Our text of concern for the purpose of this study is a bilingual reader titled as *Modern Arabic Short Stories* by Ronal Husni & Daniel Newman (2008) with texts rendered into English. Sixteen instances of special interpolations were selected and modified to illustrate our notion of quadruple explicature: literal and formal as linguistic specifications and usable and liberal as culture-bound explanations.

3.1 Protraction
Protraction is to continue the potential target reader's flow of attention by explicature to be modified for the purpose of the present study by either full insertion or full deletion:

1. *Full insertion*:
    a) On a literal level, the translator's explicature in the form of bracketed interpolations is kept up in parentheses in the translated text in a filling-out manner: i) *grammatically* as in "[t]hese people will call it 'Sidi Daud's and (*that they*) will hang candles [...] along its walls" (p. 62) to be instead as "[t]hese people will call it 'Sidi Daud's and (*that they*) will hang candles [...] along its walls," and ii) *lexically* as in "[T]ake what you like from these wordly goods improve your (*bad*) situation with it" (p. 26) to be instead as "[T]ake what you like from these wordly goods improve your (*bad*) situation with it!" This type of explicature is necessarily performed for avoiding any structurally or meaningfully ill-formed sentences in a conscious or automatic manner.
    b) The interpolations on the translator's part on a usable level are, however, kept out of parentheses in the translated text: i) *locally*, on phrase-level as in "[t]hese were definitely his students (*with their features faded or grimy*)" (p. 74) to be instead as "[t]hese were definitely his students (*with their features faded or*) grimy," or on clause-one as in "[T]he way she looked at me [...] (*that I was able to deciper despite my bewilderment*)" (p. 240) to be instead as "[T]he way she looked [...] (*that I was able to deciper*) despite my bewilderment," and ii) *globally* in a filling-out manner as in "[T]he combined smells of exhaust fumes, people and food [*rushing* (*into her nostrils*)] were sweater to her" (p. 250) to be instead as "[T]he combined smells of exhaust fumes, people and food (*rushing*) into her nostrils were sweater to her." Such interpolations are caused by differences in text-building strategies and stylistic preferences.

1. *Full deletion*:
    a) On another level (namely formal) as the translator attempts to interfere in the SL text, the explicature is kept out of parentheses in the translated text in a text-building manner: i) *on word-level* as in "[S]he raised her hand to her chest, and took out ten pounds from her (*dress*)" (p. 46) to be instead as "[S]he raised her hand to her chest, and took out ten pounds from her (*dress*)," and ii) *on phrase-level* as in "[S]he laughed with joy, as sadness was a child (*that was*) running away from her" (p. 50) to be instead as "[S]he laughed with joy, as sadness was a child (*that was*) running away from her." The translator here renders the meaning(s) yet hands everything on a plate to the TL reader along with an equivalent load of communication.
    b) The liberal level of the translator's explicature is almost represented by interpolations which are kept out of parentheses in the translated text if they are translation-proper in relation to the SL text as in "[W]hen he saw the anxious look [...], he murmured: May God (*Allah* عز وجل) have mercy on us" (p. 110) to be instead as "[W]hen he saw the anxious look [...], he murmured: May God (Allah عز وجل) have mercy on us!" The translator here might hold an equivalent effect to the TL readers as almost caused by the process itself for further stylistic appropriateness in case that the resultant text is thought to be either unnatural or unidiomatic.

3.2 Interjection
Interjection is to interrupt the TL reader's flow of attention by explicature to be modified for the purpose of this study by either direct replacement or reverse replacement:

1. *Direct replacement*:
    a) Back to literality, the interpolations on this level are kept up in parentheses in the translated text in a specifying manner: i) *grammatically* as in "[T]here (*in the house*) were pictures of her uncles, her sons, her deceased husband and family" (p. 208) to be instead as "[T]here (*in the house*) were pictures of her uncles, her sons, her deceased husband and family," and ii) *lexically* as in "[s]he came [...] knocking my door persistently (*in a continuous manner*)" (p. 212) to be instead as "[s]he came [...] after midnight and she had been knocking my door persistently (*in a continuous manner*)." The translator at least closely sticks to the SL lexis/syntax which helps adjust the SL form to the TL requirements.
    b) The same technique is used on the usable level as the interpolations are kept out of parentheses in the translated text only *globally* in a specifying manner as in "[Y]ou smelled other women's perfumes on his clothes [...] (*imagining what they looked like—if they were better looking*)" (p. 254) to be instead as "[Y]ou smelled other women's perfumes on his clothes [...] (*imagining what they looked like—if they were better looking*)." Here, the meaning(s) is rendered, the context is respected, interpreted and even explained, produce equivalent structures of semantic nature if the resultant text is thought to be either unnatural or unidiomatic.

2. *Reverse replacement*:
    a) The interpolations on a formal level are kept out of parentheses in the TL text stylistically as to rendering: i) *proper names* as in "[T]hey had different features, as Nasibi (*Destiny*) had a white complexion with black eyes [...]" (p. 114) to be instead as "[T]hey had different features, as Destiny (*Nasibi*) had a white complexion [...]," and ii) *common nouns* as in "[a]nd then there were the visits to the shrines of saints for Baraka (*Blessing*)" (p. 190) to

be instead as "[a]nd then there were the visits to the shrines of saints for Blessing (*Baraka*)." They could be left out of the text due to cultural or shared-knowledge differences while the TL text remains acceptable to the TL readership.

b) Also kept out of parentheses in the TL text, this techniques occurs on the liberal level: i) *translation-properly* in relation to the TL text as in "[T]hey had often heard about his own 'Amanah (*honesty and integrity*) at work" (p. 228) to be instead as "[T]hey had often heard about his own 'Amanah (honesty and integrity) at work," and ii) *interpretively*, on phrase-level as in "[s]he's the wife of your managing director, talk about a reversal of fortune (*i.e. things changing*)" (p. 232) to be instead as "[s]he's the wife of your managing director, talk about a reversal of fortune (*i.e. things changing*)!" or on clause-level as in "[S]heikh Ali [...] did not like anyone to talk about him (*if people talked about his poverty*)" (p. 274) to be instead as "[S]heikh Ali [...] did not like anyone to talk about him (*if people talked about his poverty*)." Here, the interpolations only rely upon the translator's view of a relationship between the author's text and its TL version.

In light of the analysis above, four translational techniques are introduced: full insertion, direct and reverse replacement and full deletion. They are almost co-text-oriented based on referents that "take place in the reader's representation of the fictional world" (Malmkjaer, 1998, p. 31). As a text is best regarded to be a semantic unit, such techniques help make up the texture or, say, the property of being a text. This is to explore all the resources English has for giving a text unity and purpose, and two types of the narrative texture are served by the translator's visibility. One is the lexico-grammatical sets of linking to hold the translated text together, represented by literality and formality. The other, represented by usability and liberality, is the ways of content-organizing letting the text be of sense, have structured sentences and relate its concepts to the situation.

4. Back to Bipolarity in Translation

Almost all approaches to translation are continuums with two extremes by which ideas are transferred literally or freely. The former is the word-for-word extreme (*based on formal correspondence*) as the meaning of a text conveyed—depending on what is the balance that the translator aims for—is the central concern. As fluency is not as important as fidelity, less natural awkward phrases might be produced. The latter extreme, however, is sense-for-sense (*on the basis of dynamic equivalence*) and is much less a translation than really a recreation. As fluency is more important than fidelity, a translator is given a greater latitude of expression for bringing the SL text into a contemporary one. Eventually, to translate is the act of rendering as closely as possible (i.e. *conservativity*) or rendering the sense (i.e. *alternativity*).

1. The translator's conservative visibility entails that the SL and TL words shall refer to the same thing in the real world focusing attention on both form and content. As perception shapes language (cf. Whorf, 1956), it employs the syntactic and semantic constraints to reproduce the author's precise meaning(s) on two levels: literal and formal.

   a) Literality in translation is caused by the various syntactic and semantic structures of either language in question by means of textual additions in parentheses to:
      i. put the translated text of fiction together by filling out any implicit, unstated parts of it or
      ii. put on weight any indirect, oblique expressions and give necessarily relevant sorts of specification.
   b) Formality in translation is influenced by the tolerable degree of freedom or the translator's own notions of how to efficiently render the TL text by means of additions to:
      i. draw together the translated fictional text by efficiently giving it real, specific amount of unequivocal sense or
      ii. hold up the style of diction or stylistic usage of transliterated-in-Arabic proper names and lexical units.

2. The translator's alternative visibility entails that the SL and TL words trigger the same or similar associations in the minds of the speakers of the two languages. As language shapes perception (cf. Whorf, 1956), it seeks the same effect on the TL readers as it is originally produced by the author on the SL ones on two levels: usability and liberal.

   a) Usability in translation is triggered by the TL reader's need to share the same historical, geographic and cultural knowledge with the SL one by means of additions to:
      i. be second, unmarked parts of bigger interpolations putting up the text and amplify its semantic value or
      ii. be extra interpolations for further putting up the text and adding exegetical values to the translation.
   b) Liberality in translation is to entail that the TL version is regularly longer than the SL one, the matter which is referred to the amount of explicitness by means of additions to:
      i. come out of the translating process as related to the target or source language texts of fiction or
      ii. explain given parts of the text based on the instant context or the translator's world of knowledge.

For a visual representation of the visibility of the translator in modern fiction, Figure 2 below illustrates the same. It is to add an item in brackets and the additions [linguistic or perceptual (cf. Crawford, Regier & Huttenlocher, 2000)] are kept as is, handled in some way or scraped out of the text. Universally shared categories constraining a range of possible linguistic ones can be manipulated by full insertion and direct replacement. The habitual use of a specific language directing one's attention to perceptual aspects can be, however, manipulated by reverse replacement and full deletion. The former is a conservative level of translatability while the latter is alternative. The translator's visibility seems to be highly necessary in order to produce grammatical and meaningful TL sentences by full-insertion.
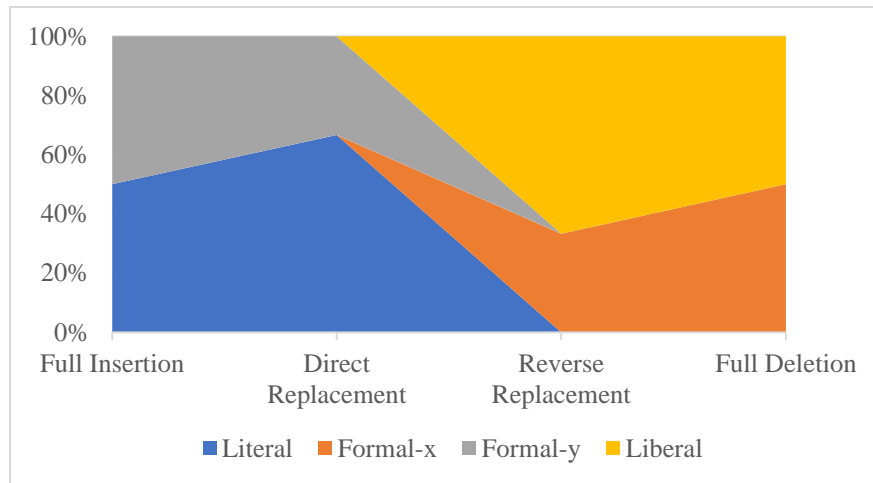

Figure 1. A Visual Representation of the Translator's Visibility in Modern Fiction

5. Conclusion

Many definitions have been given to the issue of equivalence or translation since it was a science. In most of these definitions, two major components of language—along with sound and style—have been insisted on: vocabulary and grammar. A good translation can be the one in which "the merit of the original work is transfused completely into another language" (Tytler cited in Bell, 1991, p. 11). It is to account for every item of the text by some form of transfer operation (Newmark, 1981, p. 155) and find one-to-one units in two languages (Crystal, 2005, p. 346). For producing functionally adequate results (Munday, 2001, p. 79), the translator can be deliberately visible by means of interpolations for fitting the concise language and cultural nature of (a narrative) SL text.

Helping avoid ambiguity or misleading references, a translator's interpolation is to clarify SL meanings. However, such kind of translator's visibility becomes an imprecise procedure if it causes over-translation and, thus, disloyalty to the SL text, of which any translation of a text of concern can be accused. It might be necessary for explaining, defining, illustrating and describing something in the SL text on the one hand yet misleading or unpredictable as the TL reader's flow of attention is interrupted on the other hand. Moreover, to keep to the TL stylistic demands and grammatical conventions, certain kinds of structural adjustment in translation are inevitably looked for. With reference to the visibility strategy described above, the translator's interpolations are summed to be:

1. literal and formal under a conservative umbrella by remaining within the SL structure and completing its meaning(s), with little choice given to the translator for explaining linguistic or non-linguistic information, or
2. usable and liberal under an alternative umbrella by communicating and putting across SL elements to TL readers, with a large number of variations for the translator to provide an easier and more reliable interpretation.

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