

IMPLICATIONS OF LEXICAL CHOICES IN LITERARY TRANSLATION: THE CASE OF A FAREWELL TO ARMS IN ARABIC

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Abstract

Literary translation is the recreation in one language of a work of art that was originally created in another. This recreation involves lexical, grammatical and stylistic choices by the translator in the target language. These choices are supposed to reflect the semantic, pragmatic and aesthetic values of the source text. These choices also decide the success or failure of the reception of the translation in the target sociocultural context. In literary translation, the ultimate goal is to create an equivalent work of art that has the same message, tone and effect. However, this is easier said than done. This is because human, linguistic and sociocultural factors govern translation in general and literary translation in particular. These factors can have an immense impact on the choices made by the translator. This paper is a descriptive analytical study of the lexical choices made by the Arabic-English translator and lexicographer Munir Balabaki in translating *A Farewell to Arms* by Earnest Hemingway from English into Arabic. The aim of the study is to explore the nature of these lexical choices and their implications for the novel and its readers in Arabic, especially implications for the level of discourse in the translation in contrast with that of the original. Based on an analytical comparison between the translator's lexical choices in Arabic and parallel lexical choices by Hemingway in English, the study shows that Baalbaki uses many unfamiliar classical Arabic words and expressions as well as Arabic lexical items of Islamic religious connotation that do not have parallel lexical items in the original novel in English. These lexical choices by the translator have changed the level of discourse in the novel from informal and/or semi-formal to highly formal and have added an Islamic flavor to the novel. As a result, this may change the narrative tone and the way readers interpret the characters and their behavior in the novel.

Keywords: Literary translation, Novel, Lexical Choices, Hemingway, Baalbaki, Arabic, English.