

This article was downloaded by: [An-Najah National University], [Ekrema Shehab]

On: 04 March 2015, At: 23:26

Publisher: Routledge

Informa Ltd Registered in England and Wales Registered Number: 1072954 Registered office: Mortimer House, 37-41 Mortimer Street, London W1T 3JH, UK



Translation Review

Publication details, including instructions for authors and subscription information:

<http://www.tandfonline.com/loi/utrv20>

A Context-based Approach to Proverb Translation: The Case of Arabic into English Translation

Ekrema Shehab & Abdelkarim Daragmeh

Published online: 02 Mar 2014.



CrossMark

[Click for updates](#)

To cite this article: Ekrema Shehab & Abdelkarim Daragmeh (2014) A Context-based Approach to Proverb Translation: The Case of Arabic into English Translation, *Translation Review*, 90:1, 51-68, DOI: [10.1080/07374836.2014.986779](https://doi.org/10.1080/07374836.2014.986779)

To link to this article: <http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/07374836.2014.986779>

PLEASE SCROLL DOWN FOR ARTICLE

Taylor & Francis makes every effort to ensure the accuracy of all the information (the "Content") contained in the publications on our platform. However, Taylor & Francis, our agents, and our licensors make no representations or warranties whatsoever as to the accuracy, completeness, or suitability for any purpose of the Content. Any opinions and views expressed in this publication are the opinions and views of the authors, and are not the views of or endorsed by Taylor & Francis. The accuracy of the Content should not be relied upon and should be independently verified with primary sources of information. Taylor and Francis shall not be liable for any losses, actions, claims, proceedings, demands, costs, expenses, damages, and other liabilities whatsoever or howsoever caused arising directly or indirectly in connection with, in relation to or arising out of the use of the Content.

This article may be used for research, teaching, and private study purposes. Any substantial or systematic reproduction, redistribution, reselling, loan, sub-licensing, systematic supply, or distribution in any form to anyone is expressly forbidden. Terms &

Conditions of access and use can be found at <http://www.tandfonline.com/page/terms-and-conditions>

A CONTEXT-BASED APPROACH TO PROVERB TRANSLATION: THE CASE OF ARABIC INTO ENGLISH TRANSLATION

Ekrema Shehab and Abdelkarim Daragmeh

Introduction

Translating proverbs across languages and cultures has been troublesome for most translators as proverbs are deeply rooted in culture and “deal directly with societal customs that might not translate directly to certain other societies.”¹ They reflect the cultural heritage of their people and “contain a vast treasure of information and knowledge on the sociocultural life of their beholders.”² Translators’ attempts to find proper equivalence in the target language (TL) to bridge this gap are fraught with difficulties. Most of their endeavors have been devoted to comparing lists of proverbs in both the source language (SL) and the TL and to making matches between source and target proverbs. Thus, we might be led to think that proverbial meaning is frozen and has acquired a “slogan-like status.”³ Accordingly, proverb translation is judged by the proverb’s circulation among and familiarity to the TL audience. An equivalent proverb in the TL earns currency as long as it is most circulated; however, little attention has been paid to the proverb’s context and linguistic structure, the things that may prompt translators to abandon a familiar, most circulated TL proverb for one that well accommodates its exact contextual meaning. The fact of the matter is that proverbs very often occur in peculiar contexts, but translators usually consult ready-made lists of decontextualized proverbs to find proper equivalents.

In this paper, we propose a context-based approach to proverb translation from Arabic into English that takes into consideration the proverb’s contextual meaning, linguistic form, speakers, and addressees and thus presents target readers with its context-based equivalence(s) and not with its most circulated version(s). Taken in their immediate context of use, the study suggests that most Arabic proverbial expressions are often used ironically to imply the opposite of what is being said.

Problem of the Study

A proverb is “the horse of conversation, when the conversation droops, a proverb revives it.”⁴ This is true, we believe, as far as the understanding of a proverb is rightly secured among participants in a conversation; otherwise, a proverb will have no such value. This very fact highlights the idea of shared background knowledge, which is quite important to the understanding of proverbial expressions as intended by the proverb user. Interestingly, the idea of shared knowledge implies flexibility in the use of proverbial expressions. Sometimes, a proverb user may allude to a certain proverb by quoting part of it or by introducing minor changes to it. It is also worth noting that the idea of shared knowledge or beliefs emphasizes the fact that proverbs are culture-specific utterances and are difficult to grasp by non-native speakers of the language in which they are said. Hence, the difficulty of translating proverbial expressions across cultures becomes more

Translation Review 90: 51–68, 2014

Copyright © The Center for Translation Studies

ISSN: 0737-4836 print/2164-0564 online

DOI: 10.1080/07374836.2014.986779

evident. Khamis writes, "If translating a text written by a single author or even multiple authors is so difficult, what would be the case when we attempt to translate a text written by a whole nation or culture with all its background and historical legacy. These texts are the proverbs."⁵ What complicates the issue even further is the fact that most proverbial expressions appear as unconnected utterances in a conversation, as an abrupt shift in subject matter at the literal level occurs once a proverb is used. To this effect, Seitel points out that proverbs are "provisionally defined as short, traditionally out-of-context statements used to further some social end."⁶ However, at some deeper level, and contrary to appearances, the proverb user will prove to be rather cooperative as long as shared knowledge between interlocutors is rightly secured.

Additionally, it is essential to note that the most problematic aspect in translating proverbs comes from the fact that some proverbs feature linguistic peculiarities that cannot be reflected in the TL culture. Such linguistic peculiarities may include obvious artistic touches that are beyond the scope of translation such as tone, rhythm, alliteration. Along these same lines, Gimblett aptly claims that proverbs usually exhibit "neat symmetries and witty convergences of sound and meaning, tight formulations of logical relations, highly patterned repetitions, structural balance, and familiar metaphors."⁷ Thus, proverbs of this type (i.e., those that depend on paralinguistic features to determine their intended meaning) would suffer much meaning loss when rendered into another language. It is the translator's task to try to compensate for such loss of emotive overtones by preserving as much as possible of the original proverb meaning, using appropriate compensation mechanisms.

Moreover, the proverb may have the potential to mean more than one thing even when it is used in its actual context. Gimblett maintains that

When examined in terms of their actual use in specific situations, we see that a proverb can be made to express more than one meaning, that sometimes these meanings are contradictory and that a proverb's meaning, rather than being autonomous of the proverb's use as we are led to believe by collections, is indeed contextually specified.⁸

Similarly, Gleason argues that "proverbs are intended to have applications that, while anchored in the meaning of the words, extend far, far beyond those words."⁹

Proverbs' Performance Meaning

This study examines a number of proverbial expressions in their immediate context of use to show how the social and pragmatic context along with other factors may affect the proverb's original meaning and form. This is so important because "in everyday life proverbs only exist as socially situated meanings in contrast with proverb compilation in which proverbs are unsituated and appear to express absolute truths."¹⁰

It is widely recognized that the proverb's immediate context illustrates the meaning intended by the use of some proverb. This being so, a proverb might be used to perform an act of, say, praising, condemning, advising, or insulting depending on the situation, hence the inappropriateness of studying proverbs in isolation as a "proverb's meaning ultimately emerges from [the] proverb's use in a specific context and it is not the meaning of the proverb *per se* that need be our central concern but the meaning of the proverb performance."¹¹

Gimblett emphasizes the proverb's performance meaning that, according to her, arises from the integration of proverbial (base meaning) and situational meaning (participant evaluation of meaning). She goes on to contrast this performance meaning with a proverb's base

meaning that provides the investigator with a foundation for examining the associations that emerge when base meanings are socially situated. In other words, the performance meaning is the effect of a proverb on its receiver. It teaches, warns, threatens, or advises him or her. Accordingly, it is the proverb's base meaning that is held constant and the proverb's performance meaning that keeps changing in light of the context of situation. This is why proverbs should not be studied in abstraction as is frequently done by researchers. In support of this point, Arewa and Dundes argue for the study of proverbs in context and offer a number of critical points:

What are the rules governing who can use proverbs, or particular proverbs, and to whom? Upon what occasions? In what places? With what other persons present or absent? Using what channel (e.g., speech, drumming, etc.)? Do restrictions or prescriptions as to the use of proverbs or a proverb have to do with particular topics? With the specific relationship between speaker and addressee? What exactly are the contributing contextual factors which make the use of proverbs, or of a particular proverb, possible or not possible, appropriate or inappropriate?¹²

Stressing the same point, Prahlad¹³ maintains that the contextual study of proverbs is of great importance because there are cultural and social forces that may influence proverb meaning, application, and interpretation.

Purpose of the Study

It is often the case that translators of literary and other texts are challenged with proverbs that may contain textual difficulties, expressions with an uncertain lexical value or semantic load, vague metaphors, and cultural distance. These difficulties, however, are either overlooked or neutralized because of the translational tradition within which translators work.¹⁴ This translation tradition, inherited over time, dictates particular renderings that translators sometimes consciously but more often unconsciously use. By so doing, translators are victimized by what Putnam calls "the tyranny of the tradition."¹⁵ That is to say, translators tend to opt for frozen and most familiar translations of proverbs in the TL, and they neutralize the proverb's pragmatic, social, and cultural aura. The most circulated and familiar equivalent (of an Arabic proverbial expression) in the TL becomes the standard against which all subsequent proverbial situations are assessed. Hence, the tyranny of the familiar. Renderings are affected by the fact that we must present our readers with what they accept as valid and with that which has relative proximity to the familiar, but not with what fits the proverb's context. This is a long tradition of proverb translation that translators have unduly respected for so long.

This study, therefore, aims to advance the proposition that the translation of Arabic proverbial expressions into English should be done in association with context. This is of high importance because most translators are mechanically driven to check published lists of unsituated English proverbs and choose the one that seems to be equivalent to its Arabic counterpart. The crucial point to note is that most translators strip proverbs of their context and seek decontextualized English proverbs as equivalents to contextualized Arabic proverbs. Rarely do we find translators who give much consideration to the proverb's social and pragmatic context; the social context of a proverbial expression could comprise the proverb's background, speakers, addressees, reasons for proverb use, etc.¹⁶ We will use sufficient examples to demonstrate that a minimal difference in the application of a proverb in a certain context signals a difference in meaning.

Methodology

The authors claim that anytime a particular proverb is used, its users intend to accomplish specific functions. We will interpret, analyze, and then translate into English ten contextualized Arabic proverbial expressions to demonstrate that the proverb's overall pragmatic and social context could yield multiple meanings of the same proverb as a result of various convergences of social situations and participants' assumptions.

For convenience sake, we classify the Arabic proverbs into two main categories: observational (social) proverbs, and religiously invoked proverbs. This classification, it should be remarked, is flexible in the sense that some proverbial expressions may overlap, i.e., in some cases a religion-based proverb may furnish a social feature.

In the discussion section below, each proverb from each category is interpreted and analyzed in its immediate context of use. These context-based meanings are then compared with the renderings as given by Le Gassick¹⁷ and Stewart.¹⁸ The wider Arabic context of each proverbial expression is provided followed by its English translation as suggested by those professional translators. Each proverbial expression and its rendering are underlined in both the Arabic and English versions. The professional translations will be analyzed and assessed in light of three translation equivalences, namely formal (i.e., semantic translation), functional, and ideational (i.e., communicative translation). Formal equivalence "attempts to reproduce as literally and meaningfully as possible the form and content of the original."¹⁹ Functional equivalence, however, is "the closest natural equivalent to the source-language message."²⁰ To the dichotomy of formal versus functional equivalence, Farghal adds "ideational equivalence,"²¹ which is often neglected in translation theory but frequently used in practice. It captures the idea independently of formal and functional constraints. Thus, it exclusively stresses the communicative sense of an utterance rather than its formal and/or functional correspondence in the TL.

Finally, it should be noted that this study is not meant to only offer renderings to ten Arabic proverbs; the authors believe that attending to the problem at large would be of more theoretical value. Thus, the ten selected proverbs would serve as a representative sample that is used to highlight the paramountcy of context in translating Arabic proverbial expressions into English.

Analysis and Discussion

Observational Proverbial Expressions

Observational proverbs are those that express generalizations about everyday experience. They sum up life experiences and teach people how to behave. The first example below sheds light on people's social life at the time of the British Mandate in Egypt. At the time, poverty was so widespread in Egyptian society, and most Egyptians endured much suffering because of it. Many of them had to engage themselves in unfavorable and socially unacceptable jobs like serving in the British army camps to earn a living:

(1) وليبث بها حتى اندلع لهيب الحرب فالتحق بخدمة المعسكرات البريطانية، وبلغت يوميته بها

ثلاثين قرشا نظير ثلاثة قروش في عمله الأول – غير ما يسميه هو "أكل العيش يجب خفة اليد"

(Ziqaq Al-Midaq [Midaq Alley], 29)²²

(1) He remained there until the war broke out and then went to work in a British Army camp. His daily wages were now thirty piasters compared to three piasters in his first job. All this was apart from what he made by applying his philosophy: "For a decent living you need a nice quick hand." (Le Gassick's rendition, 32)²³

People who performed such jobs (serving in the British army camps) were seen as collaborators by most Egyptians. In the context above, the proverb user or speaker (called Hussain) accepted to serve the British to earn a fascinating, generous living (thirty piasters instead of three). To justify his socially unacceptable act, he used the proverb above to convey the meaning that he accepted the job just to have a decent living and to be able to feed himself. It is obvious that the proverb in its context above was used by the speaker to relay the opposite of its original meaning. Out of context, the proverb is originally used to tell people that the burden of (daily) life obliges us to be so active and energetic to find and/or even accept a job that can barely enable us to buy العيش (bread, a symbol of one's very basic needs in the Arab culture and probably the cheapest thing one can buy in Egypt at that time); people should always work hard to find a socially acceptable job that will provide a proper living for them. Taken in its context, the proverb is said sarcastically to mean just the opposite of what it is basically used for. Put differently, the speaker knows well that his work is indecent and it is not merely for purchasing "bread," rather it is work with a very high salary (thirty instead of three piasters), but he chose to utter this proverb to justify his irrational behavior that contradicts social norms (i.e., serving an occupying army). Moreover, this proverb employs metaphorical images. The making of a living is likened to a human being with a "light" hand. Apparently, the proverb conveys the intended meaning that the proverb user is not really making a decent living by accepting to serve the British who are occupying his country, and he is indeed being ironical. Putting the proverb in its Arabic context above inside quotation marks by the writer merits this ironical interpretation.

The difficulty of translating this proverbial expression may lie in that it might be hard to keep its proverbial status together with its ironic sense. Le Gassick gave an inappropriate literal translation that is not proverbial and may not sound natural in the TL. It seems that Le Gassick was unaware that the proverb above was used ironically. Translators are to be aware of context, background knowledge, and explicit indicators of irony which signal ironical interpretations. The use of quotation marks in our context should have alerted Le Gassick that the proverb above was used sarcastically by the speaker. Literal translation may well be used to convey an ironical meaning provided that it makes sense to target readers and is enclosed by quotation marks and/or exclamation mark. However, literal translation may not fit this particular context, and it would be hard for TL readers to grasp the meaning of the original Arabic proverb. Apparently, we may not find a proverb in the TL that can be used to convey the same function of the original proverb because it is not universal and culture specific. In this case, translators can opt for conveying the implied meaning of the proverb while preserving its implicated ironic sense through the use of quotation marks and/or an exclamation mark. To quote Baker, "In English, the use of quotation marks around a word or expression in the body of a text can suggest a range of implied meanings."²⁴ Translators, therefore, should be alert to detect that the contextualized proverb above was not used the way it was originally meant. When taken in context, the proverb above can be translated into: "For a modest living, you need to hustle!"

Some observational proverbs are used to show how people feel toward others. They employ images that are hard to be understood by TL readers without a contextual background. To clarify, let us consider the following proverb:

(2) فدهشت أم حميدة، وذكرت كيف تحلب ريق أهل الزقاق يوماً على قطعة من هذه الصينية،
وها هي ذي امرأة زاهدة لا ترضى عنها! وقالت المرأة لنفسها "يعطى الحلق لمن ليس له أذنان."

(Ziqaq Al Midaq [Midaq Alley], 114)

(2) Umm Hamida was astonished at this and she recalled how all Midaq Alley was at one time wild for a bit of this food. So Alwan's wife was too puritanical, was she, and didn't approve of it? She repeated to herself the saying: "People with fine voices often have no ears to enjoy their singing." (Le Gassick's rendition, 117)

In an Arabic cultural setting, the above underlined proverb is originally used for those who have good things available to them but they do not make use of them. It may also be used for people who already have or own wealth but do not deserve such a fortune. It can be applied in different contexts of situation to yield different effects on its receivers. Thus, it is the context rather than the proverb's seemingly frozen meaning that determines the exact meaning intended by the proverb user. In the context above, the proverb is said out of jealousy. The proverb user (Umm Hamida) envies Alwan's wife for having a special delicious food available to her and she is not eating from it. The intended meaning of the proverb is exemplified by giving *حلق* (literally, a pair of earrings) to those who do not have *أذنان* (literally, ears). This awkward image is what gives the saying its proverbial meaning. In the Arab culture, earrings are normally used by women and young girls. In many parts of the Arab world, it is not uncommon that baby girls are given earrings to wear immediately after their birth. This is done by their mothers to make them look beautiful or as a way of revealing the sex of the newly born child. In Arab and Muslim countries, several years ago, earrings were worn only by women and young girls, and it was unethical to see young men wearing them as Islam forbids that for men. But this situation has started to change and now, in some Arab countries, you can find some young men who seem to be imitating a western lifestyle by wearing earrings, but their behavior is not accepted by many people in their community.

In terms of translation, Le Gassick's rendering above, though awkward, can be judged positively. Le Gassick used "fine voices" instead of "earrings" and "have no ears to enjoy their singing" to clarify the proverb's intended meaning that some people cannot make use of precious things available to them. The image he employed could make sense to TL readers in the proverb's context. Le Gassick's successful rendering encourages proverbial borrowing across languages and cultures. This suggests that when translating some proverbial expressions that do not encapsulate universal themes and do not have direct equivalents in the TL, translators are encouraged to create their own proverbial expression in the TL, provided that its image is clear to the English readers in terms of its meaning through the context of situation. This practice would enrich the TL culture with more proverbial expressions. Thus, translating the proverb above into "God gives earrings to those who have no ears" would sound *contextually* appropriate as it preserves the meaning, creates almost the same function in the TL, and utilizes an image that is clear to the English audience. However, the meaning of the above proverb can also be expressed either functionally as in (2.a) or ideationally as in (2.b):

(2.a) "The gods send nuts to those who have no teeth."

(2.b) "Gifts come to those who cannot make use of them."

To further illustrate inventive or creative translation of proverbial expressions across cultures, let us consider the following proverb:

(3) وخرج النعش محمولاً عند الضحى، واقتصر المشيعون على الأهل والأقارب ولكن قاسم

انضم إليهم غير مبال بنظرات الفتوة المحرقة، وغضب صهر القتييل فقال لقاسم محتداً:

نقتل القتييل وتمشي في جنازته!

(Awlad Haritna [The Children of Gebelawi], 640)²⁵

(3) Later in the morning the bier was carried out, followed only by the family and close relatives, and by Kassem, who ignored the chief's furious looks. The dead man's brother-in-law was angry and said to Kassem:

"You kill the man and then attend his funeral!"

(Stewart's rendition, 250)²⁶

Funeral rituals in the Islamic culture are different from those in English culture. In Islamic culture, the bier is carried and people walk from the mosque, where prayers on the deceased have been performed, to the cemetery, where he or she will be buried. While in procession, relatives, close friends, and other participants compete to carry his or her bier for a short time, and they keep doing this until they reach the cemetery. This practice (competing to take turns in carrying the coffin while walking to the cemetery) is encouraged in Islam. With this in mind, we can see clearly that the proverb's image is derived from this behavior. It uses the verb *تمشي* (walk) instead of "attend."

This proverb is usually said to a murderer who acts like he or she has done nothing wrong. He or she behaves normally even when participating in the funeral of his or her own victim. Over time, this proverbial expression has acquired more pragmatic applications and usages and is well applied in other situations. For example, the proverb above can be said to someone who commits a theft and tries to help the victim find the thief, or to someone who causes a conflict and tries to help put an end to it, or to someone who causes a divorce between a husband and a wife and then tries to help them get back to each other.

Evidently, the image employed in this proverbial expression is not clear to the TL audience; it might even be hard to find a functional equivalence in the TL that conveys its meaning. In such a case, translators could simply interpret the proverb and then translate it literally. When the proverb is translated into "you kill the man and then attend his funeral," this translation would make sense to TL readers only in this particular context. From previous context, they would know that the addressee is a hypocrite who pretends to have done no offense or harm to the victim. Stewart's rendering, "You kill the man and then attend his funeral!" is acceptable because it can be easily understood by target readers in its context, but the problem with this rendering is that it only amounts to an interpretation of the above proverb while it sacrifices the expression's proverbial status in Arabic. This strategy of conveying the proverb's meaning without keeping its proverbial status should be justified as a translation behavior, especially when translators run out of translation choices. It is inventive in the sense that it shares new images, themes, and human behaviors across cultures.

Some Arabic proverbs refer to the basic pillars of Islam such as *صلاة* (praying), *صيام* (fasting), *زكاة* (compulsory charity in Islam when income conditions are met), etc. Such proverbial expressions are usually difficult to translate because the metaphorical images aroused by them are different from the ones aroused in the TL culture. By way of illustration, consider the following proverb:

(4) أظنك تفضلين رجلا متقدما في السن ؟

لم تدر الأخرى بماذا تجيب. لم تكن تطمع في الزواج من شاب، ولا كان الشب بالزوج الذي يناسبها، ولكنها

لم ترتح إلى عبارة "متقدم في السن" هذه. وكان تدرج الحديث قد خلطها بأمر حميدة فأنست إليها واستطاعت

أن تقول وهي تضحك لتداري ارتياكها:

أصوم و أفطر على بصلة!

(Ziqaq Al Midaq [Midaq Alley], 21)

(4) "I take it you would prefer a man well advanced in years?" The widow did not know how to reply. She did not want to marry a youth who would be an unsuitable husband for her and yet she was not pleased at the expression "well advanced in years." The way the conversation had developed had made her feel a little more at ease with Umm Hamida and she was able to say, laughing to hide her embarrassment:

"What, break a fast by eating an onion?!" (Le Gassick's rendition, 20)

First we should note that the proverb's original wording *صوم صوم وافطر على بصلة* (lit. fast and fast and then break your fasting on an onion) was modified to suit the context above, which does not tolerate the repetition of the word *صوم* (fast). In our context above, the woman in question (speaker), who is a widow, prefers to have a younger husband to an old one, but at the same time, she does not want to lose Umm Hamida's (addressee's) offer, hence the deletion of the second word *صوم*. By doing so, she seems to be trying to mitigate or conceal her suffering from being without a husband for a long period of time. In Arab culture, single or divorced women may not enjoy or lead a normal life. They are usually to be blamed, though they are victimized by men. Their communities do injustice to them, and hence a woman's best chance is to get married and maintain a family life that could protect her against the uncertainties of a traditional society.

The difficulty of translating this proverb stems from the metaphorical image it encapsulates. The metaphorical meaning aroused by the word *صوم* (fasting) is not easily available for TL readers, hence the implausibility of translating it formally as was done by Le Gassick. It would require some extra effort to capture the functional equivalents aroused by the metaphorical use of the word *صوم*. This being the case, ideational equivalence that stresses the communicative sense of original expression is the outlet, and it should be called on to clarify that *صوم* in the above context means waiting for a long time without achieving satisfactory results. A close look at Le Gassick's literal translation above reveals that he fails to encode the metaphorical image of *صوم*. His literal translation may be easily grasped by Arab readers but would sound like double Dutch to the English audience because in the Arab culture, breaking long fasting hours by eating an onion is extremely unsatisfactory; a fatty varied meal is expected instead. So onion fast breaking connotes bad endings.

Obviously, what the speaker (Mrs. Afify) says is the opposite of what she really means. At the surface level, the speaker seems to convey the message that she is not interested in marrying a man advanced in years, but, if she had to, she prefers marrying this old man to remaining a widow.

This ironic interpretation of the proverb can be also detected from the use of the exclamation mark (!) in the original Arabic proverb above. Moreover, this proverb appears to disrupt the flow of discourse between the speaker and the addressee. Put differently, the proverb sounds both irrelevant and dry in context as it may appear to be disconnected from the previous discourse (again at the literal level). It conveys the intended message in an obscure manner. Here, the shared background knowledge is crucial for the understanding of proverbial expressions among interlocutors even in the same language. In other words, the more shared knowledge secured between interlocutors, the easier the understanding of proverbs would be, and vice versa. If we assume that Arab readers do not know that an onion fast breaking implies bad endings, it would be difficult for them to understand this proverb and they would see it as irrelevant in this context (at a deeper level) because they lack shared knowledge. We know this assumption about Arab readers is only hypothetical but we include it here to clarify our point about the importance of shared knowledge for proverb comprehension. So, if shared knowledge is lacking among participants in a speech event in the same language or among TL readers, proverbial

expressions appear irrelevant in any context. Accordingly, it can be claimed that Le Gassick's literal translation remains incomprehensible for TL and Arab readers who do not have the needed shared knowledge. It should be remarked here that we could come to such interpretations after a thorough study of the context in which the proverb was used.

In terms of translation, such proverbs are doubly problematic. Translators are urged to keep their proverbial status and, at the same time, they need to relay their ironic meaning. For Newmark,²⁷ it is preferable when translating ironic utterances to use quotation marks or an exclamation mark to alert the readership to the ironic meaning. Following Newmark's suggestion, the above proverb could be translated functionally as in (4.a) below, and ideationally as in (4.b):

(4.a) "The longer the wait, the worse the reward!"

(4.b) "Long you wait, little you get!"

It is worth mentioning that the English proverb in (4.a) has undergone some changes in its wording to suit the context. Originally, it reads as: "the longer the wait, the better the reward." Translators, therefore, can make use of existing proverbs in the TL and then introduce some changes to them to suit their context as is the case in (4.a). This practice (modifying an existing proverb in the TL to suit a SL proverb) can give translators more options when it comes to translating proverbial expressions across cultures.

In some observational proverbial expressions, the metaphoric and literal use of a proverbial expression may coincide to suggest a proverbial meaning. To illustrate this point, examine the following proverbial expression:

(5) فصاح جبل بأعلى صوته:

فليرد إليه بصره أولاً

فبكى كعبلها وقال الشاعر رضوان متأوها:

ليست في الإمكان رد البصر.

فقال جبل وقد أظلم وجهه كالسمااء الراعدة البارقة:

ولكن في الإمكان أن تؤخذ عين بعين!

(Awlad Haritna [The Children of Gebelawi], 493)

(5) Gebel shouted at the top of his voice:

Let him first give him back his eye.

Kaabelha cried, and Radwaan the storyteller said with a sigh:

If only it were possible to give that back.

Gebel's face was dark. He said:

But it is possible to take an eye for an eye. (Stewart's rendition, 134)

The above proverbial expression is an abridged version of the original Arabic proverb that reads as *العين بالعين والسن بالسن* (literally, an eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth). In English we have a proverb that is equivalent to the Arabic proverb in both form and meaning. It reads as, "An eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth." But translators cannot simply opt for this familiar and most

circulated translation as an equivalent to the proverb above. Such translation would be incongruent simply because the contextual literal meaning of the proverb (the speaker indeed wants to damage and poke the addressee's eye) is as important as its proverbial meaning. In this case, the proverb is literally intended by its user. The speaker, Gebel, wants to poke the addressee's eye because the latter had damaged his brother's eye. He is invoking an existing proverb in Arabic to imply a literal meaning. In a wider (proverbial) sense, the advice in the above proverb is that we should be treating others the way they treat us. If they do us any injustice, we should treat them likewise. There is no literal meaning in such usage. Its proverbial meaning that can fit different situations delivers a message of warning to people; they will be punished the same way they punish others. For example, if someone betrays you, betray him; harms you, harm him, and so on. But in the example above, it is clear that the proverb has a double meaning: literal and metaphoric (proverbial). On the literal level, the speaker intends to damage the addressee's eye, while simultaneously, it suggests a proverbial meaning that we should repay others in the same way they pay us. This coincidence between the literal and metaphoric meaning of the above proverbial expression is what translators should attempt to reflect in their translation. They should try to find a translation that captures both the intended literal and proverbial meaning of the above proverbial expression.

In terms of translation, Stewart's rendition appears to be only proverbial, thus failing to reflect the coincidence between the proverbial and the literal meanings. This is often the case when translators mechanically use a comparable proverb in the TL without closely examining its immediate context of use. Translators seem to wrongly believe that a proverb's meaning is frozen and not flexible, but in our above example, it is context that should dictate our rendering, and it is context that made Stewart's translation incongruent. To fit the context of use, this proverbial expression can be rendered into something like:

(5) "Damage an eye for a damaged eye!"

The insertion of the word "damage" is meant here to convey the literal meaning intended by the speaker.

Although the functional equivalents for some observational Arabic proverbs do exist in English, these equivalents often sound less emotive and far less artistic than the original ones. By way of clarification, consider the proverbial expression below:

(6) فتاة مثلها تحل العقد!

وذهب الرجل إلى بيت ياسمينة مدفوعا باليأس وحده، طرق الباب ففتحت ياسمينة بنفسها، ولما عرفته تراجع رأسها في دهش مقرون بالخوف وقالت:

أنت! ياما تحت الساهي دواهي!

فغض الرجل بصره أمام شفافية قميصها.

(Awlad Haritna [The Children of Gebelawi], 517)

(6) A girl like her has a kind of power!

Shafey went to Jasmine's house, driven by despair alone. He knocked at the door and Jasmine herself opened it. When she saw who it was she jerked her head back in a mixture of surprise and triumph. She said:

You?! Every dreamer hides a schemer!

He looked away from her flimsy blouse. (Stewart's rendition, 154)

The above proverbial expression is a clear case where the two languages present positive overlap in terms of functional translation equivalents. In the Arab culture, this expression is said to a person who appears to be rather polite, friendly, simple, calm, and quiet, but then he or she suddenly behaves or acts in a way that is never expected of him or her. It delivers a universal message that people should not be deceived by one's outside appearance. One's friendliness and politeness should not make others trust him or her. In the context at hand, the speaker (Yasmeena) does not trust the addressee who appears to be a good, polite man and she has doubts that he hides great cunning behind his politeness. In English, there are straightforward functional equivalents that convey the same function of the original Arabic proverb. These translations read as follows:

- (6.a) "Still water runs deep."
 (6.b) "Empty vessels make the most sound."

Though such choices express similar function to that of the original, they are incongruent renderings. This is because it is the form of the Arabic proverb along with its function that makes it more emotive and proverbial. If translators choose to be more faithful to the original, they should attempt, if possible, to capture the proverb's rhythmic form as well as its function. The beauty of the Arabic proverb stems from the use of the two words *الدواهي* and *الساھي*, which exhibit an emotive rhythm. The point is: translators should not mechanically resort to familiar choices or rush to find most circulated and valid functional equivalents in the TL, but rather, they should pay careful attention to the proverb's immediate context, which should dictate their (congruent) translation. A translator can sometimes create a proverb even if it replaces a commonly understood proverb and TL audience may feel as if something is not quite right. Out of context, [(6.a) and (6.b) above] are perfect translations, but in the above literary context, a translation that captures the proverb's linguistic beauty must be configured, if this is possible in the first place. Therefore, we would support and adopt Stewart's rendition that reads:

- (6.c) "Every dreamer hides a schemer."

It may be wise to argue that though Stewart might be aware of the existing functional equivalent in English, she chose a translation of her own to reflect the artistic touches of the Arabic proverb. She used "dreamer" for *الساھي* and "hides a schemer" for *الدواهي*, which is more emotive and more poetic. The dreamer usually appears to be contemplating, calm, and quiet, and the schemer is the person who schemes in a devious way. Above all, the suffix "er" in dreamer and schemer can be seen as a reflection of the rhyme "هي" in *الساھي* and *الدواهي*. This translation makes for a good match as far as the proverb's artistic touches and rhythmic sound are concerned.

Religion-based Proverbial Expressions

The Islamic culture has undoubtedly influenced the patterns of thought and speech on the part of the speakers of Arabic language. And belief, as one of the basic components of culture, is the area where differences between Arab and English societies are greatest. Consequently, the

process of translation between Arabic and English is affected by variance in religious belief. There are several proverbial expressions that are religion-based, i.e., they are derived from Islamic teachings and/or traditions. Islam introduces concepts that are alien to Christianity, and some of these concepts have found their way into proverbial expression, thus furnishing culture-specific themes based exclusively on Islam.²⁸ By way of clarification, consider the following proverb:

(7) ودبت الحياة مرة أخرى في الشيخ درويش فأدار رأسه نحو الجهة التي اختفى فيها الزاهبان ،
وتأوه قائلاً:

ذهب الشاعر وجاء المذياع . هذه سنة الله في خلقه .

(Ziqaq Al Midaq [Midaq Alley], 11)

(7) Life stirred once again in Sheikh Darwish and he turned his head towards the direction in which they had disappeared, mumbling:

"The poet has gone and the radio has come." This is the way of God in his creation. (Le Gassick's rendition, 8)

The underlined proverbial expression in the above Arabic extract has religious roots. In Islam, it is well known that God has his own way in his creation and there is always a message behind the way God chooses to make his creation. This interpretation applies for out-of-context use of this proverbial expression. In the above context, apparently, there is no creation whatsoever, and the talk is about how the industry of reciting poetry in cafes had become futile and anachronistic. In the Egyptian culture, people used to gather round a poet listening carefully to him while saying verses of poetry, and poets made money out of this industry that no longer exists. So, the speaker (Sheikh Darwish) is lamenting the fact that the radio (a new invention at that time) replaced poetry recitation in public. At that time, a cafe owner would use a radio instead of a poet to amuse his/her customers, who had lost interest in listening to poets after radios were invented. Thus, the proverbial expression above acquired a new application in the Arab culture.

Obviously, Le Gassick gives a literal rendering that may make sense to English readers; however, his translation suffers two deficiencies that render it unfaithful. The first deficiency has to do with the linguistic rhythm present in the Arabic proverb by the use of "هذه" (this) and "خلقته" (his creation). This rhythmic style is used in the original proverbial expression to signal admiration. We should admit that such features are hard to handle, but translators should make every possible effort to reflect them in their rendering because they are dealing with a literary work where translation peculiarities do count. The second problem lies in the fact that Le Gassick seems to be unaware of the reality that the proverbial expression was used ironically. Thus, it is the context rather than the proverb per se that determines the exact meaning intended by the proverb user. The above proverb is usually used in the Arab world to show admiration for God's might, who knows his creatures well and has his own ways in creating them. If we examine the above context carefully, we can easily see that the speaker (Sheikh Darwish) uses the expression sarcastically. The context tells us that Sheikh Darwish does not admire poets, but rather, he prefers listening to a radio to listening to a poet, and he seems to enjoy a better, more normal life when the poet disappears. Any translation should account for this ironic meaning. It is important for translators to know that, in ironic usages, the intended meaning is quite opposite to what is being literally said. Gibbs and O'Brien maintain that "people can really detect ironic meaning by assuming

the opposite of an utterance's literal meaning once the literal meaning is seen as being contextually inappropriate."²⁹ This shows that the interpretation of proverbial expressions with ironic meaning greatly depends on context as well as on various assumptions shared by speakers and addressees. Mateo argues that an ironic interpretation "depends on context because it springs from the relationships of a word, expression, or action with the whole text or situation."³⁰ This fact complicates the task of the translator when it comes to translating proverbial expressions with ironic meaning. Hence, the translator is usually faced with a double interpretation (the literal and the ironic), and accordingly, he or she has to choose between these two interpretations.

However, if we are to be faithful to the original, we should attempt to come up with a translation that both keeps the speaker's ironic intentions and to some extent retains the saying's linguistic peculiarities. With this in mind, the above proverbial expression may be best translated into something like:

(7) "This is God's norm! This is God's disposition!"

Some Arabic proverbial expressions make use of the theistic agent Allah (God). This use of the word "Allah" in proverbs may impede cross-cultural communication. To clarify, let us consider the following proverb:

(8) وضاق دعبس بتأدب حمدان فقال:

نحن أسرة واحدة، جميعنا أبناء أدهم و أميمية.

فقال الأفندي بامتعاض:

ذلك تاريخ مضى ورحم الله امراءا عرف قدر نفسه .

(Awlad Haritna [The Children of Gebelawi], 422)

(8) Daabas was annoyed by Hamdaan's politeness and said:

We are one family, we are all children of Adham and Omayma . . .

Effendi said angrily:

That's ancient history. Thank God some people know their proper place. (Stewart's rendition, 79)

This proverbial expression is a clear case where the proverb user's intended meaning and the literal meaning of the proverb are seriously different. The difficulty of translating this proverb lies in the fact that it can be used to implicate more than one meaning in different contexts of situation as it employs the theistic agent "Allah." Farghal and Borini maintain that expressions with the theistic agent may be uttered ironically "upon the mention of the deceased denotatum in a conversation for the purpose of disreputing him in a polite manner."³¹ Moreover, this expression drifts from its semantic import and acquires new pragmatic dimensions. Thus, it is, more often than not, used ironically to perform an illocutionary act of insulting. This being the case, translators should scrutinize the pragmatic aspect of any proverbial expression with a theistic reference to come up with an appropriate rendering. Translators should fully realize that in the above proverb, the formulaic expression *رحم الله* (literally, may God have mercy) does not connote its original religious meaning in Arabic, namely "May God have mercy." That is, the proverbial expression is used originally in Arabic to deliver a message to arrogant people that God loves and has mercy on humble people who know their right position and do not show off. We will need to examine the proverb's context to realize that the proverb user is, indeed, cursing and not

praising the addressee who should not brag or boast and is supposed to know his right position. The speaker is being ironic via conveying an impolite illocutionary act (cursing) in an apparently polite way (praising). In other words, the speaker is being impolite in a polite way.³²

Stewart's rendition above reveals that she inappropriately conveyed the proverb's out-of-context meaning. That is to say, her rendering is congruent as long as the proverb is unsituated in a particular context, because the proverb user is rebuking the addressee for not knowing his right position and thus the addressee has no right whatsoever to pride on the origin of his ancestors. Based on this contextual meaning, the proverbial expression above can be translated into something like:

(8) "God's curse is on those who do not know their right position!"

There are some proverbs that make reference to Prophet Mohammad's sayings. By way of illustration, consider the proverb below:

(9) كيف يعيبك ما هو شرع وحق! أنت ست عاقلة شريفة، والكل يشهد بذلك، فالزواج نصف الدين يا حبيبتى، وربنا شرعه حكمة. وأمر به النبي عليه الصلاة والسلام.

(Ziqaq Al Midaq [Midaq Alley], 20)

(9) Why should it be wrong to do something both lawful and right? You are a respectable and sensible person, as everyone knows. Why, my dear, marriage is one half of religion. Our Lord in his wisdom made it lawful and it was prescribed by the prophet, peace and blessings be upon him. (Le Gassick's rendition, 18)

Originally, the above proverb refers to words said by Prophet Mohammad (peace be upon him) to encourage Muslims to get married once they are capable physically and financially to do so. It is an adjusted version of a statement by the prophet Mohammad that has acquired a proverbial status, thus enabling it to enjoy a wider metaphorical application; it may be used ironically to deceive or mock others as it is used in the above context. The proverb's user (Umm Hamida) makes fun of the addressee (Mrs. Afify) by trying to convince her to agree to marry a young man. Umm Hamida fully knows that the addressee is too old and she has already lost her chance in getting married. She is not using the proverb sincerely; rather, she is deceiving her in order to get her to agree to a reduction in the rent payment.

Needless to say that marriage in both Islamic and English cultures is a source of stability and a way of forming a family, but in English culture, unlike in Islamic culture, marriage may not have religious connotations or invoke religious considerations. When couples in the West decide to get married, they do not often do so under the influence of their own religious belief. In the Islamic culture, however, marriage is religiously encouraged and is seen as a protection against starting or having unlawful relations like committing adultery. It is also seen as a complement to one's religion. These divergent social and religious practices in the two cultures may make it difficult to come up with an appropriate rendering for the cited expression. In fact, we cannot find a comparable proverb in English that conveys a similar contextual meaning to that of the Arabic proverb. Le Gassick translated the above proverb literally, thus offering English readers opaque and, mostly, unintelligible translation. Because keeping the proverb's religious connotations may

make it incomprehensible to the English readers, it would be wise if we sacrifice those connotations for the sake of conveying its communicative meaning. Accordingly, it can be translated into something like:

(9) "As your wedding ring wears, you will wear off your cares."

It is true that this translation is depleted from any religious references that are present in the original, but it may fit the TL readers, as getting married may not invoke religious connotations in their own minds.

Some religious proverbial expressions gain their religious status by making use of Quranic verses. People employ them in a proverbial, metaphorical way. By way of clarification, observe the following proverbial expression:

(10) وربما هز رأسه أسفا وقال: "ما له الحشيش!" "راحة للعقل وتحلية للحياة وفوق هذا وذاك

فهو مدر للنسل!" وأما عن شهوته الأخرى فيقول بفتحته المعهودة: لكم دينكم ولي دين!

(Ziqaq Al Midaq [Midaq Alley], 10)

(10) He frequently shook his head sadly and said: "What's wrong with hashish? It gives peace to the mind and comfort to life and apart from both these facts, it is an excellent aphrodisiac!" Concerning his "other vice," he would say in his customary way: "You have your religion, I have mine!" (Le Gassick's rendition, 47)

Originally, the underlined Quranic verse above was said to Prophet Mohammad; this verse urges him to tell infidels that he (Mohammad) will follow his religion and that they (infidels) should follow their religion. The reference in this verse is to infidels who offered to grant Prophet Mohammad mundane things such as money and fame if he stopped undermining the authority of the idols they had worshipped. Following the prophet's rejection of their offer, they suggested that he worship their idols for one year and they would worship his god (Allah) for one year. Then, Allah instructed Prophet Mohammad to reject their offer and ordered him to tell them that they should continue to honor their religion and he would honor his own religion. Over time, this verse has gained a proverbial status, and then it came to be used in different social situations. When said by someone, it generally implicates that the speaker does not want anyone to interfere with his own affairs; people should mind their own business. This shows that the above saying is culture specific and it will, therefore, pose a serious challenge for translators into English. A literal translation like in the case of Le Gassick may not make much sense to an English audience.

According to the original context, the speaker (Karsha) is using a religion-based proverbial expression to legitimize his homosexuality. The message being sent is that Karsha wants people to understand that he is free with whatever he wants to do, and they are free with what they want to do. They should not oppose or criticize him for being a homosexual.

Obviously, the above context does not have any of the religious connotations of the original, and the proverbial saying is used metaphorically. The expression *لكم دينكم* (lit. you have your own religion) was figuratively used to refer to people's way of life and *لي دين* (lit. I have a religion) is used to refer to Karsha's sexual orientation.

Translators are expected to realize that the literal translation of this saying will by no means make much sense to the English audience. To avoid any confusion that may result from mixing

religion with the character's own homosexual preference, a more functional translation could be used. A better rendering of the above proverbial expression, therefore, could be something like:

(10) "You mind your business and I mind mine."

Two justifications can be given for this translation. First, it conveys the proverb's intended focus on the character's homosexuality. Second, it makes use of linguistic features to accommodate the Arabic saying. As the Arabic proverb is more emotive and proverbial through the use of rhythmic words like *لكم دينكم* and *لبي دين* in our suggested translation above, we have, more or less, a similar linguistic rhythm that emanates from the use of "you mind" and "I mind mine." There is no doubt that this rhythmic match adds to the beauty of the translation.

Conclusion

This study has demonstrated the paramourcy of context in translating Arabic proverbs into English. To achieve this purpose, ten Arabic proverbial expressions were examined and analyzed in their immediate context of use. They were classified into two major categories: observational and religion-based proverbs.

The study has shown that proverbial expressions can be used to express more than one meaning; in fact, these meanings are sometimes contradictory. Such a feature of multiple meanings and usages of proverbs should motivate translators to give due attention to proverb's context before they make their decisions.

As they work on producing congruent renderings that suit the context of the proverb, translators can make use of a corresponding proverb in the TL via introducing some changes into its wording to accommodate its context. This has been made clear in translating *صوم وافطر على بصلة* into "the longer the wait, the worse the reward." Alternatively, translators can in some cases invent or create their own proverb in the TL, provided that their translation is transparent and makes sense to TL readers; thus, they can, and with good reason, encourage cross-pollination between cultures and languages where a proverbial gap may be felt in the TL. In addition, translators can use literal translation (formal correspondence) to render Arabic proverbs into English as long as the SL proverb encapsulates a universal theme and its image is shared between the two cultures in question. Finally, translators should, whenever it is feasible, endeavor to maintain the rhythmic and linguistic tone of proverbial expressions in their renderings. The proverb's rhythm should not be sacrificed for the sake of clarity, and the proverbial effect should not be completely lost for the sake of conveying the message. We have hailed the successful rendering of *ياما تحت الساهي دواهي* into "every dreamer hides a scheme" and favored it over using the familiar, most circulated equivalent in the TL, "still water runs deep."

As a last remark, we strongly advise translators against stripping proverbs of their context and against mechanically choosing frozen English renderings by consulting published lists of decontextualized English proverbs. This translational tradition within which translators frequently work has contributed to producing many awkward and irrelevant translations.

ABOUT THE AUTHORS

Ekrema Shehab is assistant professor of translation studies at the Department of English, An-Najah National University, Palestine, where he has taught translation courses at the undergraduate and

postgraduate levels since 1999. He obtained his BA in English language and literature and MA in translation from Yarmouk University, Jordan, and received his PhD in translation from the Department of English, College of Languages, University of Sudan. Dr. Shehab has published a number of articles on Arabic/English translation problems. He has worked as an accredited freelance translator for a number of international companies and has been a member of the panel of judges in New York for ARC Awards honoring outstanding achievements in Annual Reports since 2011. His research interests include literary translation, the teaching of translation, pragmatics, discourse analysis, and Islamic and cultural studies.

Abdelkarim Daragmeh has published articles on postcolonial and minority literature, translation between Arabic and English, and blended-language teaching environments. Dr. Daragmeh's research interests are in African, Arab, and American contemporary literatures, translation studies, and faculty professional development programs. He has a PhD in contemporary literature and literary theory from Southern Illinois University and works currently as an associate professor of English at the Department of English Language and Literature, An-Najah National University, Palestine.

NOTES

1. Maria Khodorkovsky, "How to Translate Proverbs," <http://www.altalang.com/beyond-words/2008/11/19/how-to-translate-a-proverb> (accessed June 25, 2013).
2. Amba, "An Assessment of the Problems and Prospects of Translating Hausa Proverbs into English," 4.
3. Fred Putnam, "In a Pig's Nose! The Tyranny of Tradition," 2, <http://fred.putnam.org> (accessed April 20, 2013).
4. Witting, *English Proverbs Explained*, 56.
5. Mohammad Khamis, "The Translation of Proverbs," <http://educationcingblogspot.be/2012/06/translation-of-proverbs.html> (accessed June 20, 2013).
6. Seitel, "Proverbs: A Social Use of Metaphor," 145.
7. Gimblett, "Toward a Theory of Proverb Meaning," 821.
8. Ibid.
9. Jon Gleason, "The Problem of Proverbs," <http://mindrenewers.com> (accessed June 20, 2013).
10. Gimblett, "Toward a Theory of Proverb Meaning," 827.
11. Ibid., 826.
12. Arewa and Dundes, "Proverbs and the Ethnography of Speaking Folklore," 36.
13. Prahlad, *African-American Proverbs in Context*.
14. Putnam, "In a Pig's Nose!" 1.
15. Ibid.
16. See Arewa and Dundes, "Proverbs and the Ethnography of Speaking Folklore."
17. Le Gassick, *Midaq Alley*. Translation of Mahfouz's *Ziqaq Al-Midaq*.
18. Stewart, *Children of Gebelawi*. Translation of Mahfouz's *Awlad Haritna*.
19. Nida, *Toward a Science of Translation*, 159.
20. Ibid., 166.
21. Farghal, "Ideational Equivalence in Translation," 2.
22. *Ziqaq Al-Midaq* is a literary masterpiece written by the late Najib Mahfouz, the most famous Egyptian novelist. He won the Nobel Prize for his literary masterpieces that mainly depicted the Egyptians' social life in the nineteenth century.
23. Le Gassick's *Midaq Alley* is a translation of Mahfouz's *Ziqaq Al-Midaq*.

24. Baker, *In Other Words*, 230.
25. *Awlad Haritna* is a literary masterpiece written by Najib Mahfouz.
26. Stewart's *The Children of Gebelawi* is a translation of Mahfouz's *Awlad Haritna*.
27. See Newmark, *Approaches to Translation*.
28. See Farghal, "Jordanian Proverbs: An Ethnographic and Translational Perspective."
29. Gibbs and O'Brien, "Psychological Aspects of Irony Understanding," 524.
30. Mateo, "The Translation of Irony," 172.
31. Farghal and Al-Borini, "Pragmareligious Failure in Translating Arabic Politeness Formulas into English" 79.
32. See Leech, *The Principles of Pragmatics*.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

- AMBA, IBRAHIM. "An Assessment of the Problems and Prospects of Translating Hausa Proverbs into English." Master's thesis, Ahmadu Bello University, 2011.
- AREWA, OJO, and ALAN DUNDES. "Proverbs and the Ethnography of Speaking Folklore." *Proverbium* 5 (1964): 25–40.
- BAKER, MONA. *In Other Words: A Coursebook on Translation*. London: Routledge, 1994.
- FARGHAL, MOHAMMAD. "Ideational Equivalence in Translation." In *Language, Discourse and Translation in the West and Middle East*, edited by R. de Beaugrande, Abdullah Shunnaq, and Mohammad Heliel, 55–63. Amsterdam: John Benjamins, 1992.
- . "Jordanian Proverbs: An Ethnographic and Translational Perspective." *SENDEBAR* 6 (1995): 197–208.
- FARGHAL, MOHAMMAD, and AHMAD AL-BORINI. "Pragmareligious Failure in Translating Arabic Politeness Formulas into English: Evidence from Mahfouz's *Awlad Haritna*." *Multilingua* 16, no. 1 (1997): 77–99.
- GIBBS, RAYMOND, and JENNIFER O'BRIEN. "Psychological Aspects of Irony Understanding." *Journal of Pragmatics* 16 (1991): 523–30.
- GIMBLETT, KIRSHENBLAT. "Toward a Theory of Proverb Meaning." *Proverbium* 22 (1973): 821–26.
- LEECH, GEOFFREY. *The Principles of Pragmatics*. London: Longman, 1983.
- LE GASSICK, TREVOR, trans. *Midaq Alley*. London: Heinemann, 1975.
- MAHFOUZ, NAJIB. *Awlad Haritna*. Beirut: Dar Al-Adaad, 1959.
- . *Ziqaq Al-Midaq*. Cairo: The Library of Egypt, 1947.
- MATEO, MARTA. "The Translation of Irony." *Meta* 40, no. 1 (1995): 171–77.
- NEWMARK, PETER. *Approaches to Translation*. Oxford: Pergamon, 1981.
- NIDA, EUGENE. *Toward a Science of Translation*. Netherlands: Leiden: E. J. Briu, 1964.
- PRAHLAD, ANAND. *African-American Proverbs in Context*. Mississippi: University Press of Mississippi, 1996.
- SEITEL, PETER. "Proverbs: A Social Use of Metaphor." *Proverbium* 76 (1984): 143–61.
- STEWART, PHILIP. *Children of Gebelawi*. London: Heinemann, 1981.
- WITTING, RIDOUT. *English Proverbs Explained*. London: Heinemann, 1967.