



Assessing English Translation of Historical Intertextuality in Maḥfūz's Cairo Trilogy

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Abstract

By skillfully integrating a wide range of scholarly and intercultural references into his novels, the Egyptian novelist Najīb Maḥfūz has differentiated himself as an author of exceptional prowess. To convey his intended meanings, he has made extensive use of historical allusions, including (past figures and events). In the present study, we attempt to assess the translation of these types of intertextuality utilized in Maḥfūz's Cairo trilogy via adopting the criteria of "accuracy, clarity and naturalness" proposed by Larson in 1984. This study follows a qualitative descriptive approach to analysis. We aim to discover the tactics utilized in translating historical intertextuality into English and to identify the challenges faced by the subject translators and the reasons behind them. The current study hypothesizes that irrespective of what method the translators use to translate historical intertextuality, the translator's historical and cultural background would seriously influence the output of the translation process.

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The study concludes that intertextuality is a crucial device for all language users since no speech ever starts in a vacuum, and it is via intertextuality that our old legacy is continually refreshed and viewed from different points of view. It further concludes that intertextual expressions that are more culturally specific are the most challenging and the translator's familiarity with the previous texts of SL plays a significant role in the process of deciphering the meaning of intertextual texts.

Keywords: Accuracy, Appropriateness, Clarity, Culture, Intertext

تقييم الترجمة الإنكليزية للتناص التاريخي في ثلاثية القاهرة

ملخص البحث:

من خلال دمج مجموعة واسعة من المصادر العلمية والثقافية وبمهاره في رواياته ، ميز الروائي المصري نجيب محفوظ نفسه كمؤلف ذو براعة استثنائية. ومن أجل نقل المعاني المقصودة ، استخدم الروائي وعلى نطاق واسع التلميحات التاريخية ، بما في ذلك (الشخصيات والأحداث التاريخية). في هذه الدراسة ، نحاول تقييم ترجمة هذه الأنواع من التناص المستخدمة في ثلاثية القاهرة من خلال اعتماد معايير الدقة والوضوح والطبيعية التي اقترحتها لارسون عام 1984. تتبع هذه الدراسة نهجا وصفيا نوعيا للتحليل كما تهدف إلى اكتشاف الاستراتيجيات المستخدمة في ترجمة التناص التاريخي إلى اللغة الإنكليزية والوقوف على التحديات التي يواجهها المترجم والأسباب الكامنة وراءها. تفترض الدراسة أنه بغض النظر عن الآلية التي يستخدمها المترجمون لترجمة التناص التاريخي ، فإن الخلفية التاريخية والثقافية للمترجم تؤثر وبشكل كبير مخرجات عملية الترجمة. وخلصت الدراسة إلى أن التناص هو أداة حاسمة لجميع مستخدمي اللغة حيث لا يولد أي خطاب من فراغ، ومن خلال التناص يتم تحديث إرثنا اللغوي والثقافي القديم باستمرار واستعراضه من زوايا مختلفة. يخلص البحث كذلك إلى أن تعبيرات التناص المرتبطة ثقافيا بلغتها الأم هي الأكثر تحديا للمترجم وأن معرفة المترجم بالنصوص السابقة للنص الأصلي تلعب دورا مهما في عملية فهم وترجمة النص المصدر.

الكلمات المفتاحية: الدقة، الملاءمة، الوضوح، الثقافة، التناص

1. Introduction

Although the term "Intertextuality" is a fresh one, having been first used by the Bulgarian-French writer and critic "Julia Kristeva" in the 1960s, the idea that underlies it clearly shows up in the early writings of Ferdinand de Saussure and Mikhail Bakhtin. Intertextuality as a literary device dates back to earlier literary works in both English and Arabic. At the same time, the academic discussion concerning it began with the development of postmodernism.

Najīb Maḥfūz (1911–2006), the Egyptian novelist and 1988 Nobel Prize laureate for Literature, excelled at using this device in his novels. Unquestionably, his prose work demonstrates his unique gift for using a variety of intertextual relations, including religious, literary, historical, and mythological relations. Maḥfūz's Cairo Trilogy (1956–1957) consists of three novels, namely "Palace Walk, Palace of Desire, and Sugar Street." This trilogy demonstrates all types of intertextual dependencies, and this makes it very useful in carrying out a study on TQA, especially on historical intertextualities due to the extensive use of this type by Maḥfūz in most of his novels to enhance his work of literature and extends its more profound significance.

1.1 Statement of the Problem

The process of translation primarily relies on reading and interpreting a text composed of numerous interconnected fragments of other texts. Accordingly, the network of intertextual use by the authors might complicate the translation task, mainly when the author uses intertextual expressions heavily loaded with cultural specificity. The problem is exacerbated when the recipient culture possesses a distinct perspective on matters and the world, which diverges from the source culture. The synthesis of many texts by the source text authors, influenced by the literary and cultural surroundings, would inevitably confuse their work's translators, especially those who need more familiarity with the author's culture. Consequently, such translators would face difficulty in

effectively carrying out their tasks in achieving accuracy, clarity and naturalness.

1.2. Aims of the Study

The following are the primary aims of this study:

1. Providing Arabic and English readers with a comprehensive understanding of intertextuality by highlighting its early phases and development in both languages.
2. Demonstrating the phenomenon of historical intertextuality as a troublesome area in translating literary works from Arabic into English.
3. Highlighting the appropriate strategies and procedures for translating historical intertextuality in literary texts in particular and other types of texts in general.
4. Enabling the cultural awareness of both translation learners and novice translators.

1.3. Research Questions

The current study aims to answer the following questions:

1. Do historical intertextualities present a serious challenge throughout the translation process, and if so, to what extent?
2. What results might be expected if a translator fails to consider the cultural differences between the SL and the TL when historical intertextuality is being translated?
3. How should translators approach the problem of historical intertextuality when they translate literary works?

1.4. Procedure and Data Analysis

The translation of historical intertextuality from Arabic into English is investigated in this work. Six examples of historical intertextuality are drawn from Maḥfūz's Cairo Trilogy (1956-1957), along with their translation by Hutchins et al. (2016). To

carry out the present study, the current research's novels are carefully examined to gather the data. The data pertains only to the historical intertextuality in Cairo Trilogy. None of the other forms of intertextuality is examined.

1.5 Model of the Study

Translation quality assessment (TQA) is conducted following Larson's Model (1984). Each excerpt is assessed according to the three criteria suggested by Larson, i.e., accuracy, clarity, and naturalness. In applying the accuracy test, the researcher intends to find any wrong or inaccurate information in the T.T. The unjustifiable or even justifiable addition and omission produced by the subjects in their attempt to render Arabic intertextuality into English. In the clarity test, on the other hand, severe meaning alteration, as well as lexical and syntactic vagueness of meaning, is checked. Finally, the naturalness test is applied to check the natural feel of translation, i.e., reading as original. The stylistic, lexical, and syntactic forms are checked for appropriateness.

2. Review of Literature

The idea of interrelated texts first appeared in Saussurian structuralism and semiotics. According to Saussure, cited in (Bertens, 2005, P. 67), any language is a network of signs that relate to one another. Language, for him, is a sort of sign system among many throughout the world. As a result, anything that is an element of any system is a sign, and the meaning of this sign is established by how it is associated with other signs of the same system. As a result, no sign has significance on its own. A sign's value depends on how it interacts with other signs and how diverse the system's total sign population is (ibid). In Saussure's view, a sign's meaning arises from its relationship to other signs; in other words, a sign "takes its significance from its function inside a specific structure; from its interactions with the other signs" (ibid). Saussurean school of linguistics was utterly content to study

language in a vacuum and to use sentences as its basic concept or unit (Bakhtin,1986,p. 69).

In contrast to the Saussurean school of linguistics, the Bakhtin circle took the utterance as the point of departure (Bakhtin,1986, p.71). According to Bennett (1979, pp.74-5), Bakhtin proposed dialogism as the propeller for Saussure's pet-like and magic langue. Bakhtin and Volosinov(1986, p.70) argue that abstractly analyzing literary genres in particular and any other genres, generally, means ignoring that people use language in particular social circumstances. Here, the keyword is an utterance that reflects the human-centered and socially relevant quality of language that Saussurian linguistics failed to spot. Meaning, then, is something unique that arises from the language interaction of particular people in particular social settings (ibid). Through his dialogic discourse theory, Bakhtin conducted his famous critical study "Problems of the Poetics of Dostoevsky" on Dostoevsky's works. In this study, Bakhtin found many voices within the work of Dostoevsky that combat the idea of the existence of autonomous and independent texts. Accordingly, he concluded that the human being has a speech that is not his own but acquired from other voices, so language is a collective property and not individual (Lary,2019, pp.153-5).

3. The Origin of the Concept

According to Allen (2000, p.44), the intertextual theory was first developed by Kristeva by combining Saussurean semiotics "relational signs" and Bakhtin's "dialogism or the social word." In Bakhtin, Kristeva saw the intelligence and novelty that had not been understood forty years before. She was very interested in Bakhtin's concept of the plurality of voices or polyphony, which is associated with the idea that several voices are within a single voice. The static cut of the work is opposed by a dynamic one, in which the literary structure is elaborated in relation to another (Kristeva,2003, p.8). Kristeva expanded on Saussure's innovative ideas while she doubted the assumption

that textual material is a closed-off entity. She advanced the idea that a work of literature is not an outcome of an author's original ideas with a single referential meaning but rather a construction of many ideas with multiple referential significations embedded in the text (Zengin,2016, p.305). Kristeva (1986, p.37) maintains that "any text is structured as a mosaic of quotations"; "every text is the transformation and the absorption of another text and the language of poetics is read as at least double. Kristeva replaced Bakhtin's concept of voices with her concept of texts, resulting in a modification and paraphrase of Bakhtin's approach (Kristeva,1980, p.66). For her, "each word (text) is an intersection of words (texts) where at least another word (text) can be read." She confirms that every word contains other words, and every text contains other texts (ibid). Since texts are produced by the reiteration and alteration of additional textual constructions, the intertextuality theory necessitates that we view texts as interdependent systems, never like autonomous entities. Consequently, they cannot operate as isolated units (Alfaro,1996, p.1). The two methods of Bakhtin and Kristeva are similar in some aspects but differ in others. For example, they are both post-structural, dynamic, and recipient centered and focus on the social aspect of language use. Also, they are similar in some terms, such as "heteroglossia" and "polyglossia," which mean diversity of voices or pronunciation (Todorov 1984, pp. 64-65). In contrast, Kristeva's approach can be considered a remold of Bakhtin's approach replacing dialogism with intertextuality. Accordingly, Kristeva replaced the notion of inter-subjectivity with intertextuality (inter-objectivity) and intratextuality with intertextuality and unilateral focus on novelistic genres into multiple foci on a wide spectrum of genres (Lesic-Thomas,2005, pp.5-9). Scholars after Kristeva entertained different notions of the term, although they all shared the same core meaning of the interrelationship. In his interest to reformulate Kristeva's original approach that dates back to 1967, the French literary critic and theorist Gérard Genette has

written his famous work "The Palimpsest: Literature in the Second Degree" (1982) in which he argues that the object of poetics is not the text itself, but the archtext. The arch-textuality of the text is defined as the set of general or transcendent categories, such as types of discourse, modes of enunciation, literary genres, etc., that pertain to the palimpsestuous nature of texts. Intertextuality within this framework has a more restricted definition. The co-presence relationship between two or more texts means a hypotext appears in hypertext (Oke,2021, pp. 14-15). Genette, in this case, restricts intertextuality to the relationship in which a text appears within another, either through quotations, allusions, or plagiarism. Therefore, both texts must be present, directly or indirectly (Burns&Lacasse,2018, p.10). Roland Barthes, in his work "The Pleasure of the Text," says: "I enjoy the kingdom of formulas, the overturning of origins, the ease that makes the previous text come from the subsequent text"(Barth,1975, p. 57). In his essay "The Death of the Author, " Barthes focuses on the fact that the author is not a person but a culturally, socially, and historically constituted subject (Barth,1977, pp. 142-148). The critic calls this phenomenon the removal (distancing) of the author. Therefore, the author does not "nourish" the book, does not exist before it, does not think and suffer for it"; the modern author "is born at the same time as his text, he is not endowed with a being that would precede or exceed his writing"(ibid). According to Allen (2006, pp.69-70), Barth's contribution to the post-structuralist concept of intertextuality explicitly emphasizes the reader's role in producing the anti-monological text. Thus, the author mentioned above indicates the presence of two categories of readers: consumers", who read the work in search of stable meaning, and readers" of the text, which are productive during reading. Riffaterre created his unique theory of intertextuality in 1990, in which he adopted a reader-focused approach to intertextuality. He views the text as the origin of all reader's behaviors, and a literary text would constantly guide the readers

toward the significance of the literary work (Riffaterre, 1990, p.61). Riffaterre (1978), cited in Kulei (2014, p. 207), developed the concept of "hypogram" to designate the central notion that drives a text. A word, a short sentence, a concept, or even a cliché grabbed from a previous piece of writing is an example of a hypogram. This demonstrates Riffaterre's conviction that a literary work never exists by itself but is instead the result of ideas from some other texts. According to Riffaterre (1978, p.66), A hypogram is repeated frequently throughout the text via anomalies that make the reader think himself forced to uncover it via a retroactive reading. This encourages the reader to refer to earlier parts of a certain text and evoke his knowledge of older works in the culture. Additionally, Riffaterre made a distinction between intertextuality and intertext. For him, an intertext could be one or even more texts that the reader has to be acquainted with to recognize the entire importance of a piece of literature. The concept of intertextuality contends that significance and even "literariness" are produced through repeated allusions to other texts (Riffaterre, 1990, pp.56–57).

4. Data Analysis, Discussion & Results

The following section investigates the translation of historical intertextuality from Arabic into English. The analysis focuses on the potential shift in the message's intended meaning caused by the cultural and social specificity of these types of intertextuality, which could ultimately result in a loss of accuracy, clarity, and naturalness. The strategies of translation used by the subject translators in their attempt to translate this kind of intertextuality from Arabic into English are also addressed in this section.

HISTORICAL INTERTEXTUALITY

INTERTEXTUALITY WITH PAST FIGURES

TT	ST
Khadija shouted sarcastically”, “Diva Munira al-Mahdiya, you renowned prima donna, please do us the favor of eating. Your servant has set the table for you.” (<i>Palace Walk</i>, p.27)	رَعَقَتْ خَدِيجَةٌ بِنَهْجَمَ: يَاسْتُ مُنِيرَةُ يَا مَهْدِيَّةَ، تَفْضُلِي أَعَدَّتْ لَكَ خَادِمَتُكَ السُّفْرَةَ. (بين القصرين، ص:34)

TEXT 1

Interpretation

Munīrah al-Mahdīyah is a former well-recognized Egyptian actress and singer. Al-Mahdīyah, known as " al-Sultānah, السلطانة" or " Sultānt al-ṭarab, سلطنة الطرب "is the first Egyptian woman to appear on stage in the 1920s (al-Sayyid,2015:76). In this example, Khadijah, who does all of the housekeeping, gets irritated by her younger sister ‘Ā’ishah who spends so much time singing while standing near the balcony waiting for the Egyptian police officer to come along the terrace to give him a loving look.

Discussion

In the abovementioned instance, Maḥfūz refers to a well-known character in Egyptian artistic history, namely "Munīrah al-Mahdīyah," to exemplify Khadījah's critical comment on ‘Ā’ishah's singing. Understanding the author's intended message in the present instance requires prior knowledge of Egyptian artistic history on the reader's part. Consequently, those individuals with a good understanding of the Egyptian legacy of art will likely find it rather effortless to recognize the author's intent. Conversely, those unfamiliar with this subject matter may encounter significant difficulty unless guided by experienced translators.

Regarding the translation provided by Hutchins et al., the following comments can be made: (i) The provided translation is inaccurate. Although the original author's intent is successfully communicated to the target readers, the translators fail to preserve the original text's accuracy due to the inclusion of unnecessary and faulty information in the target text T.T. For instance, the term "Diva," which, according to Robinson and Davidson (1997:388) traditionally refers to a female singer, particularly in the realm of opera, is used to refer to Munīrah al-Mahdīyah, an Egyptian actress and singer, despite her lack of involvement in opera performances. Furthermore, the translators have made an additional error by employing the term "Prima Donna," which, according to Chetwynd (2017:133), is synonymous with "Diva" to give more identification for Munīrah al-Mahdīyah in the T.T. However, it is essential to acknowledge that the initial insertion, though it fails to satisfy the accuracy criterion, it contributes positively to the text's clarity as it supports the notion of Khadījah's sarcastic attitude. (ii) The translation is very clear and easy to understand. The incorporation of extra information such as (Diva), (Prima Dona), and (Please do us the favor of eating) into the translated text resulted in a greater understanding of the attitude and intention of the S.T.; However, this is done at the expense of accuracy in the T.T. (iii) Concerning the naturalness criterion, It is believed that the translation put forth by Hutchins et al. demonstrates a considerable degree of naturalness since it does not have any sign of awkwardness or strangeness. Moreover, it adheres to the linguistic and stylistic conventions of the T.L. without any influence from the S.L. Our recommended rendition might be as follows:

: زَعَفَتْ حَدِيجَةُ بِتَهَكُّمٍ -
نَقَضْتُ لِأَعْدَتِكَ الْسُّفْرَةَ , مُنِيرَةٌ يَا مَهْدِيَّةُ يَا سَتَ

Khadījah yelled mockingly, "Celebrity singer **Munīrah al-Mahdīyah**, your servant has set the table for you."

Text No.	Criteria	Appropriateness		Percentage	
		(+)	(-)	Success	Failure
1	Accuracy		✓	66.66%	33.3%
	Clarity	✓			
	Naturalness	✓			

TABLE 1

ST	TT
قَالَ يَاسِينَ: "لَوْلَا أَنَّ الْعَيْنَ الْجَمِيلَةَ لَا تَحْسَدُ" أجابته زنوبة: أَتَخَافُ عَلَى نَفْسِكَ! كَأَنَّكَ عَبْدُ الْحَلِيمِ الْمِصْرِيِّ طَوْلًا وَعَرْضًا. (قصر الشوق، ص: 346)	Yasen said: "If only the beautiful eye isn't envious." Zanuba responded: "Are you afraid of the evil eye? You're as tall and broad as <u>Abd al-Halim al-Masri</u>." (<i>Palace of Desire</i>, p.314)

TEXT 2

Interpretation

‘Abd al-Ḥalīm al-Miṣrī (1887–1922 A.D.) was one of the most well-known and physically strong patriotic conservative poets of the modern era. During the reign of King Aḥmad Fu’ād, al-Miṣrī obtained an officer's rank. A few years later, he made a close relationship with King Aḥmad that helped him gain the title "King Aḥmad's Poet"(al-Jubūrī,2003:90). In this example, Zannūbah informs Yāsīn that his complaints of imminent death and lack of energy are nothing but lies and that the mules might be envious of his good health.

Discussion

Maḥfūz has utilized the historical figure mentioned in the present example to provide the S.T. readers with a better understanding of Yāsīn's actual condition of health as well as to clarify why Yāsīn had no reason to be afraid of Zannūbah's enviousness. It is essential to point out that the allusion made by

the author here is specific to the historical and cultural heritage of Egypt. As a result, the readers of the T.L. will probably have difficulty in their attempt to understand the intended purpose behind using such a name in the T.T., especially when such reference is directly transferred to the T.L. without any explanatory notes.

Regarding the translation presented by Hutchins et al., the following remarks can be made: (i) The translation is inaccurate. While the translators succeed in producing a target text T.T. that accurately conveys the intended meaning of the source text S.T., they fail to recreate the same effect felt by the readers of the S.T. Additionally, they fail to maintain the same amount of information offered in the S.T. Including the expression "of the evil eye" is unnecessary as it can be easily inferred from the broader context. (ii) The translation is understandable and clear.

The original meaning has remained the same despite the extraneous addition by the translators. The explanatory information, i.e., "as tall and broad as "provided by the original author, helps the T.T. readers to grasp the main goal behind using such a name in the novel. Additionally, the T.T. exhibits clarity due to its complete absence of ambiguity and its strict adherence to the grammatical and stylistic conventions of the target language. (iii) Concerning the naturalness criterion, we believe the translation by Hutchins et al. is unnatural. The lack of naturalness in T.T. arises from its failure to adhere to the idiomatic conventions and established formulas of the T.L. The figure in question, i.e., "Abd al-Halim al-Masri," is strictly bound to the Egyptian historical and political culture. Accordingly, any attempt to directly transfer it to the T.L. must be accompanied by explanatory information; otherwise, such an action would inevitably undermine the criterion of naturalness and make the T.T. sound awkward and unacceptable to T.L. readers.

Depending Jeffers (2002:91), a proper rendering for the example mentioned above might be as follows:

"قَالَ يَاسِينَ: "لَوْلا أَنَّ الْعَيْنَ الْجَمِيلَةَ لَا تَحْسَدُ -

أجابته زنوبة: أَتَخَافُ عَلَى نَفْسِكَ! كَأَنَّكَ عَبْدُ الْحَلِيمِ الْمِصْرِيِّ طُولاً وَعَرَضاً
 -Yāsīn said: "If only the beautiful eye isn't envious."
 Zannūbah responded: "Are you afraid? You're *as big and strong as a bull moose*."

TABLE 2

Text No.	Criteria	Appropriateness		Percentage	
		(+)	(-)	Success	Failure
2	Accuracy		✓	33.3%	66.6%
	Clarity	✓			
	Naturalness		✓		

ST	TT
الْأَيَّامُ الْحَقِيقِيَّةُ كَانَتْ أَيَّامَنَا ! كَانَتْ يُسْرًا وَرَغْدًا. شَهِدْنَا سَعْدَ زَغْلُولٍ , وَسَمِعْنَا سَيِّ عَبْدَهُ , مَاذَا فِي أَيَّامِكُمْ ؟ (السكرية, ص:243)	Our times were the real ones! Life was easy and pleasant. We saw Sa'd Zaghlul and heard the supreme vocalist, Abduh al-Hamuli. What do your days have to offer? (Sugar Street ,p.2014)

TEXT 3

Interpretation

Sa'd Zaghlūl is a former Egyptian statesman who played a pivotal role in the revolution. He is the founding leader of the Wafd Party, which actively worked for Egypt's liberation from British colonial rule. (al-'Aqqād,2014:10). 'Abdū alḥāmwlī, on the other hand, is an Egyptian singer. He is one of the most famous oriental vocalists of the nineteenth century (Makkāwī,2018:63). In this

example, the author's use of historical intertextuality is exemplified by his direct reference to two famous historical figures, "Sa'd Zaghlūl and 'Abdū alḥāmwlī," through a

discussion between Mr. Aḥmad and his son Kamāl about the good times gone by.

Discussion

It is worth noting here that, in many cases, the translation of the historical figures' names into the T.L. should be accompanied by introductory remarks. This becomes particularly important when the people in question constitute an essential part of their culture's political or artistic heritage, yet they are unknown by other cultures, and this can be attributed to many reasons, such as the people in question might not be widely recognized or because of their association with a very distant period in history.

Now, let us consider the following remarks concerning the translation provided by Hutchins et al. (i) The provided translation for the historical figures' names is accurate. The translators' decision to directly transfer Sa'd Zaghlul's name to the T.T. is quite good even if they do not provide any background information. This is because the figure's name has already been mentioned in the novel with detailed information. Given that 'Abdū alhāmwy's name was not previously mentioned in the earlier sections of the novel, the translators demonstrate another sound decision by including it in the T.T., along with appropriate introductory comments. In a nutshell, the information encapsulated in the S.T. is accurately conveyed without any unjustified addition or omission. (ii) The translation is clear and easy to understand due to the translators' appropriate decisions. Incorporating the explanatory remarks (the supreme vocalist) and (Hamuli) to clarify the second figure's name resulted in a greater understanding of it by T.T. readers. (iii) Concerning the naturalness criterion, the translation by Hutchins et al. demonstrates a considerable degree of naturalness since it does not have any sign of awkwardness or strangeness. Moreover, it adheres to the linguistic and stylistic conventions of the T.L. without any influence from the S.L. Therefore, Hutchins et al.'s translation is a proper one.

- الْأَيَّامُ الْحَقِيقِيَّةُ كَانَتْ أَيْلَمَنَا! كَانَتْ يُسْرًا وَرَغْدًا.
 شَهِدْنَا سَعْدَ رَغُلُولٍ، وَسَمِعْنَا سَيَّ عُبْدَهُ، مَاذَا فِي أَيَّامِكُمْ؟

Our times were the real ones! Life was easy and pleasant. We saw *Sa'd Zaghlul* and heard *the supreme vocalist, Abduh al-Hamuli*. What do your days have to offer?

TABLE 3

Text No.	Criteria	Appropriateness		Percentage	
		(+)	(-)	Successes	Failure
3	Accuracy	✓		100%	0%
	Clarity	✓			
	Naturalness	✓			

INTERTEXTUALITY WITH PAST EVENTS

Text 4

ST	TT
لَتَشْرَبَ هَذِهِ اللَّيْلَةَ حَتَّى يَرْفُوكَ عَلَى الْأَعْنَاقِ، كَأَنَّكَ لَمْ تَشْرَبْ مُنْذُ عَامِ الْفِيلِ. (قصر الشوق، ص383)	Drink tonight till they have to carry you out as if you haven't had one since the year of the Prophet Muhammad's birth. (<i>Palace of Desire</i> , p.349)

Interpretation

According to al-Qurtubī (2013:131-33), the Prophet Muhammad (ﷺ) was born in the Elephant Year (عام الفيل). This year was named after a well-known fierce event in Mecca when Abrahā, the Abyssinian Christian leader of Aksum, drove his army with many war elephants toward the K'bah to destroy it (ibid).

Here, Mr. Aḥmad ‘Abd al-Jawwād's internal monologue serves as an example of the intertextuality with past events. Mr. Aḥmad is depicted in this instance as depressed and, after a prolonged period of abstinence, he decides to start drinking again in order to cope with his misery.

Discussion

In the preceding example, Maḥfūz refers to an essential year in Islamic history known as "عام الفيل" "The Elephant Year" to convey an intended message. He introduced the term to inform his readers about Mr. Amad 'Abd al-Jawwd's extended period of refraining from consuming alcohol. The author's choice of the expression, i.e., "عام الفيل" to measure Mr. Ahmad Abd al-Jawwd's prolonged refrain from drinking is unwise, as there is no need to link such a revered year with an objectionable act of alcohol drinking.

Regarding the translation proposed by Hutchins et al., the following remarks can be made: (i) The provided translation is inaccurate. The translators provide "since the year of the Prophet Muhammad's birth" as a rendition of the Arabic expression (عام الفيل). At the same time, the ST does not make any specific reference to the birth of the Prophet Muhammad. Furthermore, it is of the utmost importance to keep in mind that the year is not only associated with the birth of the Prophet. This is because another significant event occurred in Mecca in the same year. This event was when Abruḥā, the leader of Abyssinia, attempted to destroy the Ka'bah with the assistance of war elephants. The question is, how can the translators determine whether the author is referring to the year of the birth or the one in which the Ka'bah was attacked by using the war elephants? (ii) even though the translators provide an uncertain description of the phrase, we can consider it clear because they opted not to maintain the exact wording of the ST phrase, namely "عام الفيل." Instead, they chose to use simple language to ensure that the TT readers who have different religious backgrounds can easily understand it. (iii) The provided rendition is unnatural because the translators did not opt

for the variety of similar expressions used in English, such as (for

Text No.	Criteria	Appropriateness		Percentage	
		(+)	(-)	Succes s	Failure
4	Accuracy		✓	33.3%	66.6%
	Clarity	✓			
	Naturalness		✓		

ages, a long time ago). Instead, they provided an uncertain description of the ST expression. A suggested translation of the phrase might be as follows:

- لِنَشْرَبْ هَذِهِ اللَّيْلَةَ حَتَّى يَرْفَعُوكَ عَلَى الْأَعْنَاقِ, كَأَنَّكَ لَمْ تَشْرَبْ مُنْذُ عَامِ الْفِيلِ.

- Drink tonight till they have to carry you out as if you haven't had one *for ages*.

Table 4

Text 5

ST	TT
فَتَسْأَلُ إِسْمَاعِيلَ: هَلْ كَانَتْ خُطْبَةٌ مِنْ جَانِبِ وَاحِدٍ كَتَصْرِيحِ 28 فبراير ؟ رفضته الأمة المَغْلُوبَةُ عَلَى أَمْرِهَا بِإِبَاءٍ وَلَكِنَّهُ قَرَضَ عَلَيْهَا وماكان كان. (قصر الشوق, ص: 333-334)	Isma'il asked, "Was this a unilateral engagement, like Great Britain's unilateral Declaration of Egyptian Independence on February 28, 1922 . The conquered Egyptian nation had proudly rejected that declaration, but nominal sovereignty had been thrust upon it, with the inevitable consequences (<i>Palace of Desire</i> , p.301)

Interpretation

The Declaration of February 28, 1922, is a unilateral decision taken by Great Britain, in which they formally announced the termination of their control over Egypt as a British colony. However, the Egyptian people rejected this declaration due to the reservations put by the British side (BūJahfah, 2018:27). In this example, Ḥusayn Shaddād informs Kamāl Aḥmad ‘Abd al-Jawwād and Ismā‘īl Laṭīf about his sister ‘Āyidah's engagement to Ḥasan Salīm; Ismā‘īl displays curiosity over ‘Āyidah's feelings on the topic by making a comparison between that engagement and Egypt's unilateral declaration of independence on February 28.

Discussion

In the abovementioned example, Maḥfūz refers to a specific historical event in the political history of Egypt to convey an intended message. Readers who have good knowledge of Egypt's political history would infer from Ismā‘īl's analogy that ‘Āyidah was forced to accept Ḥasan's engagement and that all of it occurred without her prior knowledge.

Regarding the translation produced by Hutchins et al., the following remarks can be made: (i) The provided translation is inaccurate. While the translators successfully convey the intended message of the S.T. to the target language readers, they fail to maintain the exact wording of the S.T. due to an excessive inclusion of information in the target text T.T. without leaving anything for the readers' inference. For instance, the incorporation of the specific year in which the Declaration of Independence has been announced, the identification of the proclaiming state, i.e., (Great Britain), and unnecessary repetition of the word "unilateral." It is essential to acknowledge that not all the additions have adverse effects. For example, the inclusion of the phrase "Egyptian Independence," can usefully help in clarifying the object of the February 28 declaration. (ii) The translation is very clear. Incorporating extra information into the translated text resulted in a greater understanding of it; however, this comes at

the expense of accuracy of the TT. (iii) Regarding the criterion of naturalness, we see that the translation presented by Hutchins et al. exhibits a good deal of naturalness since it has no sign of awkwardness or strangeness. Moreover, it adheres to the linguistic and stylistic conventions of the TL without any interference by SL. Our suggested translation could be as follows:

- فَتَسْأَلُ إِسْمَاعِيلَ: هَلْ كَانَتْ خُطْبَةٌ مِنْ جَانِبٍ وَاحِدٍ كَتَصْرِيحِ 28 فبراير ؟ رفضته الأمة المَغْلُوبِ عَلَى أَمْرِهَا بِإِبَاءٍ وَلَكِنَّهُ قَرَضَ عَلَيْهَا وَمَا كَانَ كَانَ.

-Ismā'īl wondered, "Was this a unilateral engagement, like *the Declaration of Egyptian Independence on February 28.*" The conquered Egyptian nation had proudly rejected that declaration, but nominal sovereignty had been thrust upon it, with the inevitable consequences.

Text No.	Criteria	Appropriateness		Percentage	
		(+)	(-)	Success	Failure
5	Accuracy		✓	66.6%	33.3%
	Clarity	✓			
	Naturalness	✓			

TABLE 5

Text 6

ST	TT
أَصْغَى كَمَالٌ إِلَيْهِمْ، بَلْ شَارَكَهُمْ فِي حَدِيثِهِمْ، وَأَعْجَبَ مِنْ هَذَا أَنَّهُ لَمْ يَكُنْ دُونَهُمْ حَمَاسًا، وَكَانَ هَذَا ثَامِنُ عِيدِ جِهَادٍ يُشْهَدُهُ. (السكرية: ص:40)	Kamal listened and even took part in the discussion. Strangely enough, he felt just as excited as the others. This was his eighth commemoration of Jihad - or Struggle Day. (<i>Sugar Street</i> : 34)

Interpretation

Since 1919, when Egypt gained independence, and up to the outbreak of the revolution in 1952, the nation had been celebrating National Jihad Day on November 13 every year. On this Day, it was customary for Egyptians to visit Sa'd Zaghlūl's grave to lay floral wreaths and listen to speeches from some Egyptian leading figures at his memorial (Zakī,1969:164). Regarding the context of this instance, Maḥfūz has employed this type of intertextuality in a dialogue between Kamal and his fellow passengers in the tram along the way to commemorate National Jihad Day.

Discussion

The author's intent in bringing up Jihad Day in this example is to demonstrate to his readers Kamal's extreme patriotism by demonstrating Kamal's excitement for commemorating such a day.

The following notes can be made about the translation supplied by Hutchins et al.: (i)The provided translation is accurate. Providing the "struggle" as explanatory information for the Arabic word "جهاد" in the English version is deemed a wise choice by the translators, as the word has previously appeared in the novel describing the National Day. In a nutshell, the translators succeeded in accurately conveying the information encapsulated in the S.T. without any unjustified addition or omission. (ii) The translation is clear and easy to understand. The necessary addition in the TT results in a greater understanding of the National Jihad Day and the whole message of the ST The adherence of the TT to the grammatical and stylistic norms of the target language, combined with the absence of any kind of ambiguity, are additional factors in its clarity. (iii) Concerning the naturalness criterion, the translation by Hutchins et al. demonstrates a considerable degree of naturalness since it does not have any sign of awkwardness or strangeness. Furthermore, it strictly conforms to the grammatical and stylistic norms of the target language, TL,

without any SL interference. Accordingly, we believe that the translation provided by Hutchins et al. is an appropriate one.

TABLE 6

Text No.	Criteria	Appropriateness		Percentage	
		(+)	(-)	Successes	Failure
6	Accuracy	✓		100%	0%
	Clarity	✓			
	Naturalness	✓			

6. Findings

This section of the study primarily emphasizes the most noteworthy findings obtained from the entire study and the discussion of these findings. As previously mentioned, this study scrutinizes the challenges translators encounter when translating intertextual expressions or texts that rely extensively on other texts for interpretation. The intertextual expressions that might pose difficulties in the translation are divided into four categories: Religious, literary, popular literature, and historical expressions. About historical Intertextuality, it has been found that the translators managed to attain a 33.33% success rate in accuracy while they achieved a 100% success rate in clarity and 66.66% in naturalness. Several factors contributed to the low level of accuracy, the most significant of which are the translators' failure to convey the original author's intended meaning and the inclusion of unjustified and incorrect information in the target text. The high level of clarity might be attributed to the universality of the historical events used as intertextual references and the translator's integration of extra information, which made the historical intertextual expressions substantially easy to understand. As for the 66.66% success rate achieved in naturalness, this rate may be attributed to those renditions that

proved free of awkwardness and strangeness due to their compliance with the stylistic and grammatical conventions of the target language. Meanwhile, the 33.33% failure rate in naturalness may be attributed to those renditions that sound strange and awkward due to their non-compliance with the target language's conventions, idiomaticity, and established formula. The chart below shows the number of times the translators succeeded and failed to achieve each criterion in translating literary intertextuality:

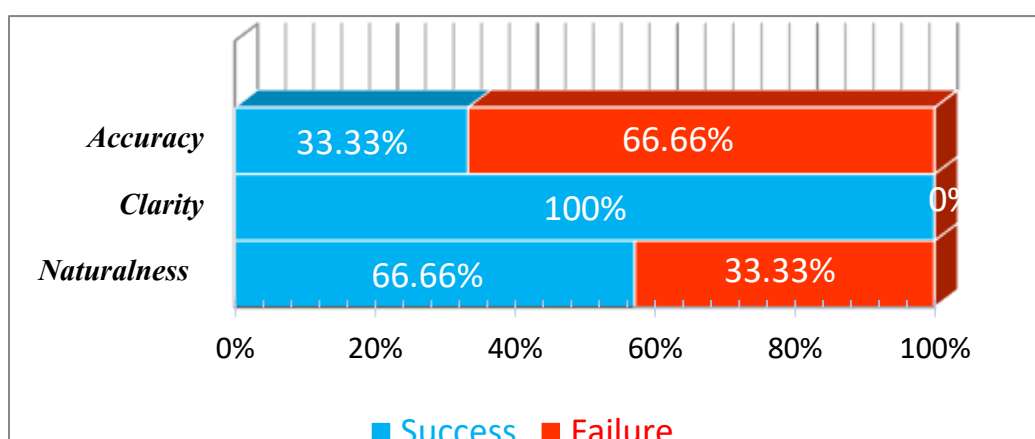


FIGURE 1. Historical Intertextuality

7. Conclusions

The present study has come to the following conclusions:

1. Intertextuality is a crucial device for all language users since no speech ever starts in a vacuum, and it is via intertextuality that our old legacy is continually refreshed and viewed from different points of view.
2. The translator's familiarity with the previous texts plays a significant role in the process of deciphering the meaning of an intertextual text; consequently, those translators who do not have such familiarity are more likely to encounter difficulty in understanding the precise meaning of those intertextual expressions used by the author of the S.T.

3. Drawing on the findings of this study, It is concluded that the most challenging types of historical intertextuality are those that display a higher degree of cultural specificity. The more the intertexts are bound to a specific culture, the more problematic they become to translate.

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