Communicating through Translation with Arab Migrants in Australia

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Abstract
Translation in countries with a large migrant population plays a significant role in providing social services and in helping migrants and refugees who do not speak the language of their host countries be aware of their rights and responsibilities. This paper investigates the translation of community texts into Arabic in Australia, which aims at providing social justice to migrants and maintaining their languages and cultures. Despite the existence of an established national body and institutions that accredit and train translators, translation for Arab migrants still suffers from problems that hinder these goals and render lip service to the Arabic language because of the prevalence of subjective interference and inappropriate transfer process. This paper discusses the challenges, and investigates the competency of translators and their ability to deal with the cultural dominance of the host country. It investigates and suggests solutions to the factors that impact on the process of producing accurate and accessible translation. As such, it addresses the peculiarities of the types, styles and language of texts requiring translation, as well as the peculiarities of the Australian public service system and terminologies.

Keywords: accessibility, accuracy, community translation, interference, and translation quality

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1. Introduction
The paper addresses the provision of community translation into Arabic for the significant Arab migrant community in Australia. It tackles translated informational texts in keeping with the Australian Multicultural policy (Koleth, 2010; Taibi, 2011), which also acknowledges the right of migrants to preserve their languages and cultures within Australian law. As such, the paper does not refer to the translation of private promotional campaigns targeting the Arabic-speaking community. Generally, translated information is disseminated through newspapers, on government websites and on stands at the offices of legal, health and community service providers. Text types and styles differ according to the dissemination method and the purpose of the translation, such as posters, brochures and information booklets as part of awareness campaigns.

Despite more than forty years since the inception of the National Accreditation Authority for Translators and Interpreters (NAATI) and the ‘professionalisation’ of translation in Australia, the quality of community translation is alarmingly deteriorating because of lack of, or inadequate training, malpractice, unethical behaviour, profiteering, and the (ab)use of technology. The responsibility often rests with agencies and institutions whose mandates are to provide professional translators and uphold the principles of the profession. To pinpoint the issues at stake, this paper moves from (the often unhelpful) discussions on the politics of translation, generalities and rants about mistakes, to a close examination of authentic data for an insight into the issues. In doing so, it aims to answer three questions: are there standards of translation quality peculiar to community translation? Do the translations qualify as translations? And, if so, where do they rank on a scale of accessibility? The first question investigates the yardstick on which a community text ought to be analysed, and revised, i.e., quality-assessed. Using the suggested assessment tool, the second and third questions probe into the status quo of the subject matter.

1.1. Background
There are three government levels in Australia: local (councils or municipalities), state and federal. Government departments translate some of the materials they deem relevant for the non-English speaking communities, including citizens’ rights and responsibilities. Arabic speaking communities live mainly in the capital cities of the states of New South Wales, Victoria, Queensland, South Australia, and Western Australia. Translated materials target first generation migrants, newly arrived migrants and refugees. According to the 2011 census of the Australian Bureau of Statistics, there are approximately 225,000 first generation Arabs from all the Arab nations living in Australia, the majority of whom are from Lebanon, followed by Iraq then Egypt. The above census also shows that Arabic is among the top three languages spoken by the second generation, a testament to the esteem that the Arabic communities hold for the Arabic language and culture. The pace of demand for Arabic translation has not faltered since the 1960s owing to the waves of Arab refugees and migrants fleeing the civil wars ravaging their countries or people
migrating to Australia for family reunion. This migration highlights the reason most Arab migrants lack proficiency in English.

Since the establishment of NAATI in the mid-seventies, which coincided with the launch of the multicultural policy, most government departments and agencies use NAATI accredited translators. Translation courses started at technical colleges and universities in the eighties. Since then, translation graduates from certain educational institutions have received accreditation from NAATI. Until the end of 2017, accreditation was also awarded by passing a one-off translation exam with NAATI. Starting from January 2018, NAATI is introducing a certification system whereby training in translation will be compulsory in order to sit a translator test. However, despite these constraints, the user of government publications translated into Arabic is often provided with inaccessible and inaccurate information.

1.2. Locating community translation
The concept of ‘community’ here refers to the first generation of non-English speaking (NES) migrants. The adoption of multiculturalism and its related government policies set the scene for the dual purpose of ‘community translation’: the integration and participation (di Biase, 1987, 1988; Taibi, 2011) of NES migrants into the Australian society by communicating pertinent messages to them through translated materials that are linguistically accessible and culturally appropriate. Seeing translation for migrants as an exercise of domination rather than inclusion, Seago (2013) suggests the concept of ‘transcultural translation’ for the activity in question. Therefore, the definition of ‘community translation’ springs from its geographical and political contexts, purpose and end-users. These factors dictate the selection of the source texts (STs), their fields and genres. Hatim & Mason (1990, p. 241) define genre as ‘conventional forms of texts associated with particular types of social occasion’. Nord (2005) considers ‘genre conventions’, or the different norms of text-production, as a source of translation problem.

The paper ultimately aspires to explore an approach to community translation which enhances the accessibility of translated government information and eliminates the impoverishment (di Biase, 1988) of the Arabic language. Two major competencies are identified in community translation: contextual knowledge and specialist translator skills. A hybrid functional-discursive transfer approach (see section 3 below) employed for the translation quality assessment of a range of community translation samples shows that the translation approaches in the literature on community translation do not assist the trainee or professional translator in learning the skills or dealing with the challenges. The results suggest a translation approach to deal with the foreignness of the source texts, and concludes that only adequate translation can at best be achieved, hence refuting the myth that community translation serves as a vehicle for language and cultural maintenance.
2. Accuracy, accessibility and interference

An accurate and accessible translation, in general terms, is one that corresponds to the elements of meaning and style of the ST (Chakhachiro, 2005). Expressed in Halliday’s terms (2001), an accessible translation is one that is considered equivalent to its ST ideationally, interpersonally and textually (see Figure 1). However, achieving this ideal equivalence in community translation is complex, as the translator is negotiating a peculiar context of situation (Halliday & Hasan, 1985), that is, a multi-layered extra-textual environment. The elements of the context of situation of the community materials, the field, tenor and mode of discourse, are largely foreign to the target readership, including the laws, institutions, services, terminology, and text formats, to name but a few of the issues that need to be ironed out in the translation process. One key consequence of failing to negotiate the context of situation is interference.

Interference is usually the subject of investigation in foreign language learning (e.g., Shekhzadeh & Gheichi, 2011), bilingualism (e.g., Grosjean, 2010), second language acquisition (e.g., Ellis, 2008), translation studies (e.g., Toury, 2012; Aixelá, 2009), and translation into the second language, in particular (e.g., Hopkinson, 2004; Thawabteh, 2013). It is also the subject of translator competence. Campbell (1998) argues that translators undergo transitional stages of linguistic development and production, and that translation is the product of a process of language learning projected onto an interlanguage framework. Toury (1979) sees that the interlingual phenomena are integral to translation and inevitable as a result of the tension between the ‘adequacy’ and ‘acceptability’ postulates in translation, and occur in the translation from the native language to second language and vice versa, hence they naturally occur and are not ‘translationese’ (Newmark, 1988). Toury further hypothesises that ‘it is more than just reasonable to expect the product of his [the translator’s] activity, the translated text, to serve as an unfailing source of interlingual phenomena’ (1979, p. 224). While the plausibility of Toury’s argument about interlingua is undisputed, especially with regard to community translation, his postulate begs a few questions: to what extent is interlingua tolerable in translation? Can it be minimised and still achieve optimal accuracy? And what effect does it have on the impoverishment of the target language? Campbell’s postulate, on the other hand, begs a couple of pertinent questions: what is the entry point of bilingual and bicultural competence required to recruit trainee translators to qualify as community translators? And should the target readership’s rights to accurate and accessible information be compromised by his theory of interlingua in [human] translation? It is hoped that the comprehensive analysis below provides answers to the above questions.

In this paper, second language interference into the first language is investigated; this is a peculiar phenomenon that can be imputed to poor translation competence, language competence and socio-cultural awareness. Deviations from generic conventions (Nord, 2005) in translation are inevitable; this applies to our subject matter given the differences between the Australian public and sociocultural systems and the corresponding systems in the Arab World. However, a
distinction has to be made between ‘objective’ interference resulting from generic conventions and ‘subjective’ (Nord, 2005) interference resulting from the interlingual phenomena of translation, or, more specifically, the translator’s level of competence.

Broadly speaking, owing to modernization, westernisation and technology, foreign, non-Arabic general and specialised terms, expressions and phraseology, are constantly filtered through to the Arab lexicon. This phenomenon and its solutions, especially in migration countries, lie with education and translation.

Interference is the opposite of correctness or genuineness; linguistically, it is a deviation from the norms of the language. The Arab lexicographer, ibn Mandhour (as cited in Nour al-Ddine, 2003) defines it as the ‘hybrid and foreign’, which does not relate in any way to the Arabic language, as it has entered the language in its foreign form and frame, and it is adopted without change, modification, addition, or omission. However, the notion of interference is no longer confined to terms and expressions as the problem has extended to style, which includes الفصل والوصل: ‘asyndetism and syndetism’ (Holes, 1995), collocation, cohesion and coherence, idioms, and fixed expressions. In the context of translation of informational texts for migrants, this extended notion of interference conjures up the Arab rhetorician al-Jaahiz’s description of التبيين (al-tabyeen): ‘demonstration’ in writing, which

is directed at everyone, it is grasped through the brain, gained through practice and it necessitates the existence of others: a teacher, a speaker to utter it and a hearer to accept it. It also, necessarily, requires various types of manipulation, as well as illustration and convincing devices (my translation, al-Banaany, 1986, p. 12)

This definition suggests that writing and composition can be a craft, in contrast to art or البيان (al-bayaan): ‘eloquence’, the other side of al-Jaahiz’s coin of البلاغة (al-balaagha): ‘rhetoric’. There seems to be a degree of affinity between the process of community translation and al-Jaahiz’s definition of al-tabyeen, which entails that subjective and objective interference is amenable to addressing through teaching and learning. Subjective interference can be linguistic or stylistic, while objective interference relates to the generic features of the text and the nature of the task itself, i.e., the transfer process, which also involves stylistic competence.

Linguistic and stylistic interference impact the delivery of intended messages in community translation into Arabic, hence their accessibility. Manifested through vocabulary, terminology, phraseology, syntax, and broadly style, this type of interference can be attributed, in addition to the geographical setting, to the dominance of English over the media, the Internet, pay TV, and poor translation. For example, it is not uncommon to read in government brochures and online Arabic publications odd collocations, such as بباحث عن اللجوء: [lit.] searcher for asylum’ rather than the correct collocation طالب لجوء: ‘asylum seeker’, or يخدم حكم: ‘serving a sentence [in a literal
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sense]’ rather than ‘impesta فيترة محكومية: ‘spending a sentence period’. Literalness, among other erroneous translation techniques, can lead to stylistic interference and ambiguity, e.g., the omission of the equivalent of ‘are’, ‘have become’, from the heading of one of the translations analysed by the author for this study:

ST: Income Stream Reviews are now quicker
TT: الآن أسرع ^ Income Stream Reviews
Back-translation (BT): Income Stream Reviews now quicker

In Arabic, the resumptive pronoun (ضمير الشأن): ‘are’ is interpersonally used for emphasis, and calls on the participation (agreement) of the readership (Chakhachiro, 2011); hence ‘هي’ is required to achieve equivalence. An example of an objective interference is the unconventional structure found in the translation of another heading:

العنف والتأشيرة الخاصة بك: BT: Family violence and the visa that belongs to you.

3. Standards of translation quality
This section addresses the first research question posed in the introduction: the standards of translation quality peculiar to community translation. The textual representations and formats of Australian government publications (e.g., brochures, websites, advertorials) are non-existent or, at best, emerging in the Arab World, and the majority of the Australian government systems have no matching systems in the Arab World (e.g., social security, immigration law). The representations and formats of these type of publications have not received much attention in language learning in Arab countries, or studies on community translation and contrastive linguistics and stylistics between English and Arabic. Accordingly, translators are only guided by their instinct and not by the target text (TT) generic features of the community material they translate or a principled translation method. The few publications on community translation targeting the issue of equivalence are general and speculative (e.g., Yamamoto, n.d.).

There seems to be a consensus in the literature, albeit not based on empirical data, that a target-orientated translation approach, or receiver-orientated approach to community translation is appropriate (e.g., Taibi, 2011). A target-text-oriented approach is an umbrella concept that covers the translation of literature for some translation paradigms (e.g., Toury, 1995) and other types of translation, including community translation, or public service translation (Taibi, 2011). The source-text/target-text dichotomy, however, has long been challenged, and the target-text-oriented approach is questioned by scholars investigating public service translation (e.g., Fraser in Taibi, 2011; House, 1997). Furthermore, given the systemic (contextual) and cultural differences between the host country and the migrants’ countries of origin, it can be argued, following Toury (1980, 1995, pp. 56-57), that community translated texts are located between the poles of ‘adequacy’, [i.e.,] adherence to the textual and linguistic norms of the Source Culture (SC) system,
and ‘acceptability’, adherence to those of the Target Culture (TC) ’ (as cited in Ulrych, 2001, p. 42). Another plausible approach for community translation, which is in keeping with Toury’s compromising continuum, is the transfer-oriented approach suggested in the context of literary translation. This approach advocates plurality, diversity and multi-disciplinarity in translation; it considers the source side, the target side and the differences between them, and acknowledges the mediation of the translator who makes the final decision based on the ST’s and TT’s socio-cultural factors, the text-type and the purpose of the translation (Frank, as cited in Shuttleworth & Cowie, 1997; Ulrych, 2001). With these translation approaches in the background, below is an interactive functional (Halliday, 1994) discursive macro-model in light of the genre at hand and considering the hypothesis that the Arabic translation of public informational material in Australia falls short of meeting the standard of accessibility owing to linguistic, stylistic and contextual interference. This model will be used for the assessment of a data set in conjunction with the general principles of translation quality assessment advanced in Chakhachiro’s approach to translation criticism (2005). See Chakhachiro’s source-text/target text analytical approach in Appendix A.

Figure 1. Functional-discursive macro-model for the assessment of community translation
4. Methodology

A contrastive analysis is conducted on twenty-two examples from seven randomly selected community translated texts, guided by the above functional discursive approach in order to, retrospectively, understand the process with which they were produced and discuss the issues that hinder accessibility. Given the space, four examples will be discussed below, and emendations will be suggested in the process.

The selected examples represent flagrant mistakes that are likely to affect the overall message comprehension, i.e., accessibility of the information, and overall quality of the translated texts in question. The texts are selected from key topics commissioned for translation by major government departments and agencies addressing migrants and would-be migrants. The departments and agencies include Centrelink, the Department of Immigration, the Federal Department of Human Services, the Department of Human Services in the state of Victoria, the Legal Aid Commission in the state of New South Wales, a group of public children’s hospitals, and BreastScreen NSW. The style of the translations and the nature of the mistakes support the assumption that the translations of the texts were undertaken by different translators.

The Arabic versions are faithfully back-translated to reflect the mistakes or suggested emendations. Not all the mistakes will be enumerated – e.g., the ungrammatical Hamza in the emphatic particle correlate َنَ: anna in example 1. The focus will be on mistakes that highlight flagrant source language interference or unintelligible renderings. The identified mistakes will be discussed for justification. The term ‘mistake’ is deemed appropriate for the assessment on the premise that errors happen and mistakes are made and, most importantly, that a mistake represents interference as illustrated above. In the documented examples and their translations/emendations, underlined segments denote mistakes, segments in bold denote emendations, and segments in italics denote English expressions used in the translation. Each analysis is preceded by a description of the mistakes. ‘Systemic mistakes’ denote misinterpretations and/or mistranslations of concepts or messages related to government systems in a general sense. Following the analysis of the four representative examples, the overall results of the analysis conducted on the larger data set will be discussed and conclusions drawn pointing to the issues at stake in an attempt to answer the questions put forward above.

The data set comprises twenty-two examples of translations extracted from fields of primary importance for the Arab migrants, who are linguistically disadvantaged and, usually, socio-economically most vulnerable. The fields include legal, medical, welfare and immigration; and the STs provide information about immigration, services, entitlements, rights and responsibilities, welfare, and health. Translated material from the area of immigration targets Arabs around the globe as well as Arab migrants in Australia, which lends special importance to these texts,
including the context and system in which they are situated. Health, by its very nature, is the only area that has universal content.

The topics of the STs are informational and specialised; the texts are fraught with technical terminology and phraseology delivered in an attempted conversational style to accommodate the target readership, the community. Apart from the direct appeal marker, the second person pronoun, the conversational features include: colloquialisms/idioms, e.g., ‘wet the bed at night’ ‘there’s no better time than now’, ‘if you tell us the wrong amount’, ‘this can be a bit tricky’; and technical terms/institutional names put in informal terms, e.g., ‘septicaemia’: infection spread into the bloodstream; and ‘best interests case planning meeting’: meeting for everyone to reach an agreement about what needs to be done to help your child.

The above conversational features can pose translatability challenges because, linguistically, they carry a low level of meaning as language signs, which lowers their degree of translatability. The simplification of specialised expressions for exhortative purposes, and for the engagement of the target audience, is challenging if exercised intra-linguistically, let alone cross-linguistically. The translation challenge in this case is doubled as one is faced with specialised texts displaying linguistic and stylistic translatability issues as well as conceptual and terminological issues.

In the contrastive analysis employed, Modern Standard Arabic (MSA) is considered the variety of Arabic appropriate for the translation and translation quality assessment. Managing the inherent contextual, stylistic, linguistic and specialised issues in ‘community’ source texts, pose intricate challenges in the translation of these texts for Arab migrants who come from diverse backgrounds. On the one hand, the translator has “to observe at the surface syntax the rules laid down by the grammarians for ‘correct/eloquent’ (faṣīḥ) Arabic some twelve centuries ago” (Holes, 1995, p. 160), and, on the other hand, accommodate the purposeful stylistic variations of these texts. Modern Standard Arabic (MSA) is the lingua franca of communication among Arabs in writing and in its educated spoken form or formal spoken Arabic, (e.g., Ryding & Zaiback, 2004). Colloquial Arabic is strictly and locally used in writing in the Arab World; in advertisements, for example (see Gully, 1996-1997; Bassiouney, 2009). In Australia, this limited use of the colloquial variety is further restricted in the translation of material targeting Arab migrants who speak a variety of dialects.

Tactfully used in translation, MSA is a ‘flexible modern written idiom’ (Holes, 1995, p. 160) that serves the purpose of writing in ‘correct’ Arabic and catering for the stylistic variations of community texts. MSA, as Holes (1995, p. 38) suggests, narrowed the gap between spoken and written Arabic and “syntactic structures common to most spoken dialects are recast into a superficially MSA form in written Arabic.” According to Holes (1995), the evolution of MSA has also been affected by loan translation and the dominance of English, the spread of secular
education, and exposure of Arabs to the broadcasting media. Notwithstanding this reality, Holes admits that “[i]n written Arabic there is less room for variation: basic grammar, morphology and lexis are in theory the same for all.” (1995, p. 40). The use of colloquial variations in children’s comics, cartoons, narratives in drama, advertisements, and in social media is not an option in the translation of community texts for Arab migrants, including the translation of the emerging social media advertisements for government and non-government agencies. The flexibility of MSA furnishes the translator with the means to overcome the dialectal barriers, use more stylistic devices (Bassiouney, 2009) and, therefore, deliver Arabic translations that are accurate and stylistically and socio-linguistically acceptable.

5. Samples of the analysed data

Health
Format: Fact Sheet; Title: Urinary tract infection in children; Published by: The Children’s Hospital at Westmead & Sydney Children’s Hospital, Randwick, Sydney, New South Wales, Australia

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ST</th>
<th>TT</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Specimens from infants may be collected in stick-on collecting bags or in older children by catching some of the urine when it comes out (although this can be pretty tricky!)</td>
<td>العينات من الرضع يمكن أخذها بواسطة أكياس تجميع ملتصقة وفي الأطفال الأكبر سنًا بأخذ البول عند خروجه وهذا الأمر قد يتطلب مهارة فائقة.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BT: The specimens from infants can be taken by way of sticking accumulation bags and inside older children by taking the urine when it comes out) [sic] and this may require excellent skill.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Syntactic, grammatical and lexical mistakes; ambiguity and total distortion of message
- Syntactically, the default subject, verb, object is inexplicably ignored. This nominalisation, coupled with the use of the definite article with ‘specimens’, necessary with nouns in initial position, highlights the subject (specimens, here) and not the process, which distorts the message.
- Semantically, ‘stick-on collecting bag’ is a urine collection bag, a plastic bag with a sticky strip on one end, made to fit over the baby’s genital area. ‘Sticking bags’ is obvious mistranslation of the propositional meaning (Baker, 2011) of ‘stick-on’. ‘Lاصقة’ ‘adhesive’ is a plausible option.
- The unfamiliar ‘passive’ is commonly used with technical texts. Here the information is technical and the verbal noun ‘accumulation’, literally used as equivalent for the pre-modifier ‘collecting’, should be replaced with a verb ‘is accumulated’ in sentence-initial position. However, the verb that collocates with ‘specimen’ in Arabic is ‘to take’, which renders the use of ‘is accumulated’ redundant and odd.
Stylistically (and idiomatically), ‘in children’ should read ‘لدى’ or ‘عند’ ‘with’; transferring ‘in’ communicates ‘inside’. The periphrastic ‘catching urine when it comes out’ can be compensated by the collocation ‘to obtain a specimen’ of the urine’, as ‘catching’ is not lexicalised in Arabic for use with ‘urine’ and the general verbal noun ‘by taking’ in the translation is inaccurate.

The rendition of ‘although this can be pretty tricky!’ is obvious misinterpretation of the TT.

Suggested emendations:

يمكن أخذ عينات من الرضّع بواسطة أكياس لاصقة أو بالحصول على عينة عند التبوّل من الأطفال الأكبر سنّاً (علماً أن ذلك قد لا يكون سهلاً).

BT: Specimens from infants can be taken by way of adhesive bags or by obtaining a specimen when urinating from older children (although this may not be easy).

Legal

Format: Fact Sheet; Title: Custody to Secretary Order; Published by: Government Website, Australia, State Government, Victoria

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<tr>
<th>ST</th>
<th>TT</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The magistrate at the Children’s Court has made a custody to Secretary order in relation to your child. This means the magistrate has granted the Secretary to the Department of Human Services (the department) sole custody of your child because your child needs protection.</td>
<td>أصدر القاضي الجزئي في محكمة الأحداث أمراً يقتضي بإلزام سكرتير دائرة الخدمات البشرية بإحتمان طفلكم لأنه بحاجة إلى الحماية.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BT: The Judge of First Instance in the Juvenile Court has issued an order requiring the Secretary of the Department of Human Services to have the advantage of bringing up your [plural] child because they needs the protection.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Specialised vocabulary; omission; systemic, grammatical and stylistic mistakes; lexical inconsistency

- Inconsistent use of derivatives from the root word حضن ‘[lit.] to foster/bring up’ for the translation of ‘custody’: حضانة ‘custody’ is the common term for custody and is used in the title of this translated text. In non-legal contexts حضانة means also ‘hugging’ when collocated with humans, which makes the mistranslation more problematic.

- إنفراد: ‘have the advantage of’ is another flagrant lexical mistake given its misleading referential meaning.
- In addition to the systemic mistakes above, there are serious mistakes pointing to the lack of knowledge of the Australian court system, their jargon and current equivalents in Arabic. القاضي الجزئي is used for judges in the Court of First Instance in some parts of the Arab World. In the court hierarchy, the above court is followed by the Court of Main Instance: الانتدائية. The jurisdiction of both courts roughly covers the jurisdiction of the Local Court in the State of New South Wales and Magistrates’ Court in the State of Victoria, for example.

- ‘Magistrate’ in this text refers to a judge in the Children’s Court, hence the chosen equivalent is inaccurate systematically and semantically. قاضي محكمة الأطفال: ‘Children’s Court Judge’ is appropriate here.

- ‘Juvenile Court’ deals in the Arab World with young delinquents/offenders. The term ‘juvenile’ in Australia is used in a similar context. Children’s Courts, however, deals with care applications / custody as well as juvenile delinquency. Hence the use of the common equivalent for Children’s Court: محكمة الأطفال is in order here.

- The literal translation of ‘Secretary’ obliterate its systemic reference and makes no sense to the Arabic reader. The word ‘Secretary’ standing alone is misleading and ambiguous given the multiple usage of the word in Arabic, none of which is applicable here. The reason for the lack of lexical correspondence is also systemic. A Secretary is the head of a government department in the Australian system, and ought to be translated as such in Arabic. Furthermore, as defined by the department in question, a custody order ‘gives sole custody of the child to the Department of Human Services (the Secretary being the chief executive officer of the Department)’. Hence, for accessibility, ‘Secretary’ ought to be replaced with رئيس دائرة الخدمات البشرية: ‘head of the Department of Human Services’

- Grammatically, there is inconsistency in the use of the singular and plural for ‘child’. The target readers are parents. However, the addressee is ‘parent’ in the singular, judging from the ST, e.g., the sub-headings: ‘Where will my child live?’ and ‘Can I see my child?’. Accordingly, the singular ought to be used. When ‘parents’ is employed with ‘child’, the dual form of pronouns, nouns, verbs, etc. is required in Arabic (e.g., طفلكما: your [dual] child).

- ‘Protection’ does not need a definite article in Arabic.

- The translation is an abridged version of the ST. The important explanation of the meaning of Secretary is omitted.

Suggested emendations:
أصدر قاضي محكمة الأطفال أمرًا يتعلق بطفلك يقضي بمنح حضانته إلى رئيس دائرة الخدمات البشرية. يعني هذا الأمر أن القاضي قد منح الدائرة حقًا حصرياً بحضانة طفلك لأنه بحاجة إلى حماية.

BT: The magistrate of the Children’s Court has issued an order about your [sing.] child ruling granting their custody to the head of the Department of Human Services. This order means that the magistrate has granted the department sole right to the custody of your [sing.] child because they need protection.
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Welfare
Format: Australian Government Website; Title: Child Dental Benefits Schedule; Published by: Department of Human Services, Australian Government

<table>
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<tr>
<th>ST</th>
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<tr>
<td>If you do not use all of your $1,000 benefit in the first year of eligibility, you can use it in the second year if you are still eligible. Any remaining balance will not be carried forward at the end of the second year.</td>
<td>إذا لم تستخدم كامل مبلغ الإعانة البالغ 1000 دولار في السنة الأولى من الأهلية، يمكنك استخدامه في السنة الثانية إذا استمرت أهليةك، وأي رصيد متبقى لن يتم ترحيله في نهاية السنة الثانية. BT: If you do not use all of the benefit amount of 1000 dollars in the first year of the eligibility, you can use it in the second year if your eligibility continues. Any remaining balance will not be carried forward at the end of the second year.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Literalness; omission; stylistic, grammatical (morphological) and syntactic mistakes; incoherence

- The key concepts, eligibility and its validity, are lost because of the omission and stylistic oddity. ‘أهلية’ must be qualified with ‘للحصول على الإعانة’ ‘to receive the benefit’, for it not be confused with other meanings, e.g., ‘competence’.
- ‘استمرت أهليةك’ ‘your eligibility continues’ is stylistically erroneous as eligibility and entitlement are not personified in Arabic, hence the collocation is unidiomatic.
- The financial jargon ‘ترحيل’ [lit.] ‘to deport’ for ‘to carry forward’ is too technical in an information text for parents and most importantly is missing its preposition ‘إلى’ ‘to’, which would require the addition of a ‘destination’ year. An alternative phrasal verb ‘نقل’ ‘transfer’ to is used in the field in lieu of the adverbial phrase and is more appropriate for the text type.
- Syntactically, the default verbal sentence should be used here (see suggestion below) in order not to foreground ‘the remaining balance’.
- ‘في نهاية السنة الثانية’ ‘at the end of the second year’ is incomplete in Arabic. Technically in the ST, the meaning of ‘to the following year, is communicated in the adverb, ‘over’. However, in its current form, without its preposition is ambiguous and incomplete. ‘Carrying to’ or the user-friendly ‘transferring to’ requires the addition of a destination year, as suggested below.
- For coherence and accessibility, a connective ‘لكن’ ‘but/however’ is required to signal to the reader the link (contrast in this instance) between the two utterances, which is considered an essential text-building element for ease of processability (see al-Batal, 1990).

Suggested emendations:
إذا لم تستخدم كامل مبلغ الإعانة البالغ 1000 دولار في السنة الأولى من أهلية الحصول على الإعانة، يمكنك استخدامه في السنة الثانية إذا استمرت أهليةك، وأي رصيد متبقى لن يتم ترحيله في نهاية السنة الثانية.

Arab World English Journal for Translation & Literary Studies
eISSN: 2550-1542 | www.awej-tls.org
BT: If you do not use all of the benefit amount of 1000 dollars in the first year of the eligibility for the benefit, you can use it in the second year if you are still eligible for the benefit; however, any remaining balance at the end of the second year will not be transferred to the following year.

Immigration
Format: e-leaflet on Australian Government Website; Title: Family violence and your visa;
Published by: Australian Government, Department of Immigration and Border Protection

The provisions are available if:

• you are on a temporary Partner visa or you married your spouse while on a Prospective Marriage visa

• you or your dependants have experienced family violence and

• your relationship has ended.

الأحكام متاحة إذا:

• كنت حاصلة على تأشيرة دخول الشريك المؤقتة أو تزوجت زوجك في الوقت الذي كنت فيه حاصلة على تأشيرة الزواج المنتظر (Prospective Marriage)

• تعرضت أنت أو من تقومين بإعالتهم للعنف الأسري

• وإذا انتهت علاقتك.

BT: The provisions are available if:

• you have obtained a temporary partner entry visa or have married your husband at the time when you have obtained the prospective marriage visa (Prospective Marriage)

• you or those to whom you are providing maintenance have experienced family violence

• and if your relationship has ended.

Lexical, stylistic, syntactic, and systemic mistakes; unidiomatic usage; incoherence; incohesion

- ‘Available’ is not lexicalised for this context in Arabic. The presupposed meaning (Baker, 2011) of ‘available’ is ‘applicable’ or ‘usable’; however, these near-synonyms (Chakhachiro, 2011) are not part of the semantic field of ‘available’ in Arabic. The appropriate equivalence in this informative text is usable: مستفيد، and a suitable derivation في الاستفادة من the available self of’ can be selected.
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- حاصلة, the present participle of ‘obtain’/‘hold’, is used as equivalent of ‘are on’ in the first dot point. The grammatical form used is interchangeable with the simple present tense in Arabic; however, a different lexical item that collocates with visa: يحمل: ‘to hold’ is required, as the root of حاصلة: ‘to obtain/to hold’ collocates with other nouns, such as qualifications, e.g., حاصل على شهادة: ‘he holds a certificate’.

- Stylistically, there is distortion to the regularity of the parallel patterning in the dot form adopted (cf. BT). In Arabic, ‘if’: ‘provided that’ or ‘on the condition that’ in ‘if statements’, i.e., antecedents, is by default repeated with each dot point. The inverted ‘then statement’, the consequent, ends with expressions that introduce specified enumeration; e.g., ‘as follows’: كما يلي, or ‘when the following conditions obtain’: في الحالات التالية: etc.

- Lexically, حصل: ‘to obtain’ distorts the readily available collocational restriction (Baker, 2011) of لدى (فلاة) تأشيرة: ‘s.o. to have a visa’ or, the more current and more formal, يحمل: ‘s.o. to hold a visa’. See above comment on the derivation of حصل: ‘to obtain’.

- ‘Entry’ in ‘partner entry’ does not collocate with ‘visa’, as intended it seems. The referential meaning of ‘partner visa’ is lost owing to the odd collocation coupled with the omission of حياة: ‘life’ from the Arabic expression شريك حياة: ‘life partner’, and the use of the determiner, the definite article ‘the’, with شريك: ‘partner’, which imparts non-inferential referentiality. The inaccuracy stemming from the inappropriate use of definiteness also applies to the ensuing visa category in the sentence الشرك المنظر: ‘the Prospective Marriage’.

- In the ST, the additive coordinating particle ‘and’ at the end of the second dot point, links the three conditional clauses and communicates ‘if the three conditions obtain’. This meaning is lost in translation as ‘and’ is only used with the last dot point, hence it [vaguely] links the last point with the first point, owing to the repetition of إذا: ‘if’, and excludes the second.

- Unlike the two letter connective أو: ‘or’, which connects alternatives, the additive و: ‘and’ is a letter that must be joined to words in Arabic, hence it cannot hang loosely at the end of each conditional statement. This explains the need for restructuring, such as the stylistic substitution (merging) of ‘if’ in the consequent clause and ‘and’ in the last condition statement with ‘provided the following three conditions apply to you’.

- علاقتك: your relationship requires, culturally, the addition of الزوجية: ‘matrimonial’, preferably followed by the presupposed expression ‘with your partner’. This is because ‘de facto’ relationship, the other implied meaning in the ST, is alien to the Arab culture.

- The post-modifier التشريعية: ‘legislative’ is added to ‘provisions’ for clarity as the latter can also mean rulings, judgments, verdicts, or sentences.

- It is important to note here that in the translation and the emendations the feminine is employed for the addressee rather than the default masculine. This is appropriated as the overwhelming majority of the victims of domestic violence are women. However, as the issue relates to immigration and as arranged marriages involving Australian brides is commonplace, addressing men ought to be covered in a footnote, e.g., ‘the use of the feminine gender in this leaflet covers the feminine and masculine genders equally.’
Suggested emendations:

يمكنك الاستفادة من هذه الأحكام التشريعة شرط أن تنطبق عليك الحالات الثلاث التالية:
- إذا كنت تحملين تأشيرة "شريك حياة" (Partner) مؤقتة أو كنت قد عقدت قرانك على زوجك خلال المدة التي كنت تحمل فيها تأشيرة "زواج منتظر" (Prospective Marriage) 
- إذا كنت قد تعرضت أنت أو أطفالك الذين تعيلينهم للعنف الأسري
- إذا انتهيت علاقتك الزوجية بشريك حياتك.

BT: You can avail yourself of these legislative regulations provided the following three circumstances apply to you:
- If you hold a ‘life partner’ (Partner) temporary visa or if you have married your husband during the period you have held a ‘prospective marriage’ (Prospective Marriage) visa
- If you or your dependent children have experienced family violence
- If your matrimonial relationship with your partner has ended.

6. Results

Table 1 in Appendix B sums up the results of a methodical and theoretically-grounded examination of twenty-two representative examples of community translations. The examination covered the accuracy of meaning and stylistic appropriateness, and ultimately accessibility. Guided by the STs’ ideational, interpersonal and textual meta-functions and their rhetorical purposes, the analysis of these examples reveals key problems that impact the purpose of the translations. In other words, it points to failure in achieving the communicative functions of the STs and, therefore, the delivery of the intended messages of the STs’ producers.

The analysis of the transfer process and its snapshot below indicate linguistic, stylistic and contextual interference affecting accessibility across the data set. The extent of distortions to the intentions of the ST producers via the examined examples ranges from the utterance level to the section level to the overall text’s rhetorical purpose. The example from the welfare text exhibit partial distortion of the utterance message, likely to affect the overall message, respectively. The examples of the remaining texts display distortions affecting the overall messages.

The inaccessibility or, at best, partial inaccessibility of the translated material would deny the non-English speaking Arab migrants access to basic information concerning legal services, entitlements, health, families, etc. The damage, however, extends to their rights as full citizens to engage and integrate in the Australian society, and to be included and empowered through communication in their own language. Maintaining the Arab migrants’ language is an important contributing factor to the government’s achieving of its multicultural agenda. These ideals are not met by the surveyed translations.
It is also evident that no quality assurance mechanisms took place in the process of producing these translations. The data shows that the translations are fraught with flagrant stylistic, systemic and language mistakes that are likely to deny the accessibility of crucial information to the intended end-user.

The ubiquitous stylistic, syntactic and lexical mistakes, unidiomatic usage, literalness and mistranslations are testament to the mediocre and rudimentary level of translation competency. The number and insignificance of the grammatical mistakes, and the Arabic syntactic structures in general indicate that the translators possess native Arabic competency. The distortions and the magnitude of the systemic mistakes point to English proficiency in the general, non-specialised texts. It can be concluded, then, that two major areas led to the pervasive interference, hence distortions, and therefore inaccessibility of the translations: 1) the lack of knowledge of the Australian government systems and socio-cultural issues, to a varying degree; and (2) the lack of translation skills.

In the introduction, three questions were asked: do the translations qualify as translations? If so, where do they rank on the scale of accessibility? And, are there standards of translation quality peculiar to community translation? The first question was inspired by Halliday’s (2001, p. 16) definition of translation equivalence in ideational terms; ‘if a text does not match its source text ideationally, it does not qualify as a translation, so the question if it is a good translation does not arise.’ The summary of mistakes in the ideational function column and the statements about the transfer of the STs rhetorical purpose in Table 1 provide a critical report on the quality of the translations, hence placing the translations on the lower end of the scale of accessibility. The conclusion answers the third question.

7. Conclusion
This paper identifies two major competencies that need to be met in community translation: contextual knowledge in the broadest sense and specialist translator skills. It demonstrates that community translation is a highly specialised field that stretches the translator’s proficiency in their working languages to the limit. Not only are they dealing with the transfer of two languages and two cultures but also overwhelming information about foreign systems affecting the lives of migrants in general. This information is packaged in unconventional styles (e.g., question/answer) and formats (e.g., fact sheets) and contains terminology, institutional and socio-cultural references pertaining to hybrid fields, topics and text-types. Hence the encyclopaedic knowledge and research skills required to wade through this comprehensive, different and ever-changing flow of information. The lack of consensus on Australian ‘systemic’ terminologies and institutional names has long been a major issue among Arabic ‘community’ translators in Australia; a quasi ‘academy’ of the Australian-Arabic language for the standardisation of terminologies would be a good start.
The content, style and formats of the ‘community’ texts indicate the translation skills required to meet the standards of quality. The general and specialised translation theories are remotely relevant to the work of the community translator, and the burgeoning literature on community translation is still hovering over generalities and politics. The translation criticism of the examples, which, *ipso facto*, involved the analysis of their source texts, shows that the translation approaches so far advanced in the literature on community translation do not assist the trainee or professional in learning the skills or dealing with the challenges. These beg the need for a hybrid approach in dealing with the foreignness of the STs and accept and advocate the hard reality that a community translation can at best be close to adequate, following Toury’s adequacy-acceptability continuum. Building on the notions of accessibility and interference, the hybrid functional-discursive transfer approach proposed for quality assessment in this study seems plausible, having been tested on only a handful of texts and examples.

Suggesting that the acceptability ideal in community translation is a myth refutes the claims that the exercise is a vehicle for language and cultural maintenance. As revealed in the STs/TTs analysis and as multiculturalists would like us to believe, one can only hope, that, in addition to delivering the intended messages, the Ozarabic publications produced for Arab migrants promote harmony, tolerance, integration, citizenship, a sense of belonging, national pride, and so on. This, anecdotally at least, has not materialised at the individual, community and institutional levels.

About the Author:
Raymond Chakhachiro is a Senior Lecturer in Interpreting and Translation at Western Sydney University, Australia, having received a PhD in Translation from the same institution. He has published on translation, including the translation and transcription of evidentiary audio recordings, revision, and the analysis and translation of irony.

References


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**Note**

The issue of subjectivity in the evaluation is minimised by the fact the author/evaluator is a PhD in Translation, has published on translation quality assessment, including the objectivity and subjectivity issues in translation criticism. He has also been an educator, examiner, translator, and reviser of translations into Arabic in the Australian context for many years, and has been a lecturer of the Arabic language, translation and interpreting, and linguistics for many years. Furthermore, the evaluation is guided by a principled micro/macro model for translation quality assessment. Bias is further minimised by scrutinising pertinent mistakes impacting on communicative functions and rhetorical purposes.
Appendices

Appendix A

Assessment criteria based on Chakhachiro’s Stylistic approach to translation quality assessment (2005: 234-235)

Source-text analysis

a. Meaning: the reviser [assessor] must fully understand the message in terms of
   - content (subject matter, attitude)
   - language (lexis, grammar, syntax)
   - structure (thematic structure, subordination/coordination, cohesion, topic shift (Hatim & Mason, 1990), and
   - context (socio-systemic)

b. Style: the reviser must fully understand the message in terms of
   - the source language’s superimposed style (cohesion, idiomaticity, punctuation, etc.)
   - the original writer’s idiosyncracies (syntactic complexity, word choice, formality)
   - the source-text recipients’ assumed knowledge (presupposition)
   - the text-type (intertextuality)
   - the tenor (relationship between the source text producer and recipients), and
   - its function (informational, aesthetic, etc.)

Source-text and target-text comparison

a. Meaning: the reviser must ensure that the target text message conforms to that of the source text in terms of
   - content (correct interpretation, completeness)
   - language (lexis, grammar, syntax (equivalent to the source text’s whenever stylistically possible))
   - structure (equivalent to that of the source text whenever stylistically possible)
   - context (linguistically equivalent to that of the source text whenever stylistically possible)

b. Style: the reviser must ensure that the target text conforms to the source text’s form in terms of
   - The norms of the target language
   - the writer’s idiosyncracies (where stylistically possible)
   - the target recipients’ knowledge (presupposition)
   - the target-text text-type or adapted text-type (intertextuality)
   - the source text’s tenor (as closely as possible in the target language)
   - the source-text function.
Appendix B

Table 1. *Mistakes relating to transfer of functions and purpose*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Texts/Examples</th>
<th>Mistakes relating to transfer of ST communicative functions</th>
<th>Statements about the transfer of STs rhetorical purpose</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><em>Ideational function</em></td>
<td><em>Faithfulness to intention of text producer</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(application of experience and logical relations to encode and decode meaning)</td>
<td>(contribution to overall or utterance message)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1/1-4 Medical</td>
<td>Mistranslations; currency; specialised vocabulary; stylistic and systemic mistakes</td>
<td>Incoherence; omissions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2/5-7 Medical</td>
<td>Stylistic and lexical mistakes; inaccuracy</td>
<td>Literalness inaccuracy; lexical mistakes; omission; ambiguity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3/8-10 Legal</td>
<td>Stylistic, lexical and systemic mistakes; incorrect specialised vocabulary</td>
<td>Incoherence literalness; lexical and systemic and stylistic mistakes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Date</td>
<td>Category</td>
<td>Issues</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>------</td>
<td>----------</td>
<td>----------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4/11-13</td>
<td>Legal</td>
<td>Systemic, lexical, grammatical and stylistic mistakes; specialised vocabulary; omission</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5/14-16</td>
<td>Welfare</td>
<td>Omission; stylistic, lexical, systemic, and syntactic mistakes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6/17-19</td>
<td>Welfare</td>
<td>Literalness; stylistic and systemic mistakes; omission; unidiomatic usage; mistranslation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7/20-22</td>
<td>Immigration</td>
<td>Misinterpretation/mistranslation; lack of cultural awareness; syntactic, stylistic and systemic mistakes; literalness</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>