



Revue de Traduction et Langues Volume 22 Numéro 01/2023
Journal of Translation Languages مجلة الترجمة واللغات
ISSN (Print):1112-3974 EISSN (Online): 2600-6235



Metaphors Are Missing: Critique of Arabic Translation Strategies of Gendered Metaphors

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0009-0005-1019-6144

To cite this paper:

Sabra, N.A.E. (2023). Metaphors Are Missing: Critique of Arabic Translation Strategies of Gendered Metaphors. *Revue Traduction et Langues* 22 (1), pp-pp. 234-251.

Received: 14/02/2023; **Accepted:** 05/06/2023, **Published:** 30/06/2023

Keywords

Arabic
translation
strategies,
Author's and
translator's
voices
Gendered
Metaphor,
The Cleft,
Doris
Lessing,
translation
Strategies,

Abstract

*This article falls within the broad area of translation studies in the context of feminist translation. It focuses on the strategies employed in translating gendered metaphors, and it carries out a critical analysis of gendered metaphors translation in Doris Lessing's novel *The Cleft* (2007) and its two Arabic translations. The first translation is done by Mohamed Darwish under the title (*The Female*) (*Al- Ūntha*) 2008 and published by Mohamed Bin Rashid Al Maktoum Foundation. The second translation is done by Mohamed Ibrahim Al Abdalla under the title (*The Rift*) (*Al- Šād*) 2012 and published by the Arab Writers Union. The article focuses on and examines the cases where the translation of gendered metaphor presents challenge to Arab translator because of cultural differences. It argues that the areas where the translation of unconventional gendered metaphor challenges target culture deserve attention and need to be examined. The article offers a critique of the translation strategies employed by Arab translators for these unconventional metaphors. The article argues that gendered metaphors that appeared in feminist literary works invites different translation strategies when it is translated from English into Arabic. The article shows to what extent feminism values and agenda are reflected in Gendered metaphors that are developed by female writers. The analysis of translation strategies that Arab translators utilised in their translations of these metaphors intends to show which strategy is able to ensure a balanced representation of the author's and the translator's voices and render gendered non-traditional images in different cultures. The study vouches for hybridity as a strategy in translating gendered metaphors from English into Arabic, the article argues that Arab translators who are dealing with verbal gendered metaphor might need to adopt new approaches/ translation strategies to render the purpose of these metaphors in a different culture and bridges the gap in feminism discourse.*



المخلص

الكلمات المفتاحية

تناول هذه الورقة البحثية الاستراتيجيات المستخدمة في ترجمة استعارات النوع الاجتماعي من الإنجليزية إلى العربية والتحديات التي يواجهها المترجمون العرب في الحفاظ على الصور الغير نمطية للنوع الاجتماعي والعلاقات بين الجنسين. يهدف المقال الى نقد وتحليل الاستراتيجيات المستخدمة من المترجمين العرب بهدف الوصول الى استراتيجيات قادرة على استيعاب هذه الاستعارات الغير تقليدية في المترجمات العربية. ويلقي البحث الضوء حول اهمية تبني او اعتماد المترجمين العرب الذين يتعاملون مع هذا النوع من الاستعارات استراتيجيات ترجمة جديدة قادرة على احتواء هذه النوع من الصور الغير نمطية للجنسين في الثقافة العربية.

استراتيجيات الترجمة
ترجمة استعارات النوع
الاجتماعي
دوريس
ليسين

1. Introduction

This article illustrates the strategies employed in translating gendered verbal metaphors from English into Arabic and the challenges faced by Arab translators in preserving female writers' nontraditional images that disturb gender stereotypes and gender relations in the target culture.

The article compares translation strategies that Arab translators employ in translating Lessing's gendered metaphors. The analysis of these strategies intends to show which strategy is able to ensure a balanced representation of the author's and the translator's voices and render Lessing's gendered nontraditional images in different cultures.

The article addresses the position of Lessing of the inevitable relationship between males and females. It highlights the cultural context of Lessing's gendered metaphors in order to show to what extent feminism values are reflected in the gendered metaphors that female writers developed in their literary works. It also offers a critique of the translation strategies employed by Arab translators for these unconventional metaphors, and the target culture context influence on translators' choices of translation strategies.

2. The position of Lessing of the inevitable relationship between males and females

Lessing took an equivocal position of gender relations as part of the larger human condition. Despite the fact that Lessing refused the label of feminist, she utilized her literary works to address female identity and female inferior and unequal position in the society. The majority of Lessing's works address the idea of gender conflict, and female frustration vis-à-vis the way women are treated compared to males. However, Lessing is



more concerned with the concept of equity than with simple female self-assertion. She states in the preface of her novel *The Golden Notebook* (1962) that “to get the subject of Women’s Liberation over with – I support it, of course, because women are second-class citizens...I support their aims but I don’t like their shrill voices and their nasty ill-mannered ways”. Therefore, the majority of her works are preoccupied with gender relations and how male and female manage to coexist. For example, she questioned female identity in her novel *The Golden Notebook* (1962): she says, “they still define us in terms of relationship with men, even the best of them” (5).

The analyses of Lessing's novels show that she tackled the idea of female identity, and supports feminists' argument that a woman is not regarded as autonomous being, she is "defined and differentiated with reference to man not he with reference to her" (De Beauvoir, 1953, 29). A woman according to the patriarchal system is the incidental, the inessential as opposed to the essential. A Man is the subject, the absolute and a woman is the other (De Beauvoir 1953). Being the other is to be the non-subject, the non-person, and to be the mere body (Daragheh 2018). In other words, female identity is based on opposition, otherness, and difference. In fact, Lessing managed to raise gender-sensitive questions in a quiet if not gracious manner that does not necessarily sharply criticize traditional gender stereotypes or gender roles.

In *The Cleft* (2007), Lessing employs the approach of the gender-based metaphor to introduce new images of both sexes; and while she offers images of women who possess the capacity for cruelty and self-defense, she presents men as parasitic and weak creatures. In the preface to *The Cleft* (2007) she states that she depicts men who “lack the solidity of women, who seem to have been endowed with a natural harmony with the ways of the world. ... Men in comparison are unstable and erratic” (v). Lessing, in her novel *The Cleft* (2007), introduces three main nontraditional gendered metaphors: ‘cleft’, ‘other’ and ‘sea squirt’. The analysis of the cultural context of Lessing’s gender metaphors shows the transgressive style and resistance discourse undergone in the novel through using these gendered metaphors. Lessing addresses a main issue in feminism discourse through these nontraditional gendered metaphors development: there-conceptualization of female identity, she introduces female as the subject, the absolute and male as ‘the Other’. In *The Cleft* ‘the Other’ Does not refer anymore to female. Lessing deconstructed the view of the concept of female as ‘the Other’ and created a new social order.

3. Female Identity Re-conceptualization

Feminists argue that female identity is based on opposition, otherness, and difference. Several critics find otherness as gender identity a core denominator. Therefore, man asserts himself as subject and free-being, he constructed the identity of women as other. Stoller (1985) explains that, “gender identity starts with the knowledge and awareness, whether conscious or unconscious, that one belongs to one sex and not



the other” (10). Thus, describing woman as other signifies that she isn't a fellow creature (De Beauvoir 1953).

Paechter (2003) and Daragheh (2018) state that the concept of describing woman as other is used as a means to differentiate woman from the 'normal' male subject. Woman is positioned as other because of the dualistic tradition of western philosophical thought: “this tradition looks at the world through a series of dichotomies pairs: mind/body, reason/emotion, public/private” (Paechter, 2003, 9). Paechter (2003) argues that these pairs are not equal as the one or the subject is always given priority over the other. Weiner (1994) and Hentschel (2019) proposes the same idea and states that as women, we may differ in ethnic origin, class or culture, but what unites us are our experiences of otherness and the exclusion from the site of power and meaning-making.

In accordance with feminist critics' argument, female writers have tried to develop new words that might be used to describe female and male, female life's experiences and the way they see themselves and their bodies. Lessing, in her novel *The Cleft* (2007), employed gender-based metaphor to create new images of both sexes. She used the word 'cleft' and 'sea squirt' instead of the word "female" and "male" to challenge the dominant social belief about female and female body.

Despite the absences of clear evidence that links Lessing to materialist feminists, her usage of these two new words affirms her belief that these male and female concepts are socially constructed. Her novel narrator explains that males and females are new words that clefts had not heard of until they met squirts. Lessing uses her literary works to address the relationship between female and metaphorical language.

The analysis of metaphorical language in *The Cleft* shows that metaphorical language is a means of power that can be utilized to bring to the forefront the issues of female identify and offer the possibility of a society in which male and female would live together as complementary halves, once they accept each other as equal. Lessing developed these new metaphors to shed the light on some of the man-made meaning which creates females' images and establishes a relation between both genders in order to show the radical changes that might occur when new words are used and relationship between both sexes are rearranged.

De Beauvoir (1953) states that, by the time humankind reached the written mythology the patriarchy was definitively established: "the males were to write the codes. It was natural for them to give woman a subordinate position"(104). Lessing (2007) affirms this idea and shows in her novel that females have an oral version of history but this version was subject to destruction and “locking up” once humanity reached the stage of writing. Lessing argues that there is a sort of truth suppression in writing history.

The clefts version's of history is altered and that results in enhancing men's, the squirts' superiority and putting 'the clefts' in the inferior position. The idea of otherness and the role language plays in oppressing women are central ideas in feminism discourse. Consequently, the way Lessing addresses these two issues in her novel oblige



researchers to consider the literary culture in which the text was produced and Lessing's position in this culture. Moreover, the analysis of the conditions that affected the production of Lessing's gendered metaphors might provide information about some of the decisions that Arab translators made in their translations of these metaphors, and their choices of translation strategies.

4. The Analysis of Lessing's Gendered Metaphors

In *The Cleft*, Lessing draws an imagined image of humankind; she developed nontraditional gender-based metaphors not only to rename both sexes but also to redefine the relation between them. She reconstructed female identity by putting women in the higher position, and while she affirms female identities as the absolute, the subject, she puts male in other position. In her novel the narrator states that, "males are always put first, in our practice. They are first in our society, despite the influence of certain great ladies ... yet I suspect this priority was a later invention." (Lessing, 2007, p. 29).

Lessing uses gendered metaphors to show that words such as 'male' and 'female' are social construction. In her pre-gender community there was no male or female. The words 'male' and 'female' are invented by society, and the same applies for the 'superiority of male' and the 'inferiority of female'. In other words, the hierarchy between the sexes is also socially constructed. Or as Lessing (2007) sarcastically states: There is something inherently implausible about males as subsidiary arrivals: it is evident that males are by nature and designed by Nature to be first... It is much easier to believe that eagles, or even deer, were our progenitors, than that the people were in their beginning entirely female, and the males a later achievement.

Lessing develops gendered metaphors to address two main issues: the social construction of sex and gender and gender hierarchy. She uses her novel to affirm her stance as a female writer concerned with female position in the society. She also explains in her novel's preface that women should have higher position in the gender hierarchy as men lack women solidity and they are unstable in comparison to women. The gendered metaphors in *The Cleft* are not cosmetic but rather carry her argument. Lessing (2007) stated that one of the recent scientific articles that tackled the origin of humanity is the motive behind her novel.

In her explanation of the role of metaphor, Larson (1998) argues that an original metaphor "is one which is understood only after paying special attention to the comparison which is being made" (p. 274). Lessing encourages her readers by using original metaphor to draw a comparison between female and the female body dominant social image and the way females see themselves and their own bodies. Feminist critics state that women's role as writers, intellectuals and translators is to create new language, new challenging metaphors which envision the necessity to re-think women's writing as connected to the female body. They argue that a woman by writing herself, she will not



only return to the body which has been more confiscated from her, but also will allow her speech which was censored to be heard (Federici (2011); Cixous (1976).

Lessing uses new gendered metaphor to challenge the prevailing culture beliefs of weak female body by likening a female to a rock with harsh edges “You got angry when I say Monsters, but just look at yourself- and look at me. Go on, look...Now look at The Cleft, we are the same, ... I am beautiful, just like The Cleft” (Lessing 2007, pp. 11-12). Lessing does emphasize the resemblance between female body and the rocky cleft to deconstruct the prevailing image of vulnerable female body.

To explain the role of metaphor, Musolff (2007) argues that metaphors do not only label and modify the subject by giving it new name, but also introduces and normalizes the new name in the society. Allowing the new name to be put on a normal footing and be treated as seemingly common or unproblematic name. Forceville (1998) also states that, “creative metaphors call their referents into being. An important consequence of the fact that the referent is created by the very act of producing the metaphor is that no truth/ falsehood test can be applied” (p. 41).

To put it clearly, original gendered metaphor does not only construct new gendered images in culture but also protects these new images from being questioned, as it is a “violation of philosophical grammar to assign either truth or false to creative or original metaphor” (Forceville 1998, pp. 25-26). Thus, translating gendered metaphors is not only culturally challenging but also calls for applying a creative translation strategy based on negotiation between the translator, the author and the function of metaphors.

It is fair to say that Lessing’s novel addresses the challenges that translators face in translating a work which adopts feminist stance and tackles gender based issues such as gender hierarchy, gender equality or re-conceptualization of female identity. The novel’s narrator states that, “the female kept records- and I cannot bring myself to write down all that is there; and the male kept records: and I do bring myself to write down what is there” (Lessing 2007, p. 49). The novel’s narrator states that historians are defeated by the historical documents written by early females 'Clefts' not only because of their difficulty but also because of their nature, as they offer new words and they failed to identify these words source.

5. The critique of the translations strategies of Lessing’s metaphors:

5.1. The Cleft

"The Cleft is that rock there, which isn't the entrance to cave, it is blind, and it is the most important thing in our lives. It has always been so. We are the cleft, the cleft is us...Now look at The Cleft, we are the same, The Cleft and the clefts." (Lessing 2007, pp. 9-10, 11)

"الكهف هو تلك الصخرة القائمة هناك ولا تشكل مدخلا الي أي كهف من الكهوف لأنه كهف بلا مخرج وهو أهم شئ في حياتنا وهكذا كان شأنه دوما. فنحن الكهف والكهف هو نحن ... الآن انظروا الي الكهف. نحن متشابهات. المرأة والنساء." (Darwish 2008, pp. 27,29).



"الصدع هو تلك الصخرة وهي ليست مدخلا للكهف وهي غير ظاهرة للعيان وأهم شئني حياتنا. كانت هكذا دواما. نحن الصدع والصدع هو نحن. ... الآن انظر الى الصدع، تشبهنا تماماً، الصدع والصدوع". (Al Abdalla, 2012, p. 22)

In Darwish's translation of Lessing's metaphor, he questioned the meaning of 'Cleft' metaphor, and then justified his choice of using the word 'female' in his preface. He states that Lessing used the word "Cleft" to refer to female and to the place where these females live. Darwish (2008) argues that it is hard to find an equivalent in Arabic that offers the two meanings at the same time. In other words, Darwish demonstrates that his translation involves a negotiation between him and the author's agent. Consequently, he converts Lessing's metaphor into a technical term and neglected the mental image process that Lessing intended to create through using original metaphor. He translated the metaphor "cleft", the sign that makes us think of something else into an idea. By transferring the word 'cleft' into female and cave, he provides the reader with his own thoughts rather than the author's sign. Short (2007)

argues that, "idea is not one thing that makes us think of another. It is the thought of that other" (p. 3). By opting for the more explicit word, "female" (*untha*), Darwish overlooked the effect of description by proxy as done by Lessing. He offered the reader, his own understanding of the word "cleft", for which he could not find an equivalent similar to Lessing's meaning. He questions the validity of Lessing's metaphor 'cleft' concerning the dominant social beliefs about women in the target culture, and then conceals the author's attempt to challenge this dominant social belief about women. In other words, he "enlists the foreign text in the maintenance or revision of [the target] dominant cultural paradigms" (Venuti, 2008).

Simon (2006) states that, "Translation can sometimes create the illusion of a relation between cultures when that tie is purely superficial. This illusion can promote a fiction of transparency and equality, making translation into an effortlessly friendly word". (p. 18). The way Darwish transformed Lessing's erotic image of female 'cleft' into a familiar and understandable expression 'female' gives the illusion that his translation of the metaphor mirrors Lessing's metaphor. Darwish believed that his explicit use of the word *unthais* a means to bring the author closer to the target reader, by explaining Lessing to the Arab receiver; however, his translation does not convey the idea of Lessing's metaphor. To put it clearly, Darwish's translation functioned as a site of surveillance and controlled the purpose of Lessing metaphor.

Feminist translation theorists state that one of the most influencing feminist translation strategies is hijacking because it allows the translator to modify the original text and use it to serve her /his own purposes or intentions (Flotow, 2009). While feminists created these translation strategies, they have no power over the implementation of it. A strategy is a matter of design and planning, but implementation is something has to do with the translator's decision. Feminist translation strategy



precisely hijacking is a double edge sword. It can help feminist translators to disseminate feminist content on an international scale and “politicize readers in such a way that they could say: I read the book, and it changed my life” (Lopera, 2017). But it also allows other translators with different ideologies to manipulate feminist texts, especially literary texts, and to get rid of unconventional images, or idea, and abide nontraditional metaphors to stereotyped images created by the target culture, which keeps target readers trapped in cultural stereotypes with its conservative gender roles.

Translator theorists state that domestication is to minimize the strangeness of the foreign text for target language readers (Shuttleworth & Cowie, 1997). The difference between domestication and hijacking can be seen in the function. The purpose of domestication in translation studies is to make the translated text understandable to target reader, on the other hand hijacking is to place a different ideology into the translated text.

Lakoff and Johnson (2003) state that there are two schools of dealing with metaphor: the traditional school that deals with metaphor as a cosmetic language and the other school that deals with metaphor as a central element concerning the construction of social reality. They also state that while ordinary words convey only what we know already, it is from metaphor that we can get hold of something fresh and that is the reason behind the fear of metaphor (Lakoff & Johnson, 2003). This explains why in Darwish’s translation of Lessing’s gendered metaphor ‘cleft’ there is no negotiation between the function of the metaphor and the translator. He hijacks Lessing’s metaphor, deletes her new image and replaces it with the accepted concept in the target culture. Even when Lessing employs the metaphor to show female body strength by confirming the resemblance of the female body to the rock of the cleft “now look at the cleft, we are the same, the cleft and the clefts” (Lessing 2007, p. 11).

Darwish (2008) appropriates or changes the whole image to what he assumes the common target cultural view of the female body “الآن انظروا الي الكهف. نحن متشابهات. المرأة ”. According to Darwish's translation women cannot be likened to rock or visualized as powerful as they are fragile, weak and delicate. Therefore, he hijacks Lessing’s image, distorts it and replaces it with what he believes is understandable and acceptable to target reader, or the dominant and female culturally accepted concept. To put it clearly, when there are multiple cultural differences between target and the source language, the employment of hijacking strategy is inconvenient because it may affect the negotiation process between the translator and gendered metaphors, especially when the translator is dealing with feminist literary works.

On the other hand, the analysis of Al Abdalla’s translation of Lessing’s gendered metaphors shows that he employed a different strategy in his translation. He places emphasis not only on providing information which target readers can understand, but also introduces the metaphor function in a way that target reader can establish its relevance and then respond to it when applied. Al Abdalla’s translation of Lessing’s



metaphor 'the cleft' is an example of challenging gender stereotypes through translation. There is negotiation not only between the translator and the author, but also between the translator and the function of the metaphor. Al Abdalla simulates Lessing's construction of gendered metaphors to introduce an unconventional perspective to the target culture and to deconstruct preexisting knowledge about gender relations in Arabic. Maalej (2008) argues that metaphor untranslatability in unrelated cultures is due to the cultural reference absences of a source language metaphor in the target language. Indeed, cultural differences play a vital role in translating metaphors, however the way Lessing chose a gendered metaphor connected with female body rather than a metaphor with cultural orientation gives her gendered metaphor universality.

Simon (2006) argues that what is translatable does not depend on language, but rather "it depends on the ability to imagine beyond the borders of one's own experience" (p. 17). The Arabic literal translation of Lessing's metaphor 'the cleft' is 'الفلق' al-falq. While employing foreignization conveys the metaphor's literal meaning, it does not convey the function of such original and creative metaphor. Using transliteration or literal translation in translating the metaphor "cleft" does not convey the actual image intended by the author, or how females see their bodies as powerful. Therefore, Al Abdalla uses a different word 'الصّدع' al-ṣād which means a rift in a hard rock, and its plural form is 'الصدوع' al-ṣūd. Al Abdalla did not look for direct lexical meaning of the metaphor "cleft", but rather focused on the purpose behind development and usage of such image. Al Abdalla challenges his cultural border and offers an unconventional image of females. Therefore, he translates it as al-ṣad to preserve the metaphor's intended purpose.

Al Abdalla's translation affirms that he deals with translation as a hybrid product. He did not integrate foreign text in target culture. He did not domesticate the new image to the target cultural values; neither did he employ foreignization as literal translation or transliteration. He is more open to the idea offered by Lessing's unconventional metaphor, and he illustrates the metaphor's purpose in a way that helps target reader to get hold of the new image and have the same experience that the original text reader has. It is clear that Al Abdalla, in his translation of Lessing's metaphor 'the cleft' employs a different strategy based on hybridity and considers the metaphor's function rather than its meaning. This allows target reader to get hold of the new image's purpose.

6. Sea Squirt

Sea Squirt is the gendered metaphor that Lessing developed to describe male. Lessing stated that she prefers the word 'sea squirt' to 'monsters', "as for the Squirts- and I like that term better than the monsters: at least it is accurate" (Lessing 2007, 40). Lessing developed an image of males that are parasitic, shrugging off any responsibilities, recklessly endangering the offspring. The translation of such



unacceptable image of male in Arabic culture needs for applying a translating strategy based on negotiation between translator, author and the metaphor function. Lessing used this image to show that both genders have their cons and pros. She employed this metaphor to show that while male possess the sense of adventure, they lack the solidity and the sense of responsibility of female. Lessing intended through her metaphor to show the need of both sexes to each other. She tried to create a compatible relationship between male and female by creating an image of female as a rock and male as sea squirt. Translating such implicit image needs a specific translation strategy that preserves the image, and uncovers its unclear meaning.

"I am beautiful, just like the cleft..., but you are all...like a sea squirt²" (Lessing, 2007, p. 12)

فأنا جميلة مثل الكهف ... اما أنتم فليستم سوي ... وحوش (Darwish2008, 24)
 انا جميلة تماما كما الصدع ... لكنكم جميعا شيء ... يشبهه ... نافور البحر. (Al Abdalla2012, 23)

In Darwish's translation of the metaphor 'sea squirt', he saw a threat to the dominant social belief about both genders in Lessing's metaphors. Thus, he deconstructed her unusual image, deleted the metaphor and followed the dominant social attitude towards both genders by converting the word 'sea squirt' into 'monster'. The way Darwish dealt with Lessing's image of male shows his refusal to Lessing's image of male as 'sea squirt'. According to his translation, a male should be huge, powerful, strong and a monster-like but not a 'sea squirt'. A man should not be a vulnerable, peaceful and soft creature at any cost. Therefore, Darwish hijacked the text, omitted the metaphor and constructed a new image that reflects the target text culture. In other words, he utilized hijacked strategy and altered the metaphor. According to Von Flotow (1991), the hijacking strategy allows translators to distort the text and deliberately feminizes the target text. What feminist theorists have missed is that once you create a strategy with powerful function, you have no control over its usage.

Darwish avoided a translation that confirms the parasitic nature of this creature to describe male and rather introduced an image that befits the current male's gender stereotypes as strong and powerful. Lessing draws an image of male as a 'sea squirt' or a 'parasitic creature' and female as a 'cleft' or a 'host'. This image is considered as defeminized image; a man cannot be parasitic and a woman cannot be a host. Therefore, Darwish hijacks the text by deconstructing Lessing's image and constructing a different image that reflects the target text culture. Darwish deletes the metaphor despite that fact that Lessing has stated that she prefers the word 'sea squirt' to 'monsters', "as for the Squirts- and I like that term better than the monsters: at least it is accurate" (Lessing 2007, p. 40). Furthermore, the translator puts gendered metaphor under true-falsehood test by questioning the image validity in the target culture instead of adopting the new



image. Darwish deconstructed the purpose of the metaphor, discarded the mental image and transferred it into a technical term.

On the other hand, Al Abdalla considers the metaphor's function and allows Lessing's image to be visualized by introducing a literal translation of it. The interpretation of this metaphorical image provokes two arguments. The first argument is about the search for reason behind the new name simultaneously at source and target level. The second argument, after having established the reason behind new label, is about the 'practical' conclusion that is the necessity of radically eliminating the supposed biased word and replacing it by the new one (Musolff, 2007).

A few of Lessing's readers will try to get more information about this uncommon metaphor. A sea squirt is a very advanced sea animal on the evolutionary scale, but unlike many sea animals, once it finds a suitable rock, it cements itself to it and becomes basically a big stomach with two sacks pumping water in and out filtering carried food. Unlike the social perception of male, as a powerful, active and strong creature, Lessing introduces this new image of male as passive, vulnerable and parasitic which affirms female strength. Lessing does not develop this metaphor by chance but rather shows that both genders have inseparable relationship.

By using an image contrasting the female prevailing image as a dependent sex and male as self-contained and breadwinner; she introduces a reversed image of this relationship. Al Abdalla's translation allows Lessing's metaphor to be visualized by her readers. Al Abdalla uses footnoting to draw attention to the metaphor's implicit meaning. He provides a more literal translation of the metaphor possibly to introduce the reader to a potentially different conceptualization of gender role and gender hierarchy. Al Abdalla, in his translation of the metaphor 'sea squirt', deals with translation as a hybrid point or space where cultural, ideological and social differences are articulated and acknowledged by target reader. He does not suppress the different cultural views offered by the new metaphor; neither has he propagated its ideas. He allows his translation to circulate the idea and function as a pathway for change, if the target reader finds it relevant to her/ his life experiences.

7. Other

Another example of how the translation of gendered metaphor might present challenge to Arab translators can be found in the translation of the word 'Other'. Lessing developed this gendered metaphor to challenge gender hierarchy. She utilized this new image to deconstruct view of the concept of woman as 'the Other' by given in her choice of the word 'Other' when referring to male.

"The first mothers of our race, carrying in their wombs the babes who were both Cleft and Other."

(Lessing, 2007, p. 102)

هن أولى أمهات جنسنا، يحملن في أرحامهن أطفالاً هم اناث وذكور.

(Darwish, 2008, p. 109)



الأمهات الأوائل لجنسنا، يجملن في أرحامهن الصغار الذين كانوا صدوعاً وجنساً آخرًا.

(Al Abdalla, 2012, p. 88)

When translating this metaphor, Darwish hijacks Lessing's metaphor and transferees the image into a common accepted concept. He has not made any attempt to retain the image and does not adopt the metaphor's purpose. On the contrary, he changed the metaphor to the dualistic biological thought, the tradition biological look, of the world male/ female (أنث و ذكور). Lessing employs the metaphor 'Other' to distinguish between the clefts, the superior and subordinate position of 'the Other'. To put it clearly, Lessing uses gendered metaphor as a means of re-conceptualizing female's identity as the superior, the one, the absolute and male as the inferior, the Other. Nonetheless, according to Darwish's translation, there is no superior or inferior. There are two sexes: female and male. Darwish oversimplified Lessing's metaphor, therefore, he hijacks the text and provides the metaphor's meaning without addressing its function which is the rearrangement of both sexes on the social hierarchy. In other words, he adopts the meaning not the metaphor purpose.

On the other hand, when translating Lessing's metaphor 'other', Al Abdalla adopts and hybridizes metaphor's purpose in a way that positions female as the subject without degrading male to subordinate position. De Beauvoir (1953) states that the category of the other does not depend on empirical facts. On the contrary, it is a social concept established to emphasize the inferiority of the inessential in opposition to the essential. Al Abdalla translates the word 'other' into 'جنساً آخر', 'another sex', he affirms that humanity consists of two sexes; one is the source of humanity which is the 'cleft' and 'another sex' which is not defined in relation to the subject or the 'cleft'. By translating the metaphor 'other' into 'another sex', Al Abdalla affirms that the other sex is not social other who accepts the social subjugation or being a shadow of the subject, and thus, humanity consists of two different genders: 'clefts' and 'sea squirts'. In other words, gender inequality and social subjugation are neutralized in Al Abdalla's translation of the metaphor 'other'. Al Abdalla, like Darwish, employs the hijacking strategy, but while Darwish oversimplified Lessing's metaphor's function and deleted Lessing's new image, Al Abdalla utilizes hybridity to emphasize the metaphor's function and leaves his readers with the idea that there are two equal sexes.

8. The influence of the target cultural context on translators' choices of translation strategies

As a matter of fact, "translation does not happen in a vacuum" (Bassnett & Trivedi, 1999, p. 2). It is a social and cultural activity practiced in social context and practiced by social human beings. Thus, translation cannot be completely done in isolation from what circulates in the domestic culture (Tyulenev, 2014; Venuti, 1998). There is always a context "in which the translation takes place, always a history from which a text



emerges and into which a text is transposed. ...translation as an activity is always doubly contextualized, since the text has a place in two cultures". (Bassnett & Lefevere, 1990, 11). Or as Michaela Wolf (2012) puts it "translations always reflect the historical and cultural conditions under which they have been produced". (p. 132)

Translation is usually tied up with social contexts in which it was produced, not only because it is carried out by individuals who belong to a social system; but also because "the translation phenomenon is inevitably implicated in social institutions, which greatly determine the selection, production, and distribution of translation, and, as a result, the strategies adopted in the translation itself". (Wolf, 2012, p. 132). Therefore, a question about the cultural context in which translations took place not the ideologies of the translators need to be asked. Analyzing cultural conditions that affected the production of Lessing's gendered metaphors translations might inform us about the strategies and the decisions made by translators. In other words, the cultural context of translated texts and the conditions that surround the creation of the translated texts must be addressed in order to understand translators' choices of particular strategies while translating these cultural-challenging metaphors.

In the preface of his translation, Al Abdalla (2012) states that he has chosen Lessing's novel because Lessing addresses human needs for equality and willingness for change, whether this change takes a personal development form or a revolutionary form. Her novel entails hope and revolution, for her eternity that does not exist. She believes in change and the temporality of any situation people find themselves in.

The Cleft is a story of our female sex ancient ancestors. It has a political aspect by emphasizing the fact that cruelty and self-defense are parts of human nature that does not differentiate between "female and male" (Al Abdalla, 2012, p. 13). –the order of female and male in this sentence is done by Al Abdalla. Al Abdalla in his answer to a question about the choice of translation strategy, he states that a translator should consider the original text writer's ideological and cultural position before translating her/his literary work. (Khoga, 2021) For him a translator should help target reader to understand the foreign text without simplifying or altering the original text's idea (Khoga, 2021). Therefore, Al Abdalla employed the strategy of hybridity in his translation of Lessing's gendered metaphors. He wanted target reader to visualize the same image that Lessing's intended to draw through her uncommon gendered metaphors.

The way he utilizes hybridity as a method in his translation of Lessing's unconventional gendered metaphors not only affirms his observation of Lessing's construction of new image of both genders and her attempt to introduce new gender hierarchy but also allows these new ideas to be introduced to target reader. In other words, when a literary text introduces uncommon metaphors, hybridity in this case is the most appropriate method of transmission, as it introduces target readers to these new cultural images. In other words, Al Abdalla searches for and utilizes a strategy that allows him to keep up with the nontraditional ideas that the novel offers, and introduces new images of both genders in target culture.



On the other hand, Darwish utilized the preface of his translation to comment on the text's content and the author's life. Although Darwish (2008) makes far fewer comments regarding the reasons behind his translation of Lessing's novel, he makes himself visible through highly personal comments. For example, he provides readers with a summary of the novel stating that the novel is a historical mythological story that offers many unacceptable ideas and concepts concerning relation between male and female (Darwish 2008). Moreover, regardless of all feminists' allegations and their agenda that calls for reconstructing gender roles, motherhood is what makes females an equal element in society. He even uses his innuendoes to attack feminism directly, to make sure that his intentions are understood by his readers. He also states that Lessing utilizes her novel to criticize feminist agenda.

Throughout Darwish's (2008) preface, he emphasizes his rejection of feminism discourse, and thus he adopts a certain strategic stance in response to his own position. Darwish allows his own ethical position to interfere with the translation. The fact that he does not honor the gendered metaphor employed by Lessing and rather waters it down with resorting to his own conventional interpretation of the words. He places the novel's unconventional metaphors into his own conservative cultural perception of gender hierarchy and gender roles.

Darwish (2008) deconstructs Lessing's metaphors by manipulating the conventional translation methods and using feminist translation strategies. He utilizes the theory- practice gap in feminist translation strategies, hijacks the text and manipulates Lessing's images. In other words, Darwish utilizes his preface to highlight the conditions underlying certain translation decisions he makes, and indicating that the changes he applies to Lessing's gendered metaphors is done after striking a balance between what the author meant and the availability of meaning of her metaphors in Arabic language and culture (Darwish, 2008). To put it clearly, the conservative stance that Drawish took against Lessing's gendered metaphor has affected his selection for translation strategies. Thus, he hijacks the unconventional gendered metaphors and adds new images that promote society's conservative stance towards feminism.

9. Conclusion

The verbal gendered metaphor has been used by female writers to introduce a new cultural understanding of gender relations. Translating this kind of metaphor presents a challenge to translators not only because of its originality but also because it is connected to the female body rather than being culturally oriented. Therefore, Arab translators who are dealing with verbal gendered metaphor might need to adopt and develop new approaches/ translation strategies to render the purpose of these metaphors in a different culture. Examining the strategies adopted by translators in the aforementioned examples shows that Arab translators who are translating verbal gendered metaphors need to consider the metaphor's function rather than its meaning. Considering the text cultural context can tell translators more about the text than the text



itself. It makes the translator acquainted with the cultural condition in which the text was produced. Moreover, it protects translation from being a surveillance site and allows translation to function as cultural exchange.

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- Critique of the Arabic Translation Strategies of Verbo-Pictorial Gendered Metaphor. <https://doi.org/10.36892/ijlts.v4i1.290>

Declaration of conflicting interest

The author declared no conflicts of interest with respect to the research, authorship, and/or publication of the article.

