

Remarks on the Translation of Noun Phrase Ellipsis from English into Arabic

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Abstract

This paper discusses the translation of noun phrase ellipsis (NP ellipsis) from English into Arabic. It aims to determine how NP ellipsis is rendered into Arabic and what implications its translation has on the target text. To achieve this, the study relies upon the analysis of authentic English texts and their Arabic translations. The analysis of the Arabic translations reveals that NP ellipsis is rendered by ellipsis or lexical repetition. Furthermore, there seems to be a tendency towards using lexical repetition in the translation of ellipsis, which raises the degree of explicitness in the translated text. The use of lexical repetition can be attributed to structural incompatibilities and differences in stylistic preferences between the two languages. Finally, the study shows that NP ellipsis is not always translated accurately, resulting in ambiguity and loss of the source text informative content. Therefore, further studies on the translation of other forms of ellipsis can show the potential renderings of ellipsis and their impacts on the target text.

Key words: cohesion, ellipsis, explicitness, explicitation, lexical repetition

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1. Introduction

Ellipsis can be defined as “the non-expression of a word or phrase that is, nevertheless, expected to occupy a place in the syntactic structure of a sentence” (McShane, 2005, p. 3). Language users, whether writers or speakers, frequently make use of various ellipsis forms. For instance, in the sentence ‘*John passed the driving test, but Mary didn’t*’, the entire verb phrase ‘*pass the driving test*’ is deleted in the second conjunct. Such an ellipsis is used to achieve specific functions such as avoiding redundancy and creating cohesion as to accurately interpret ellipsis, the reader or the listener has to refer back to the antecedent (Helati, 2005). Thus, ellipsis has a meaning, and it is semantically more productive than what is said or written (Aelbrecht, 2010).

Ellipsis is a universal linguistic phenomenon, and it is not arbitrary; it is systematically licensed by syntactic, semantic and pragmatic factors (Reich, 2019). Therefore, the deleted elements can be recoverable from the textual material available, knowledge of syntactic rules, or the situation (Helati, 2005). There are several types of ellipsis, such as noun phrase ellipsis, verb phrase ellipsis, clausal ellipsis ... etc. From a stylistic perspective, languages vary concerning the use of ellipsis. While some tend to utilize ellipsis more frequently, whether in written or spoken discourse, others avoid ellipsis and tend to use lexical repetition, resulting in a higher level of explicitness (Baker, 2011).

The primary concern of this study is to determine how noun phrase (NP) ellipsis is rendered from English into Arabic and identify the stylistic preferences of English and Arabic with respect to the use of ellipsis. The study is based on the analysis of authentic texts translated by professional translators. The extracts, which were taken from different published works, contain different types of NP ellipsis. The translations of these texts were analyzed with respect to how NP ellipsis is rendered into Arabic and what implications its translation has on the target text.

The study consists of six sections. Section 1 is an introduction to the study. It introduces the linguistic phenomenon of ellipsis and presents the study aim, methodology and structure. Section 2 reviews previous studies on the translation of ellipsis. Section 3 introduces NP ellipsis and discusses the translation of nominal ellipsis achieved by the use of deictics. Section 4 discusses the use of numeratives as nominal elliptical devices and their translation into Arabic. Section 5 sheds light on the elliptical use and translation of epithets and classifiers. Finally, section 6 presents the conclusion.

2. Previous studies on the translation of ellipsis

The translation of ellipsis has been studied from different perspectives. For instance, Arhire (2018) studied ellipsis as an identity marker in literary dialogue. The study aimed at examining how the uses of ellipsis in the speech of characters help in constructing heroes’ identity, which distinguishes them from other characters’ identities and emotional states. The focus of the study was on how ellipsis is translated from English into Romanian. The study concludes that when ellipsis is used as a cohesive device, it can be translated formally or by any cohesive device that can achieve cohesion in the target language. However, when ellipsis is used to convey additional values such as idiolectal and sociolectal values, translators use other translation strategies such as

compensation and functional equivalence even in cases where formal means are an available option as such strategies are effective in conveying information related to characters' identity, emotional state and social context.

Another study conducted by Pirnajmuddin and Nezam (2012) investigated the use of ellipsis as a stylistic feature in literary texts with a particular reference to Hemingway's *The Old Man and the Sea*. The study examined the translation strategies used by Persian translators in rendering ellipsis from English into Persian. It concluded that translators tend to use literal translation in translating ellipsis when elliptical structures are similar in both the source and target language. Expansion, however, is also used mainly in cases in which the two languages differ grammatically in expressing ellipsis. Furthermore, it pointed out that most translators are inattentive to style as they tend to expand the target text in some cases and delete the elliptical structure in others, which results in not transferring the stylistic effects of the source text into the target language.

Finally, Hassan and Taqi (2011) studied the translation of nominal ellipsis in Quranic verses. The study attempted to find out how elliptical nouns in some Quranic verses are translated into English and whether the translations convey the same meanings that will lead to understanding the verses. The study shows that there are some translations of ellipted nouns that do not provide sufficient interpretations, which may affect the understanding of the verses in question on the part of readers. Translation strategies that provide further elaboration and expansion are recommended to be used to raise the level of explicitness and enrich understanding.

In the current study, one type of ellipsis referred to as noun phrase ellipsis will be discussed in terms of its use and translation into Arabic. The study is an attempt to examine how NP ellipsis is rendered into Arabic and shed light on the implications of its translation on the translated text.

3. Noun Phrase Ellipsis

Noun phrase ellipsis involves the omission of the head noun of a noun phrase. It involves the use of a closed-set of words such as deictics, numeratives, epithets or classifiers to function as the head of the elliptical noun phrase (Halliday & Hasan, 1976; McShane, 2005).

For instance, the deictic expression 'some' in (A) and the numeral 'four' in (B) are used elliptically to function as the head of a deleted noun phrase. This ellipsis is cohesive as it connects the two clauses by referring anaphorically to a noun phrase in the antecedent clause for the interpretation of the elided material. Thus, the omitted noun phrases in (A) can only be interpreted as 'some Irish cream' and in (B) as 'hours'.

(A) If you've got Irish Cream, I'd love some \emptyset .

(B) It takes three hours to get to Albuquerque and four \emptyset to get to Santa Fe.

(McShane, 2005, p.128)

As stated in the definition above, nominal ellipsis is achieved through the use of a deictic, numeral, epithet, or classifier as a head of an elided noun phrase. The following sections will

discuss the elliptical use of deictics, numeratives, epithets, classifiers and their translation into Arabic.

3.1 Deictics

The term deictics refers to 'those features of language which refer directly to the personal, temporal or locational characteristics of the situation within which an utterance takes place, whose meaning is thus relative to that situation' (Crystal, 2008). Deictics are divided into three subtypes: specific deictics, non-specific deictics, and post-deictics.

3.1.1 Specific deictics

Specific deictics refer mainly to possessive forms and demonstrative pronouns (Butler, 2003). Both are used to function as heads of elided noun phrases. With regards, possessive forms in English, they include nominal expressions, as in 'Mary's', and pronominal expressions such as 'mine, yours, ours, his, hers, theirs, and its'.

To exemplify, the elliptical pronominal item 'mine' in (1) refers to the occurrence of the nouns 'face' and 'head' in the preceding discourse; it can only be interpreted as '*my face and head*'. Such an ellipsis is cohesive as the interpretation of elided elements relies on reference to previously mentioned textual material. The texts below illustrate the use and translation of such elliptical devices into Arabic.

(1) ST

Sapt disrespectfully kicked him sharply, but he made no movement. I saw that his face and head were wet with water, as were **mine**. (Hawkins, 1989, p. 45)

فركله سابت بقسوة و قلة احترام لكنه لم بيد أي حركة. رأيت وجهه و رأسه مبتلين بالماء مثل وجهي و رأسي. (p. 44)

(2) ST

I took the afternoon coach to the town and arrived there late in the evening. I put up for the night at the Blue Boar inn, and got up early the next morning to go to Miss Havisham's. It was too early yet to pay my visit, so I loitered into the country thinking about my patroness, and painting brilliant pictures of her plans for me. (Dickens 1993, p. 213)

استقبلت عربية بعد الظهر إلى المدينة, و وصلت هناك في وقت متأخر من المساء. فنزلت في الـ "بلو بور" لتمضية الليل، و نهضت في الصباح الباكر للذهاب إلى منزل الأنسة هافيشام. كان الوقت مازال باكراً على القيام بأي زيارة، فأخذت أتسكع في البلدة و أنا أفكر بمولاتي و أرسم صوراً رائعة لخططها التي تضعها من أجلي. (p. 212)

The source texts (1) and (2) contain NP ellipsis, which is used as a cohesion marker and as a means of avoiding redundancy. It can be noticed that these two cases of NP ellipsis are rendered into Arabic by lexical repetition, indicating that there is a shift in the type of cohesion mechanism utilized, i.e., translating ellipsis which is a grammatical feature by lexical repetition, which is lexical. Lexical repetition, however, creates cohesiveness, explicitness, and naturalness of expression in the Arabic translations.

It is worth noting that the use of lexical repetition is obligatory in such structures due to differences in the expression of 'genitive construction' in both languages. In English, the genitive construction admits the omission of the modified noun as in 'Miss Havisham's' instead of 'Miss Havisham's house'. In contrast, in Arabic, both nouns (i.e., the modifying and the modified noun) must be mentioned. Thus, as stated by Blum-Kulka, "grammatical differences between languages will be expressed by changes in the types of ties used to mark cohesion in source and target texts" (p. 299).

With regards to demonstrative pronouns such as '*this, these, that* and *those*', these are also used as forms of nominal ellipsis. When used elliptically, a demonstrative is used to function as a head of a noun phrase, as in (3), (4), and (5). As for their translation into Arabic, demonstratives can be translated by ellipsis or lexical repetition. However, the translations of texts 3, 4, and 5 show that translators tend to render ellipsis by lexical repetition through the use of explicitation.

(3) ST

Against two of the pillars were fastened two great flaring flambeaux, and in the light of **these**, standing out in the open air, was a large grindstone: a roughly mounted thing which appeared to have hurriedly been brought there from some neighboring smithy, or other workshop. (Dickens, 1999, p. 234)

وكان مصباحان كبيران يتوهج نورهما و هما معلقان فوق عمود من تلك الأعمدة، وفي ضوء هذين المصباحين كان يوجد حجر طاحونة ضخمة كان يبدو أنه قد وضع على عجل بعد انتزاعه من محل حداد كان يشهد عليه السكاكين و غيرها ليكون حدها أكثر رهافة أو أي محل آخر. (p. 235)

(4) ST

The Earth is not at right angles to its path round the sun. Therefore, the position of the sun in relation to the Earth's surface changes during the year. Twice a year on March 21st and September 21st, the sun is vertically over the Equator. At other times, it is vertically over other latitudes between the tropical zones. **These** lie between the Tropic of Cancer (23' 27' N) and the Tropic of Capricorn (23' 27' S). (Bates & Dudley-Evans, 1992, p. 21)

دوران الكرة الأرضية حول الشمس لا يكون بزوايا قائمة مع المدار. إذا فموقع الشمس بالنسبة لسطح الكرة الأرضية يتغير خلال العام. تكون الشمس عمودية على خط الاستواء مرتين في العام هما 21 مارس و 21 سبتمبر؛ كما أنها تكون عمودية على خطوط العرض الأخرى الواقعة في المناطق المدارية في أوقات أخرى من العام. و المناطق المدارية تقع بين مدار السرطان (27 درجة شمال) و مدار الجدي (27 درجة جنوب). (p. 21)

(5) ST

Mr. Pumblechock and I breakfasted at eight o'clock in the parlour behind his shop, and at ten we started for Miss Havisham's house, which we reached within a quarter of an hour. It was of old brick, and dismal, and had a great many iron bars to it. Some of the windows had been walled up; of **those** that remained, all the lower were rustily barred. There was a courtyard in front, and that was barred; so we had to wait, after ringing the bell, until someone should come to open it. (Dickens 1993, p. 69)

تناولت الفطور مع السيد بامبلتسوك عند الساعة الثامنة في الرواق خلف دكانه، وعند العاشرة، توجهنا إلى منزل الأتسة هافيشام ووصلناه بعد ربع ساعة. كان منزلاً قزمياً مكتئباً؛ فيه الكثير من القضبان الحديدية. وقد سدت بعض النوافذ؛ أما النوافذ الباقية، فقد أحاطت القضبان الصدئة بالمنخفض منها. وكانت هناك ساحة أمامية مسيجة، فكان علينا الانتظار بعد قرع الجرس ليأتي من يفتح لنا. (p. 68)

The Arabic renditions of texts (3), (4), and (5) indicate that the elliptical demonstratives are rendered into Arabic by lexical repetition, i.e., by repeating the head noun, even though Arabic manifests the use of demonstratives as elliptical devices. Such an indication reflects the tendency of Arabic to achieve cohesiveness, explicitness, and naturalness of expression through the use of lexical repetition. The preference of specific cohesive devices over others, which in many instances occur in translation, is due to differences in stylistic preferences with respect to the mechanism employed to produce cohesive, explicit, and natural target texts.

3.1.2 Non-specific deictics

Non-specific deictics include words such as ‘both, all, some, each, and any’ (Butler, 2003, p. 295). To start with, the non-specific deictics ‘both’ ‘all’ and ‘some’ are used as nominal elliptical devices. ‘Both’ is used to refer back to a nominal group when the presupposed item has the sense of ‘two’, whereas ‘all’ and ‘some’ are used to refer back to a nominal group when the presupposed material is plural. The elliptical use and translation of these items are illustrated in the texts (6), (7), (8), (9) and (10).

(6) ST

I opened my eyes, and found two men looking at me with much curiosity. **Both** wore shooting dress and carried guns. (Hawkins, 1989, p. 33)

فتحت عيني لأجد رجلين ينظران إلي بفضول بالغ. كلاهما كان يرتدي ثياب الصيد و يحملان البنادق. (p.32)

The non-specific deictic ‘both’ cannot be used elliptically in Arabic as it has to be adjoined to the head noun or pronoun, as illustrated in the translation of (6). The deictic ‘both’ should be rendered by a proper equivalent that has the sense of ‘two’; otherwise, the translation would have an interpretation different from that intended by the source text writer. It has been observed that some translators mistranslate the non-specific deictic ‘both’ when used elliptically, as evidenced in the translation of text (7)

(7) ST

Rising and looking out of the window at these harmless objects, Mr. Lorry shivered, and retired to his seat by the fire. He had opened, not only the glass window, but the lattice blind outside it, and he had closed **both** again, and he shivered through his frame. (Deckins, 1999, p. 234)

و ارتجف جسم لوري مقشعراً و هو ينظر إلى هذه الأشياء و رجع إلى مقعده بجوار النافذة. كان قد فتح النافذة و أزاح و عنها الستارة أيضاً ثم أغلقها بسرعة و اعترته رعشة. (p. 235)

The deictic 'both' in (7) has a sense of two and is used to refer back to two noun phrases, i.e., 'glass window' and 'the lattice blind'. This deictic 'both' is mistranslated as 'أغلقها'. In Arabic, the connected pronoun 'ها' does not express duality, and as a result, such a mistranslation creates ambiguity, i.e., ambiguous reference, which results in a meaning different from that intended by the source text writer. It is not clear to which item the pronoun 'ها' refers; it may refer to 'the glass window' or 'the lattice blind'.

With regards to the deictics 'all' and 'some', these are used as elliptical devices in both English and Arabic. However, when employed elliptically in Arabic, they are often used with the definite article 'ال' (Wright, 1967). In translation, they are rendered by lexical repetition (i.e., repetition of the head a noun or pronoun), as in (8) and (9), or by ellipsis, as in (10).

(8) ST

"Heaven forgive them," said the doctor, "It's the pirates!"

"All drunk, sir," came the voice of Silver from behind us. (Stevenson, 1998, p. 375)

قال الطبيب: "فلتغفر لهم السماء، إنهم القراصنة!"
ثم سمعنا صوت سيلفر من خلفنا قائلاً: "وكلهم سكارى، سيدي." (p. 374)

(9) ST

The human body is made of a number of different systems. Each system has a separate function, but **some** work together. (Bates & Dudley-Evans, 1992, p. 42)

جسم الإنسان مكون من عدد من الأجهزة المختلفة لكل جهاز وظيفة منفصلة إلا أن بعض الأجهزة تعمل معاً. (p. 42)

(10) ST

Just at this time the king and all his great men had met together to talk about me. I was told later about these talks by a friend who was present at them. **Some** were afraid that I might get free which might be very dangerous. ... **Some** thought that perhaps it might be best to kill me (they could do it in my sleep). (Swift, 1993, p. 29-31)

في ذلك الحين كان الملك مجتمعاً إلى كبار رجاله يتداولون بشأني. و علمت لاحقاً من صديق لي كان حاضراً الاجتماع، بشأن الكلام الذي دار بينهم. كان البعض خائفاً من أن أصبح طليقاً، و هو أمر في غاية الخطورة. ... و ظن البعض أن من الأفضل قتلي، فيقومون بذلك أثناء نومي. (pp. 28-30)

3.1.3 Post-deictics

The words which function as post-deictics are adjectives such as 'identical, other, usual, regular, certain, odd, famous, well-known, typical'...etc. All these lexical items can form noun phrase ellipsis in which they function as heads of elliptical noun phrases. The following texts illustrate the use and translation of post-deictics.

(11) ST

There were fine red houses standing on the edge of the water, and on the side of the hill

there was one house larger than the **others** near some tall trees. That was Van Baerle's house. (Dumas, 1988, p. 37)

كانت هنالك بيوت حمراء جميلة على ضفة المياه، فيما انتصب منزل أكبر من المنازل الأخرى على طرف التلة بقرب بعض الأشجار الباسقة. ذلك كان منزل فان بيرل. (p. 36)

(12) ST

"She is my sister, Doctor. She was a good girl. She was betrothed to a good young man, too: a tenant of his – that man's who stands there. **The other** is his brother, the worst of a bad race." (Dickens, 1999, p. 318)

"هي أختي يا دكتور كانت بنت طيبة، و كانت مخطوبة لشاب طيب أيضاً هو أحد مستأجري أرضه، ذلك الذي يقف هناك. و الرجل الآخر هو أخوه، و هو أسوأ واحد في هذه السلالة الرديئة". (p. 319)

(13) ST

I opened my eyes, and found two men looking at me with much curiosity. Both wore shooting dress and carried guns. One was rather short and very strongly built, with a big square head, a gray moustache and small light blue eyes. **The other** was a thin young man of middle height, with dark hair, rather graceful. (Hawkins, 1989, p. 33)

فتحت عيني لأجد رجلين ينظران إلي بفضول بالغ. كلاهما كان يرتدي ثياب الصيد و يحملان البنادق. كان أحدهما قصيراً و قوي البنية، رأسه كبير مربع الشكل و شاربه رمادي و عيناه صغيرتان بلون أزرق فاتح. أما الآخر فكان شاباً نحيفاً متوسط الطول، أسود الشعر، بهي الطلعة. (p. 32)

The post-deictics 'others' and 'other' are used elliptically as a means of avoiding lexical repetition. Although Arabic manifests the elliptical use of post-deictics, it can be noticed that the post-deictics 'others' and 'other', which are grammatical, are rendered into Arabic by lexical repetition. Lexical repetition, however, achieves cohesion and explicitness in the Arabic translation. In this respect, Baker (2011) points out that:

Whether a translation conforms to the source-text patterns of cohesion or tries to approximate to target-language patterns will depend in the final analysis on the purpose of the translation and the amount of freedom the translator feels entitled to in rechunking information and/or altering signals of relations between chunks (p. 211).

Moreover, some translators mistranslate post-deictics when used elliptically, as in (14) and (15).

(14) ST

I had to pass through that part, to get to **the other**. (Dickens, 1999, p.316)

و كان من اللازم أن أمر و أمشي بين هذه الأكوام من تلك الأشياء. (p. 317)

(15) ST

... there was only one adventurous traveler left to be congratulated; for **the two others** had

been set down at their respective roadside destinations. (Dickens, 1999, p.10)

لم يكن يوجد إلا مسافر واحد يتلقى التهنية بسلامة الوصول أمام كبير العمال لأن المسافرين الآخرين كانوا قد اتخذوا لأنفسهم أماكنهم خارج الفندق كالمعتاد. (p.11)

The elliptical item 'other' in (14) is mistranslated. This incorrect translation fails to convey the source text meaning to the target text reader. Likewise, the items 'the two others' in (15), which are used elliptically to mean 'the other two travelers', are not translated accurately. These items are rendered lexically as 'المسافرين الآخرين كانوا قد اتخذوا' which means that the 'travelers' mentioned in the target text are more than two, whereas, they are two in the source text.

4. Numeratives

Numeratives can be used elliptically as cohesive devices. They include lexical items such as cardinals, ordinals, and indefinite quantifiers. Cardinals are words such as 'two, three, four, five,' etc. When used elliptically, cardinals may be preceded by a deictic such as the definite article 'the' or a demonstrative pronoun, as in 'the three' and 'these three'. The texts below illustrate the use and translation of cardinals.

(16) ST

Two were dead, one had run away, **four** had succeeded in getting inside the stockade while, from the shelter of the wood, seven or eight men, each with several guns, kept up a hot but useless fire on the log house. **The four** who had got inside ran straight towards the building, shouting. (Stevenson, 1998, p.219)

لقد قتل اثنان، و واحد لاذ بالفرار، بينما نجح أربعة في اختراق السور، و تابع سبعة أو ثمانية رجال مزودين بعدة بنادق إطلاق النار من مخبأهم في الحرج على المنزل الخشبي بغزارة لتغطيتهم، لكن دون جدوى. في هذا الوقت، جرى أربعة رجال من الذين استطاعوا التسلل متجهين إلى المنزل، و هم يصرخون. (p.218)

(17) ST

Next day I got the boat, and it was brought round to the Temple stairs, and lay where I could reach it within a minute or **two**. (Dickens, 1993, p.337)

حصلت على القارب في اليوم التالي، فجئ به إلى سلم التامبل، و أرسى بحيث أستطيع الوصول إليه خلال دقيقة أو دقيقتين. (Ibid: 336)

(18) ST

... four rough men in red caps armed with sabers and pistols, entered the room. ... The four surrounded him, where he stood with his wife and child clinging to him. (Dickens, 1999, p.280)

... ظهر أربعة رجال مظهرهم خشن و يرتدون القبعات الحمراء، و هم مسلحون بالسيوف الطويلة المقوسة وبالمسدسات و دخلوا الحجرة. ... و أحاط الرجال الأربعة بالسيد تشارلس دارني بينما كان هو يقف وتمسك به زوجته و ابنته متشبثين به كل التشبث. (p. 281)

(19) ST

The men had taken their boats to the river mouth, but Hunter and I rowed straight in, in the direction of the stockade on the map. **The two** who were left guarding their boats seemed surprised when they saw us. (Stevenson, 1998, p.163)

كان الرجال قد قادوا القاربين إلى مصب النهر، لكن هانتر و أنا تخطينا القاربين باتجاه الحصن المرسوم في الخريطة. فاندعش الرجلان اللذان كانا يحرسان القاربين عندما شاهدانا. (p. 162)

Though Arabic manifests the elliptical use of cardinals, cardinals are translated by ellipsis or by lexical repetition. The difference in the use of ellipsis and/or lexical repetition, which often takes place in translation, can be mainly attributed to the fact that each language has its stylistic preferences that determine the type of cohesion mechanism to be used in a given context as well as the degree of explicitness required in the translation.

Regarding ordinals, these include items such as *first, second, third or next, last.... etc.* Ordinals are used elliptically with the definite article ‘the’ or a possessive as a deictic, as in (A) and (B).

- (A) Smith was the first student to leave the room. I was the second.
 (B) John was still on his second round when the other runners had already completed their fifth.

The ordinals ‘second’ and ‘fifth’ in (A) and (B) respectively are used elliptically to as cohesive devices and as a means for avoiding redundancy. They can only be interpreted as ‘the second student’ and the ‘their fifth round’ respectively through reference to the previous sentences.

Given that Arabic manifests the elliptical use of ordinals, such items are translated by ellipsis, as in (20). However, when used elliptically and preceded by a possessive pronoun, ordinals are rendered by lexical repetition, as illustrated in (21). This is because the genitive construction in Arabic does not allow the omission of the modified noun. Thus, as pointed out by Beeston (2017) in Arabic ‘when structural considerations demand the repetition of a word, it can be repeated without hesitation’ (p.113).

(20) ST

I opened my eyes, and found two men looking at me with much curiosity. Both wore shooting dress and carried guns. One was rather short and very strongly built, with a big square head, a gray moustache and small light blue eyes. The other was a thin young man of middle height, with dark hair, rather graceful. I put **the first** down as a soldier, **the second** as a gentleman accustomed to move in good society, but with something of the army about him also. (Hawkins, 1989, p. 33)

فتحت عيني لأجد رجلين ينظران إلي بفضول بالغ. كلاهما كان يرتدي ثياب الصيد و يحملان البنادق. كان أحدهما قصيراً و قوي البنية، رأسه كبير مربع الشكل و شاربه رمادي و عيناه صغيرتان بلون أزرق فاتح. أما الآخر فكان شاباً نحيفاً متوسط الطول،

اسود الشعر، بهي الطلعة. فاستنتجت أن الأول جندي، أما الثاني فسيء اعتاد أن يكون في المجتمعات الراقية، إنما برفقة جنود حوله.
(p. 32)

(21) ST

Running as slowly as a tortoise (runs), my indolent brother was still on his third round when the other runners had already completed **their fifth**. (Mubarak, 1985, p. 370)

بينما كان أخي المتباطئ يجري على مهل كالسحفاة و هو ما زال بعد في دورته الثالثة كان باقي العدائين قد أنهوا دورتهم
الخامسة. (p. 371)

5. Epithets and Classifiers

Epithets are adjectives such as adjectives of colour and size. This class of lexical items is used elliptically to mark the omission of a noun phrase, as in (22). The word 'black' in (22) is an epithet functioning as a modifier in (A), but as a head of an elliptical noun phrase, i.e., the black horse, in (B).

(22) ST

A: Which horse won the race, the red horse or the black horse?

B: **The black.**

أي الجياد فاز بالسباق، الجواد الأبيض أم الجواد الأسود؟
الأسود.
الجواد الأسود.

Given that Arabic manifests the elliptical use of epithets, epithets are often translated into Arabic by epithets (i.e., by ellipsis), or for more explicit translation by lexical repetition, as illustrated in the translation of (22), which is provided by the researcher.

Classifiers are lexical items that precede the head and have an adjectival function. They are used elliptically if the classifier is not a noun, as in (A) below, or if the presupposing item of the nominal group is signaled by an anaphoric 'the', as in (B).

(A) Q: Did he won a first prize?

A: No, he only got a **third**.

(B) Here are my two white silk scarves. Or would you prefer **the cotton**?

(Halliday & Hasan, 1976, p.150)

Since classifiers function as adjectival and classifying items, such items are often rendered into Arabic elliptically by equivalent adjectives, as in (23) or by lexical repetition for a higher level of explicitness, as in (24).

(23) ST

"What floor do you want?"

“The **top** ...”. (Dickens, 1993, p. 289)

"أي طابق تريد؟"

"الأعلى ...". (p. 288)

(24) ST

Gray, following close behind me, had cut down Anderson before he had time to recover from his wasted blow. Another had been shot in the act of firing into the house, and now lay wounded, the pistol still smoking in his hand. The doctor had dealt with **a third**. Of the four who had climbed the stockade, one only remained unwounded and he, leaving his sword on the ground, was climbing out again with the fear of death upon him. (Stevenson 1998, p. 223)

لقد قضى غراي، الذي كان خلفي مباشرة، على أندرسون الذي لم يكن لديه متسعاً من الوقت للاستعداد مجدداً بعد الضربة التي أهدرها. وقد أصيب آخر خلال المعركة بالرصاص داخل المنزل و سقط أرضاً، و مسدسه حامياً في يده، بينما تمكن الطبيب من رجل ثالث. و لم يبق من الرجال الأربعة الذين تسلقوا سور الحصن إلا رجل واحد غير مصاب، ترك سيفه على الأرض و عاد إلى خارج السور ثانيةً مذعوراً و الخوف من الموت يملأ قلبه. (p. 222)

6. Conclusion

Ellipsis is used in both spoken and written discourse to fulfil functions such as avoiding redundancy and creating textual cohesion and coherence. NP ellipsis is a form of ellipsis involving the use of a deictic, numerative, epithet, or classifier to function as the head of an elliptical noun phrase. The analysis of Arabic translations reveals that NP ellipsis is rendered by ellipsis or lexical repetition. There is a tendency, however, towards the use of lexical repetition, which can be ascribed to structural incompatibilities and differences in stylistic preferences between English and Arabic. Finally, the paper has shown that existing English-Arabic translations contain mistranslations of NP ellipsis. Such mistranslations create ambiguity and convey different meanings to the target language readership.

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