The Rewriting of Characters’ Dialogue: Translating Literary Dialectal Dialogue in Saudi and Egyptian Novels

Eman Suraid Almutairi
Translation Department, University of Jeddah
Jeddah, Saudi Arabia
Email: esalmutairi@uj.edu.sa

Abstract
The research aims to identify the procedures carried out by translators to deal with translating Literary Dialectal Dialogue (LDD) in the English translations of contemporary Saudi and Egyptian novels. The significance of this study is that it focuses on two Arabic dialects and examines what are the translation procedures if these procedures shift with changes in dialect. The study involves an analysis of random selections of LDD that were extracted from several Saudi and Egyptian novels. The study uses descriptive quantitative and qualitative analysis that focuses on mapping the procedures that were chosen to translate LDD in Arabic diglossic novels. The analysis first examines the construction and function of LDD in its source context and then studies how these procedures have managed to reconstruct the socio-cultural and socio-ideological function of LDD in the selected novels. This study finds evidence to suggest that due to the change in language communities, Literary Dialectal Dialogue (LDD) has changed in the translation to become Literary Informal Dialogue (LID). The data also reveals that in practice, none of the translators rendered the source dialect into a target dialect. Interestingly, however, translators do not tend to standardize or erase the conversational elements of dialogue. On the contrary, they recognize the conversational aspect and try to adhere in general to that in their translations. In fact, their procedure is one of compensation rather than a translation of the dialect. Fairly similar varieties of procedures were used to translate the different regional and social dialects in all the selected STs.

Keywords: Arabic dialects, descriptive analysis, dialect, literary translation, translating dialect, Saudi and Egyptian novels

Introduction

Translation is not just an exchange of words; it is also an important element of communication between cultures. It helps to create an image in the target readers’ minds that allows them to build up an idea of how others behave and think. To facilitate this communication, the translator needs to be aware of the context of the Source Language (SL) text so that it can be recreated, in line with the translation purpose, in the Target Language (TL). The translator’s awareness of the source’s cultural context helps them to choose procedures to serve the purpose of the translation. One of the phenomena that complicate the task for the translator is the use of conversational dialects in writing, such as literature, or what is referred to in this paper as Literary Dialectal Dialogue (LDD).

The Arab region is a diglossic speech community, where more than one dialect is used to communicate. The traditional existence of diglossia in the region takes the form of two or more dialects in the same Arabic speech community, where according to Ferguson (1959) the superposed dialect is the one used in formal education and formal writing or spoken purposes whereas the other is used mostly in ordinary conversation.

Concerning Arabic literature, the literary scene in the Arab world changed from the mid-1940s onwards, and there was a transformation in the themes and structure of creative writing. These changes coincided with and may have been the result of several political and social changes in the region (Abu-Deeb, 2000). Holes (2004) states that the need to use the dialect in the Arab world spread in the 1950s after World War II and the political independence in the region. This change has had a significant impact on how novels have been written, and changes have occurred in the type of language, themes, and settings of the novel (Abu-Deeb, 2000). The phenomenon of using dialect in novels has grown in recent decades, and the new forms of dialectal novels have become more prominent in the Arab literary scene in recent years. In addition to the sociopolitical factors, the rise of digital technology and social media platforms has significantly contributed to familiarising readers with dialect as a written form.

This diglossic situation will pose a translation problem for the translator who needs to reflect the nuances of the dialogue that not only exist for linguistics purposes but also to reflect the many sociopolitical layers and other factors for the use of LDD in the first place.

This paper aims to understand how LDD in contemporary Saudi and Egyptian novels is recreated in English and to examine whether the change of the dialects plays a role or influences the dialogue in the English translations of the novels. This primary focus can be subdivided into two interrelated questions that structure the research. The questions can be formulated as follow:

1. What are the procedures that translators have employed to translate LDD in the corpus? Are there frequent procedures that translators have applied more than others?
2. Do the translation procedures shift with changes in dialect?

This paper is divided into six sections. Following this introduction, the literature review will be concerned with discussing the literature on translating dialects, an overview of the issue, and procedures to deal with such an issue. Then, the discussion will move to the method part where the macro methodological approach will be discussed and the specific micro methods will be explained. To answer both questions, quantitative and qualitative analysis will be conducted to gain a holistic overview of the procedures and frequency of using them in English translations. The result section maps the translation procedures used to tackle LDD in the corpus of Egyptian
and Saudi novels. Then, the paper will present the discussion and findings that emerge from the results and end with the conclusion.

**Literature Review**

Novelists incorporate the voices of ordinary people. These voices may derive from many different regional and social dialects, and novelists employ these dialects as the voices of their characters. However, these representations are not a transliteration of oral speech, because using a full real dialect may pose a challenge to the flow of the novel and make it difficult to read. Giving too many details and representations may hinder the reading process and affect the reader’s comprehension of the storyline and the author’s message (Fine, 1983). In analysing how writers render the characteristic of spoken conversational language, it can be observed that when conversation is used for literary purposes it distances itself from the raw spoken word in reality (Leech & Short, 2007). Hence, the process involves selecting representative linguistic features that can demonstrate the spoken language in that speech community. Such changes are intended to make a spoken dialect fit with the rhetorical style of the novel, taking it from the ordinary dialect zone to what Ives (1971) has called ‘literary dialect’. According to Ives (1971) literary dialect can be defined as an “attempt to represent in writing a speech that is restricted regionally, socially, or both” (p. 146). It is crucial to use the adjective ‘literary’ when referring to the dialectal dialogue in the novel, because it indicates that this dialect exists within the piece of fiction and is not a real entity in the way that regional or social dialects are (Azevedo, 2000).

Translation scholars have paid attention to the issue of translating dialect in general and dealing with Literary Dialectal Dialogue (LDD) in particular (Catford, 1965; Hatim & Mason, 1990; Fawcett, 1997; Sánchez, 1999 a, b; Berthele 2000; Määttä 2004). Many procedures have been proposed to tackle this issue, but scholars all agree that there is no clear-cut solution to managing this problem and that it depends on the translator’s understanding of the social and cultural context of the SL and TL, the intention behind the use of dialect in the ST, and the translator’s goals for the translation.

Lefevere (1992a) has noted that language is never used in isolation; rather, the use of language is related to the situation in which a particular language is considered appropriate. Authors elevate the communicative effect of their text, or what calls “the illocutionary power”, by utilising “all kinds of discrepancies between utterance (the use of language) and situation (the particular context in which language is used)” (p. 58). That might help to create the communicative effect of the meaning for the readers. According to Lefevere (1992a), translators should pay attention to whether the register or type of utterance in the TT is appropriate for the specific context and also to whether a particular situation is similar, to some extent, in different culture. Translating needs to capture this communicative effect and explain the source’s cultural situation rather than apply a literal translation of the text or “the illocutionary power of the source text will not be heightened by a mere literal translation of the words on the page in what amounts to a cultural vacuum” (p. 58). He argues that choosing a variety from TL to replace the variety in ST is not the best strategy to deal with a dialectal text and “is likely to sound artificial and may even make the translation less intelligible” (p. 69).

Translating dialect cannot be isolated from associated political and cultural considerations. Hatim and Mason (1990) have commented on that when dealing with a dialect in a text, it is not always just the linguistic aspect that differentiates a regional dialect, but those political and cultural
considerations also contribute to set these boundaries. Understanding the ideological, social, and political implications of the source and target dialects is vital knowledge for the translator when dealing with a dialectal text since such knowledge helps to produce a translation that avoids problematic misconceptions by its readers.

Catford (1965), like Hatim and Mason (1990), has thought that the translator should keep in mind that the source and target dialects extend beyond the limit of language and the location of the dialects. The translator should also be careful about the impact that the translation and the chosen procedures have on the target reader. Catford (1965) has given an example of replacing the southern British cockney dialect with the northern French Parigot dialect, based not on the location but on social implications. Therefore, unwanted messages will be associated with the text where the mark of the dialect in ST may be formally quite different from those of the ST. Another point regarding translating based on the linguistic aspects, not the social or cultural implications have been shared in a very recent study by Jiménez (2021) who analysed the Spanish translation of Yaa Gyasi’s *Homegoing* (2016), a novel that focuses on slavery and the history of a black family from the beginning eighteenth-century in Ghana to the early twenty-first century in the United States. Jiménez (2021) has noted that sometimes the inconsistency in applying the translation procedures to represent the purpose of LDD in the character voices could affect the social and cultural role that this character is meant to serve; such as the case with the major Ghanaian character in the story, the maid Esther, whom their broken English was used to reflect their otherness was standardised in the TT.

The importance of understanding the functions of dialect in the ST has highlighted by Sánchez (1999b) who has thought it is crucial to choose the best possible procedures for translation. Fawcett (1997) has demonstrated that a dialect in a text poses a problem to the translator to the point where translation becomes impossible. He thinks that “dialect translation is by no means as simple and straightforward as one might think, especially since it often relates to questions of status and repression” (p. 76). For him, this form of translation is more representation than a translation of the ST.

This is a point that Määttä (2004) has agreed with him on it as he has stated that the novel is a medium to express the ideologies of the language. However, in the translation, the ‘sociolinguistic stratification’ cannot be produced in translation. Accordingly, the emphasis on the role and intention of using the dialect in the ‘polyphonic structure’ of the novel might give the readers an understanding of the ideological framework of the novel (Määttä, 2004). The focus in translation should be on the general of the novel and its macro context, including the literary dialect, and not on reflecting every single dialectal word or utterance.

In the field of Arabic literary translation studies, a few research studies have addressed the issue of translating dialects from dialectal Arabic literature into English. One of these is Rosenbaum’s (2001) research, which has highlighted the issue of translating diglossia from Egyptian literature into Hebrew and English. She has noted that when a text is written mainly in dialect, there will be no problem in identifying the dialect. However, she has stated that the problem becomes more complicated and challenging to the translator when some dialect elements in a text are mainly written in Modern Standard Arabic (MSA), i.e. elements that uniquely belong to dialect; elements that have the same form in dialect, and MSA but are different in meaning; and dialect elements that look like MSA where the words have been modified to comply with MSA grammar. Rosenbaum (2001) has claimed that failing to identify these elements of dialects in the
translation process may result in problems in the translation, such as literal translation of figurative expressions, translation shifts, and non-equivalent translation.

Concerning the practice of translating Saudi dialectal novels, Daoudi (2011) has outlined the challenges of translating the two e-Arabic novels Banāt al-Ri'yāḍ (Girls of Riyadh) and Barīd Mista3jil. She has argued that the emergence of e-Arabic has led to the rise of a new way of writing the novel in Arabic, and she has suggested that these new forms of novel-writing are challenging the MSA elite literary language and offering a more diverse multilingual space for the expression of the self. However, she maintains that when these novels are translated into English, the co-mixture of dialects in the ST loses its cultural and linguistic effects, especially in the case of Girls of Riyadh where the author intervened in the translation. She stated that changing the intended readers could lead to the loss of e-Arabic dynamics in translation.

Further, a very interesting point was raised in a recent study conducted by Shmasnh (2022) where he compared the work of an Egyptian and a British translator for Mourid Barghouti’s novels. He has stated that sharing a very similar cultural and linguistic background like the case with the Egyptian translator Ahdaf Soueif, might not have a great influence on translating the text; the translator may still fail in conveying the pragmatic implication of some cultural and LDD dialogues in the text. Shmasnh (2022) has stressed the importance of understating the intended purpose of the novel’s cultural and social significance in these kinds of novels and does not rely much on the hypothesis that the translator mastering the source text culture is more faithful and adequate in reflecting the source text than the translator who does not.

On a different note, in the discussion of translating dialect several specific procedures have been suggested that can help the translator to overcome this challenge and which may help to fulfill the function of the ST (whether a novel, play, poem, and so on). These suggested procedures are using pseudo-dialect translation which is creating a literary dialect and changing the standard grammar of the language with the standard linguistic features, and making it sound like a dialect (Hatim & Mason, 1990). However, Wekker and Wekker (1991) has stated that creating a literary dialect may invent a non-existent, broken language. Azevedo (1998) also has noted that using a creation or ad hoc literary dialect might mask or misrepresent the sociolinguistic variables of the ST. Parallel dialect translation which is translating the literary dialect into another target dialect that has a similar connotation or functions could result in it serving the same functions in the TL (Sánchez, 1999b). Lefevere (1992b) has criticised this procedure by stating that it may have a negative impact on the TL readers, because it may awaken unwanted connotations that are different from the intended function of the source target. Standardisation which is using a standard formal variety in the TT and removes all dialectal elements from the TT novel (Leppihalme, 2000). However, replacing the literary dialect with the standard form could affect the representation of the characters and might substantially alter their relationship with each other and with the reader (Azevedo, 1998). Dialect compilation is translating the dialect into a mixture of target dialects and using this mixture in the idioms and dialectal expressions (Perteghella, 2012).

It is in the end up to the translator to use one or a mix of these procedures or other applicable procedures to achieve the desired stylistic and semantic impact. With the characters’ LDD in the text, the role of constructing the characters’ speech is crucial. The translator is in the first place a reader of the author’s words and their novel; she or he is one of the implied readers who is supposed to decode the markers of the chosen dialects and try to fill the gap with their background
knowledge. ST readers are supposed to pick up these signifiers and turn these words into voices and images that might help them to create a visual scene in their minds while reading. These images can be clear or vague depending on the reader’s imagination and their familiarity with the context of the text (places, sound, characters, smells, and so on). Thus, we can think of the translator first as a reader who translates the text before taking it to a different language. She or he translates it in a way that evokes certain images, sounds, and, perhaps, smells. This might help to comprehend the context and to make sense of the narrator’s internal dialogue or the characters’ dialectal dialogue. Then comes the mission of creating a parallel story in a different language.

This parallel text to translate LDD will be produced based on several internal and external factors relating to the purpose of the translation, which in turn will determine the translator’s procedures in dealing with such a linguistic challenge. It is obvious that translation is a process that cannot be isolated from the environmental factors surrounding its production. When shifting from a focus on the language to the culture, it is important to pay attention both to the cultural power of the target context that influences the translation and to the special purposes the text will serve in the target culture. Bassnett and Lefevere (1990) argue that these cultural powers lead translators to manipulate the text and attempt to imitate a certain discourse to be accepted by the target readers. The ideology and power of the target culture quite often play an important role in the translation process, according to the ‘manipulation school’ (Lambert & van Gorp, 1985; Hermans, 1985). Under these circumstances, the translation, and specifically the translation of literature, reconstruct the representations of SC, authors, and text.

The concept of ‘rewriting’ in translation was coined by Lefevere (1992b). He draws attention to how the text is rewritten in various ways to serve certain purposes, such as political or cultural interests. He suggests that the factors that control the acceptance or rejection of the literary text in any translation system are ideology, patronage, poetics, and the universe of discourse. He argues that ideological consideration is the most important – even more so than linguistic consideration – when it comes to the translation process (1992b). The ideology comes from society to show what is and what is not acceptable in the literary and social norms. According to Lefevere (1992b), ideology serves as the basis of the translation strategy when dealing with the text in the primary stages: it is the guidance the translator follows to shape the translation. The translators themselves, according to their ideology, can also enforce the ideology of those who impose upon the translators themselves, such as the patrons who are responsible for publishing the translation. Moreover, translation is also influenced by regulatory forces, whether from within literary systems, such as the professionals (for example, translators themselves, critics, and reviewers) or from factors outside the literary system, such as patrons (persons, institutions). Powerful people, a religious body, a political party, a social class, the media, a publisher, or an educational establishment are all examples of (potential) patrons.

In addition, other ‘intra-systemic’ constraints affect the rewriting of literature, such as poetics and the universe of discourse. Poetics refers to the aesthetic principles that control the literary system at a certain time. Lefevere (1992b) claims that poetics consists of two components: literary devices, which comprise genres, motifs, symbols, characters and situations; and functional components, which concern the relation of the literature to the social system, the role this literature should play in a certain society, and the way it should play this role. An example of this is the rewriting that was done by Fitzgerald to Rubáiyát, the work of the Persian poet Omar Khayyam to make it come close to the target literary conventions (Lefevere, 1992b); this resulted in huge
changes to the ST. This kind of rewriting manipulates the text to work by the literary system of the target society. On the other hand, the functional component can be influenced by the ideological constraints from outside the domain of poetics, such as the contextual environment surrounding the literary system. Certainly, professionals and patronage can also play a role in determining and supporting the dominant poetics in a certain literary system. However, poetics is subject to change, and they have a variable nature.

The final factor that plays a crucial role in rewriting the literature is, according to Lefevere (1992b), the universe of discourse that can also act as an intra-systemic constraint in literary systems. The universe of discourse refers to “the knowledge, the learning, but also the objects and the customs of a certain time, to which writers are free to allude in their work” (Lefevere, 1985, p. 233). Each culture is unique in the way it expresses itself, and elements like costumes, concepts, and ideologies are different from one culture to another. This is, in turn, a challenge for translators. The attitude of the translator’s patron, and the social forces relating to the universe of discourse in the ST and the other universe of discourse of their target society, are the factors that determine the rewriting that occurs in the target literary system. This attitude is influenced by many factors, such as the status of ST, the self-image of the target culture, what type of texts are acceptable in the TC, and the intended audience (Lefevere, 1992b).

When the rewriting is put in the context of LDD it could be seen that there is a strong emphasis on the target culture, but little has been said about the author and SC, the importance of the function of the ST, and how this might be decided by the translator to be reflected in the translation. Nord (200) has pointed out the importance of understanding the communicative function of the ST and how this is important as a basis for determining the choice of translation method and strategy. Furthermore, she argues that “the translation purpose justifies the translation procedures” (p. 35) and that this purpose can be identified in part by the translator analysing the communicative function of the ST. Nord (200) has maintained that the purpose depends on the translator’s evaluation of the impact of their translation:

the translator acts as a responsible mediator in the cooperation developing between the client, the target audience and the source-text author. This does not mean that translators always have to do what the others expect – this may even be impossible if the three parties expect different translational behaviours. It just means that the translator has to anticipate any misunderstanding or communicative conflict that may occur due to different translational concepts and find a way to avoid them. (p. 3)

Nord (2002) has introduced the functionalist theory the concept of ‘loyalty’, which refers to the social relationship between the translator, on the one hand, and the client (or patron [Lefevere, 1992b]), author, and TT readers on the other. In particular, she highlights the relationship of the translator with the author, which is based on respecting the latter’s “individual communicative intentions” (p. 4). According to Nord, this might lead to the author accepting any changes that happen in the process of the translation. The translator’s loyalty towards her or his partner performs a helpful role in the ‘powerplay’ between the client (or patron), author, and reader expectations. Thus, according to the translator’s evaluation, the purpose of the translation of LDD will affect the chosen procedures. The purpose of the translation could determine that little attention should be paid to the LDD, so the translator will be less concerned about creating LDD in the TT and more concerned about fitting the text within his or her evaluation of the TT’s literary translation norms.
and readers’ expectations. However, if the translator’s purpose is to recreate the style of the ST and focus on the LDD, that might change the translator’s procedures in this matter. Lastly, it could be argued that LDD especially in relation to Arabic novels and more precisely to Saudi novels still an under-researched area that needs to be analysed. The most important research angle, which will be addressed in this paper, is that analysing the translation of both Saudi and Egyptian novels by the same translators might be still a gap in the field. These research gaps will be studied in this paper with a combination of descriptive quantitative and qualitative textual analysis that will be discussed in the following section, in order to understand the translation of LDD across and within novels.

Methods
Descriptive methodological Approach

To investigate the phenomenon of the use of LDD in Egyptian and Saudi novels, and how LDD has been translated, a descriptive approach was adopted as the general methodological approach to data. The descriptive approach was undertaken by conducting a quantitative and qualitative comparative analysis of contemporary Saudi and Egyptian novels.

Toury’s descriptive analysis emphasises the need to move from a source-orientated approach to a target-orientated approach to examine and explain the nature of the translation product and/or process. Toury (1980) argues that source-oriented theories are abstract and insufficient as a point of departure for research since they are mainly preoccupied with the source text and protecting it. Toury (1985) stresses the empirical nature of a descriptive study of translation:

Since the object-level of translation studies consists of facts of ‘real life’ – whether they be actual texts, intertextual relationship, or models and norms of behavior – rather than the merely speculative outcome of preconceived theoretical hypotheses and models, it is undoubtedly, in essence, an empirical science. (p. 16)

Translation, according to Toury (1995), is a product of the host culture, so the function, process and product of translation according to him are studied in consideration of the target culture (TC). The main aim is to understand and explain the translation product rather than to suggest or present the right or correct translation. This approach does not neglect ST, but it shifts the attention to studying the relation between the TT, the TC, and the process of the TT’s production. Toury (1995) believes that such an approach is the “best means of testing, refuting, and especially modifying and amending the very theory, in whose terms research is carried out” (p. 1).

As mentioned above, this target-oriented approach does not exclude the ST or the translation relationship, but it changes the priority and level of attention. It begins with an observation from where the translation activities end, which is the translated text and its position in the social and literary system of the TC. Then the observations go back to study the process, which involves comparing segments from the ST and the TT to identify regularities. Ultimately, it will formulate a generalisation of norms and establish implications for decision-making in future research (Toury, 1995).

One of Toury’s central sociological notions is the concept of translational norms. This concept was previously discussed by Even-Zohar (1971), but it was Toury who expanded the concept and took it further (Brownlie, 1999). The exploration of norms in a broader sense in
translation studies began with his article, published in the 1980s, and was then expanded in his 1995 book *Descriptive Translation Studies and Beyond* (Malmkjær, 2008). Toury (1995) argues that norms are socio-cultural phenomena that lie and move on a scale between two extremes of absolute rules and individual idiosyncrasies. He claims that, by their nature, norms are unstable: they can appear, change and disappear over time. They are formed through socialisation, which involves individuals shaping these norms or other kinds of sanctions through their activities (Toury, 1995). Norms, according to Toury, can be defined as “the translation of general values or ideas shared by a community – as to what is right and wrong, adequate and inadequate – into performance instructions appropriate for and applicable to particular situations” (Toury, 1995, pp. 54–55). Toury states that norms exist in translation practice, but that they are not just limited to the translation process; rather, they are involved at every level of the translation experience. The norms of translational behavior can be identified by studying the text and identifying regular patterns in the translation. Regularities of the behavior in the data can indicate the existence of translational norms.

**Comparative Textual Analysis**

Comparative textual analysis was conducted as the major method to collect and categorize the data for the paper. A key initial stage in the comparative analysis involved analysing LDD in the STs. The source textual analysis was concerned with confirming the diglossia in the novels and then locating the LDD in the diglossic texts. This aimed to understand the differences between the LDDs that were used in the novels, such as which Saudi or Egyptian dialects are presented in the text. In particular, this stage focused on providing evidence as to why the selected novels can be considered LDD novels, how the LDD in the novels is represented, how it is semantically and syntactically different from the spoken dialect in everyday life, and, finally, what changes authors have made to the spoken dialect when they write their dialectal dialogue. To identify the LDD, the researcher used my knowledge of the dialects, consulted with other native speakers, studied the profile of the characters in the novel, and make use of the oral (podcast, radio and, television shows) and written (such as dictionaries, forums and social media) media material. It should be noted that the transliteration of the LDD in the discussion chapters also made use of these resources.

After completing the identification process of the STs, the researcher then identified the availability of the English translations of the selected texts. After confirming the availability of the TTs, the researcher started to create unidirectional parallel corpora. To obtain satisfactory results that covered the procedures that were used in the English translations of the selected novels, the researcher worked on each novel with its translation individually. LDD and its translation were mapped into a series of paired segments. This series of paired segments were organised by following two steps. First, the data were compared, by identifying LDDs in the STs and analysing all of the LDDs and their translation. After this, each paired segment was divided into several categories depending on the adopted translation procedures. The program that was used to organise the paired segments was Microsoft Excel. Each novel had its own Excel file that was divided into several sheets, with each sheet representing a translation procedure. In a word document, and while the researcher was doing the analysis for each novel and its translation, the researcher added her comments and analysis for a substantial number of examples to assist me in the description. It is important to clarify that the Microsoft Excel program was used only as a management tool for
clearly organising the data. After that, the data was turned by Excel into visual charts to facilitate understanding. Where relevant, the quantitative data will be included in the data analysis chapters in the form of percentages. Due to the overlap between procedures, where several procedures were used simultaneously for the same sentences, the percentage will be an approximation. The main expected outcome from the quantitative method was to give only an indication or estimation of the frequencies of procedures in the translations. In addition, the quantitative evidence was intended to strengthen the validity of the observations, especially about stylistic features, and to highlight the significance of stylistic features that might be overlooked in the first descriptive chapter.

Selections

It is impractical and impossible to include the whole selected translations in the analysis, so a sample from the texts should be selected. The selection technique used in this research was inspired by purposive sampling, which “involves selecting a sample based on pre-defined critical parameters” (Saldanha & O’Brien, 2013, p. 34). A focus on the characteristics of the population might help in serving the aim of the paper. The selections were made in two stages when conducting the comparative textual analysis. The focus was on mapping the translation procedures adopted to translate LDD in Arabic diglossic novels regardless of who the translator of the text was. The selection method was applied across each novel by choosing a sample from several chapters. The chosen chapters were from those that include more LDD, whereas those chapters that include more narrative than dialogue were excluded. However, due to the variation of length between each novel – which meant that a chapter in one novel could equal in length three chapters in another – no maximum of 15 chapters from any one novel were included in the selection. Within the selected chapters I divided each paired segment in each novel, as stated previously, into separate categories, where each category represents a translation procedure. Next, I select examples from each category to represent each procedure in the discussion chapters. The representative examples were chosen based on internal and external factors. External factors that are related to the context for example the regional varieties. The internal factors are linguistically representative of each procedure.

Results

The reason behind this paper is mainly to explore how the translators have dealt with LDD by examining a selection of ten dialectal novels (five Saudi and five Egyptian). The aim is to give a quantitative and qualitative overview of how LDD has been translated into English and what the frequent procedures used in English translations are when one of the Saudi or Egyptian dialects is used in the dialogue. What are the changes that the LDD undergoes in the translation process?

The data included in the following analysis is extracted from: 1. Mūdan Al Mīlḥ (Cities of Salt); 2. Dunqulah: Riwāyah Nūbīyah (Dongola); 3. alShamīsī (Shumaisi); 4. Matāhat Maryam (Maryam’s Maze); 5. Dḥāt (Zaat); 6. al-Qārūrah (Munira’s Bottle); 7. Banāt al-Rīyāḍ (Girls of Riyadh); 8. al-Bāb al-Mafṭuḥ (The Open Door); 9. al-Ḥamām lā yaʿfīr fī Buraydah (Where Pigeons Don’t Fly); 10. al-Fāʾīl (A Dog with no Tail).

Two points require clarification concerning the writing of Saudi and Egyptian novels. First, the use of diacritic markers plays a crucial role in the Arabic writing system as it shows how a word is pronounced. In most of the LDD in the ST, diacritic markers are partially absent, so it is sometimes difficult in short sentences to classify whether the words in the selected data should be
pronounced in MSA or according to the pronunciation of the dialect used in the novel. I used my knowledge of the dialects, in addition to the contextual and dialogue information surrounding the LDD and the background information of the character that is speaking, to judge the sentence. Any sentence that in my judgment leans more towards Modern Standard Arabic (MSA) was discarded. Second, the letter ج (qāf) is realised as a glottal stop in the Cairo and the Delta spoken dialects but as a hard ‘g’ in upper Egypt. However, Egyptian writers retain MSA phonological realisation for the letter ج (qāf) as ق (qā) when writing LDD.

Overall, the comparison of parallel corpora reveals that the procedure used by translators can be classified into three categories. First, the most frequent procedures, which are evident in almost all translations of the novels in the corpus, include using marked form, standardisation, borrowing, substitution, and paraphrasing. The second category comprises the semi-frequent procedures which do not score a high percentage in the novels and are apparent in only halves of them, such as semi-literal translation, omission, addition, explication, and paratextual procedure. The third category contains the least frequent procedures; these procedures, which only appear in less than a quarter of the corpora i.e. changing the narrative to dialogue, using broken English. These findings, especially with only the first two categories, will be expanded and described in more detail, with examples from the translations, in the subsequent sections.

It is important to note that the procedures do not function separately and that there is an overlap between several procedures; for example, marked style can exist with borrowing and paraphrasing in the same sentence. However, the procedures are considered separately in the analysis stage and here for the purposes of description and illustration, even if several procedures may occur in the same sentence. Particularly with procedures such as borrowing and substitution, the focus will be on the part of the sentence that represents that procedure to clarify how these are presented in the translated novels. The frequency percentages represent the percentage of those procedures out of the overall percentage in each novel. Procedures in the novels will not be compared here based on percentage; these figures are provided here only to show the frequency of each procedure related to LDD in each novel.

**Using the Marked Form**

The use of a marked writing style to tackle the LDD in TTs is one of the most frequent ways that translators choose to approach LDD in the ST. By marked writing style, I mean a style of writing that imitates spoken conversation. It includes contractions, slang, incomplete syntax, abbreviations, and the use of short or incomplete sentences. The marked writing style is presented in the selected translations thro as the use of contractions, phrasal verbs, idioms, incomplete syntax (such as removing subject and auxiliary verb), slang, and colloquial words. The marked writing style was either a direct representation of the dialect or compensation to present the conversational style of the dialogue.

This procedure was the most frequent in all of the translated novels, with high frequency in the corpora, as shown in Figure One.
The selected novels include a substantial number that uses marked writing style. This striking result stems mostly from the prevalence of contractions and phrasal verbs in dialogue to illustrate the marked style of the dialogue in the translated novels. However, there are different preferences for using marked writing styles in each novel.

The most frequent procedure to represent the marked writing style in the translations is the use of contractions. The translators try to represent the dialect in the STs by using contractions as a means to create in the TTs a marked style that resembles the conversational writing style. Most of the contractions are the common contracted forms that occur between the subject and the verb ‘to be’ or that come with interrogative or negative sentences. The following example is from The Open Door:

Example One (ST, p. 4; TT, p. 6)

ماتخافيش ياماما، ماتخافيش، أنا عارفه ان محمود بخير. دلوقتي ييجي، ضروري ييجي ضروري ضروري، الصبح..

“Don’t be afraid, Mama. Don’t worry, I know Mahmud is fine. He’ll come now, he must, he’ll come. This morning…”

The representation of the Cairene dialect in this example is presented in the following way: (1) omitting the glottal stop in the emphasising particle إن /inn/ and the dot below the letters ی /yā/ in the repeated word ضروري /ḍaruwwrī/ which means “must”; (2) negative marker /mā/ and inflectional negation marker /-shā/ in the verb ماتخافيش /matkhāfiš/ which means, as translated in this example, “do not worry” or “do not be afraid or scared”; (3) the Egyptian adverb دلوقتي /dilwa’t/ which means “now”, although it can be noticed that the letter /qāf/ is kept in MSA. The translator has chosen to render the dialects in the sentence through contractions of the negation and the subject with modal auxiliary verb ‘will’, along with using repetition.

There are some cases where the translator has used a less common contraction, that is, one that is more a spoken than a commonly written form. An example from the novel in Munira’s Bottle:

Example Two (ST, p. 39; TT, p. 24)

“the war’s started.”

The verb بدّ /bidat/ is pronounced and written in the central Najdi dialect with the omission of the glottal stop after the letter /d/, in contrast to its MSA counterpart. It is presented with the short vowel /a/ at the beginning and the absence of the phonological feature /a/, which occurs in the

![Figure 1. Using marked form](image-url)
middle of the MSA counterpart verb بدأ /badʾat/. This central Najdi verb is rendered through the omission of the ‘h’ and the vowel in the verb ‘has’ and the use of contraction.

As seen from the above examples, contraction is sometimes used as the only means to reflect the whole dialectal sentence in the translation of the dialogue, and where there is no other compensation for the dialectal representations in the ST.

The second representation is the use of phrasal verbs and idiomatic expressions, which were used by the translators to give a conversational style to the translated parts of the LDD. A phrasal verb is a combination of a verb and a particle that can function in a sentence as a single verb. When combined, both words give a different lexical meaning. Although phrasal verbs are more accepted nowadays in formal writing and settings, a number of the phrasal verbs in the translations are mostly used in spoken and conversational settings or sometimes in marked writing styles. This procedure has been used as a substitute for the dialectal verb in the STs. Consider the following example from A Dog with No Tail:

Example Three (ST, p. 26; TT, p. 20)

هي نقلة رمل، سبع متر، هتطلع الدور السابع، وانت حر، هتطلعها لوحدك طلعها، هتقاول عليها وتجبلك نفرين م السوق معندناش مانع.

“It’s a load of sand: seven meters. You’ll carry it up the seventh floor. Do what you want. If you want to contract it out and bring a couple of other guys with you, I don’t mind.”

The LDD in the ST example has been presented by the following means: (1) prefixal conjugation /hal/ before verbs, which indicates the future tense in Egyptian dialects; (2) the omission in the preposition to refer to the speaker as someone who lives in Cairo but is from outside Cairo (probably the Delta); (3) negative marker /mā/ and inflectional negation marker /-sha/ after the verb. The dialect form has been reflected in several ways. As the focus here is the phrasal verb and idiomatic expressions, the sense of the prefixal conjugation /hal/ has been replicated through the use of “Carry it up” and “contract it out”.

Another example of capturing the marked form of the dialectal verb through the use of phrasal verb and idiomatic expression in Cities of Salt is:

Example Four (ST, p. 50; TT, p. 47)

وهفض صوته كثيراً، حتى اصب ح همساً:

He added, almost in a whisper, “He should be roaming about with the sheep or playing with children.”

In this example, the collocation يسرح بالغنم /yasrah balghanml/ means “to freely graze sheep”. This collocation is used in the Saudi Bedouin dialect to refer to a shepherd who takes his/her sheep and goats in the early morning to search for food. The verb يسرح /yasrah/ means to “proceed freely or without restraint”, but it also has a temporal dimension that implies going out in the early hours of the morning. In the TT, the markedness of the collocation has been considered, and the translator uses of the idiomatic expression “roaming about”, which means to wander or range about freely, which may also imply doing an activity with no restraint. The temporal dimension of the verb has not been replicated, probably because the focus of the speaker was more on the effect of the activity rather than on the time.

The third representation of the marked writing style is through using TT colloquial and slang words. Here is an example from The Open Door:

Example Five (ST, p. 9; TT, p. 11)
“What’s wrong my boy? Tell me …”

In this case, the character addresses her son using يا بني /yā bni/, which translates as “my son”. The dialect is shown through the omission of the vowel at the beginning of the un بني /bni/ after the vocative particle يا /yā/, as well as the omission of the dot under the letter /yā/ at the end. The use of the colloquial phrase “my boy” as a translation of /yā bni/ reflects the intimacy and a close relationship in English dialogue.

The same colloquial expression is used to translate the synonym for the word يا بني /yā bni/ from the Saudi dialect, which is ياوليدي /yā wlīdī/. Consider the following example from Cities of Salt:

Example Six (ST, p. 22; TT, p. 16)

“that’s enough, my boy.”

The word ياوليدي /yā wlīdī/ is an eastern Bedouin dialectal diminutive form of the word ولدي /wlādī/, which means “my son”. Again, the translated word “my boy” captures the informality and the caring and intimate feeling implied by the dialectal diminutive.

Finally, short sentences are also used in the translations to indicate LDD, as can be seen in the following examples:

Example Seven (ST, p. 133; TT, p. 114, my underlining)

“... Asleep. Why are you asking all this? Don’t you trust me?” (Munira’s Bottle)

Example Eight (ST, p. 4; TT, p. 6, my underlining)

“nothing to worry about, Papa. It’s to be a peaceful demonstration.” (The Open Door)

The subject and the verb ‘to be’ in these two examples were not presented, thereby shortening the sentences and making them less unmarked and more conversational.

**Standardisation**

Standardisation is when dialectal words are substituted by unmarked forms. Specifically, this procedure involves the translator choosing to omit all the dialectal references in the original text and to opt for more standard terms words. In this situation, the translator does not heavily include any marked writing style, such as the examples mentioned above – contractions, phrasal verbs, and colloquial or slang words. It is important to highlight that standardisation occurs mostly for sentences that do not have strong cultural references. The focus is not on the presentation of the sentence but the translation of the LDD words themselves. As Figure two indicates, standardisation is a frequent procedure that is present throughout the entire corpus.

Figure 2. Standardisation

However, the results obtained from the preliminary analysis of standardisation also show that the frequency percentage varies. Particularly worth noting is the wide disparity between the application of standardisation in the translations. Standardising the dialect is below 15% of the total procedures in more than half of the novels, and in some cases, such as *Shumaisi* and *A Dog with No Tail*, standardisation accounts for less than 2%. The highest score for standardisation was in *Zaat* and *Munira’s Bottle*, both translated by Calderbank.

The following example of standardisation comes from the translation of *Zaat*:

Example Nine (ST, p. 127; TT, p. 117)

heard your servant Kamal, car clearance. What can I do for you?

The phrase *أي خدمة* /āyy Khidmah/ “any service” means the offer of any service to someone, usually in providing service settings. It implies a sense of informality and causality when it is used in the conversation. The auxiliary verb and subject are again omitted here, as is the case in the Cairene dialect, and the sentence has been shortened. In the translation, the question has been presented in its full formal form as a direct wh-question. Moreover, instead of a series of very short sentences, the translator has used a comma as a pause before clarifying the job description.

Another example of standardising LDD in the translation can be found in *Girls of Riyadh*:

Example Ten (ST, p. 47; TT, p. 30)

“what are you doing, Mother?”

The Najdi LDD is shown in this example through: (1) the Najdi interrogative particle /wish/, which is used to request specific information where it means “what”; (2) the verb /tsawiyyn/, a second-person feminine singular non-past active indicative of /sawiy/, which means “what are you doing” or “what you are up to”; (3) the word /lamintī/, which means “my mom” and is a diminutive form of the standard word /’ummi/. This is an expression used in the Najdi region to show unconditional love and respect for the mother. The whole sentence was standardised; the effect of showing love and respect to the mother by using a diminutive word in the ST has changed in the TT by the unmarked form.

The data analysis also reveals that some translators standardised a few dialectal terms or expressions and used the generic translation of source terms. The generic word can be defined here as the general word or phrase that is used to describe a group or a class of something without referring to a specific individual thing from that group or class. An example from *Cities of Salt* is:
Example Eleven (ST, p. 50; TT, p. 47)

“If we get good rains, everything will change – the wadi will be a different place.” (47)

The word الوسمي / al-wasmī/ means the rain that falls at the beginning of spring. It is derived from the word الوسم / al-wasm/, which means the marks left on the skin after cauterisation. The Bedouin use al-wasmī to refer to the rain that comes after the dry season. It is a metaphor for the effect of the rain on the land when the crops start to grow, and it reflects the obvious signs of the rain after the dry season. The translator has standardised the word and used the generic term to describe this rain as “good rains”. This retains the sense of joy and hope after the arrival of this rain, but it does not reflect the temporal aspect of this rain.

**Substitution**

Substitution is here used to describe the translation of ST concepts by using a substituted referent from the TT that performs a similar function. Concerning the topic of this research, and based on the results obtained from the data analysis, substitution was used mainly when translating linguistically specific expressions from the SC or with some culturally specific expressions, such as jokes, religious expressions, or idioms.

![Substitution Graph](image)

*Figure 3. Substitution*

Figure three shows that substitution constituted no more than 14.49% of procedures in the corpus novels except Shumisi in which it constituted approximately 27% of all procedures. Despite its fairly low frequency, this procedure was consistently found throughout the whole corpus.

An example of substitution from the data is the following idiomatic expression uttered by one of the main characters in the novel *Girls of Riyadh*:

Example Twelve (ST, p. 16; TT, p. 8)

“No, you idiot, I mean, turn to your left like the hands of a clock when it’s eleven – you will never get it, will you – you’ll never pass Gossip 101!”

The word أصول الحش / ʾuṣūl al-ḥash/ is a collocation used generally in Saudi dialects to mean the basic knowledge of gossiping. This collocation is translated as “Gossip 101”; the number 101 is a colloquial expression usually used in the university context to mean an introductory course, often with no prerequisites, and, outside the university context, it can also mean an introduction to the basics of something. It is usually combined with another word that denotes what is being introduced. The collocation “Gossip 101” performs the same function as the ST terms and is a
more accessible referent in the receptor culture. Moreover, it preserves and reflects the humour in
the original collocation.

From *The Open Door*, consider the following:
Example Thirteen (ST, p. 78; TT, p. 86)

تعبان ولاجيت تلبس وتستوجه عشان ال

“Tired – or was it just so you could come and get dressed and make yourself dandy for the
reception.”

Here, the character is mocking his friend for coming to the party by saying to him تستوجه /tīstawjāh/
which means literally “to make yourself a noble”. He means to tell him that “you come here to
us you are dressing fancy clothes just to make yourself noble”. In the translation, the expression
“make yourself dandy” has been used. What is interesting in this translation is the relevancy of
the word to TC. According to the Cambridge dictionary, the word ‘dandy’ refers to a man, especially
in the past, who dressed in expensive, fashionable clothes and was very interested in his
appearance. Connecting this historical connotation to the word could help the readers to understand
how the character is mocking the other for being an extravert and for his attempt to create this
noble image for himself.

**Borrowing**

Borrowing is a procedure used to transfer a word from the SL into the target culture. Vinay
and Darbelnet (1958/95) state that this procedure is usually used to create “a stylistic effect” for
the text and to introduce some of the source’s local style into the TC (Shuttleworth & Cowie, 1997,
p. 17). Following such a procedure will keep the SC present in the translation (Fawcett, 1997).
Borrowing has always helped to introduce many loan words into other languages, which could
become accepted over time as part of the TL.

**Figure 4. Borrowing**

As Figure four shows, most of the translators in the corpus used the procedure of borrowing, with
the highest frequency of 7.69% and the lowest of 2.33%. Although the procedure does not occur
in the dialogue in *Maryam’s Maze*, that does not mean that it is not used. A quick analysis shows
that it is present in the narrative through the borrowing of several words which were explained in
the glossary included in the novel.

A closer look at the selected novels reveals that this procedure is used more with terms
relating to clothes, cultural expressions, religious expressions, places, honorific titles, celebrations,
or public figures. The use of borrowing is consistent in the corpus; however, translators have approached it in many different ways. First, some translators include in the dialogue borrowed words with no explanation in the translation or even in a glossary. This is mainly the case in three novels: *Cities of Salt*, *Shumaisi*, and *Where Pigeons Don’t Fly*. In other novels, borrowed words are combined with other procedures or followed by an explanation to help the reader grasp the sense of the borrowed words.

Few translators mainly rely on in-text explanations, such as in Booth’s translation of *The Open Door* and in a few cases in *Girls of Riyadh*, where she adds a parallel concept in English after the borrowed word to help the reader understand the borrowed cultural terms. For example:

Example Fourteen (ST, p. 8; TT, p. 12)

"Zayy al-qamar, he’s as gorgeous as a full moon."
The expression /Zayy al-qamar/ in the above dialogue has been explained in the ST in a footnote as meaning “like a moon”, is usually used to praise someone and to comment on their beauty. As can be seen from the translation, an explanation was added in the sentence next to the borrowed word.

A similar example of this procedure of borrowing with an explanation, but where the latter is not included in the dialogue but after the quotation marks, can be found in the translation of *Dongola*:

Example Fifteen (ST, p. 99; TT, p. 68)

"My son is dead, people! Dead! Ya badailli." This meant, what a loss! “My dear Awad!”
The meaning of the Nubian expression /Ya badailli/ in the above dialogue has been explained in the ST in a footnote as meaning “what a loss”; however, in the translation, that footnote is included as an explanation after the borrowed word.

The case of *Dongola* is interesting for the variation in opting for an explanation or not. The translator varied between in-text explanation and no explanation at all, even for Nubian words that would be unfamiliar to readers of the English translation. On the other hand, in the translations of *A Dog with No Tail*, *Munira’s Bottle*, and *Zaat*, the translators choose to treat the borrowed words as a natural part of the English dialogue. They include the borrowed words in the TT, with no in-text explanation or footnote, but they do include a glossary at the end of the novel to explain all the cultural terms included in the translation. One interesting case in Calderbank’s translations is the consistent appearance of the vocative particle /Ya/lyal/, which can be considered a new and experimental addition in the target English context. For example, in *Munira’s Bottle*:

Example Sixteen (ST, p. 119; TT, p. 111)

"How am I the criminal, ya Munira?"
The two letters /Ya/lyal/ are a grammatical structure called the vocative. The vocative usually consists of two parts: the first is the vocative particle, which is /Ya/, which is followed by the second part (noun or phrase) for the one who is being addressed. It is usually used to attract someone’s attention.

**Paraphrasing**

The use of paraphrasing procedure in the context of translating dialect is the omission of the dialectal denotative meaning of the word, followed by the addition of amplification or
explanation of the connotative meaning. It has been used with culturally specific expressions or dialectal proverbs.

Figure 5. Paraphrasing

The results obtained from the preliminary analysis of paraphrasing show that it is a procedure that translators in the study preferred to use as an option to balance and not overload the text with cultural references. However, as is also the case with substitution, the procedure in most of the novels in the corpus does not exceed 15% of the overall procedures in each novel, as shown in Figure five with the lowest frequency of 4.4% in Girls of Riyadh. In Shumaisi and Dongola, dialectal cultural reference phrases are frequently naturalised and paraphrased. This is largely because, at least in these two novels, the translator tends to reflect the communicative nature of the phrase within the dialogue rather than give a literal meaning or borrow the whole phrase. The following is an example from Dongola:

Example Seventeen (ST, p. 44; TT, p. 29)

وأنا من جنيه لألف

"And I’ll give you all the money you want."

The dialectal idiomatic phrase وأنا من جنيه لألف is used in the Egyptian context in general, and in this excerpt from the dialogue in particular, to mean that the speaker will support the other man financially no matter what the amount of money needed. It means: “I am ready to give you from one pound to one thousand.” In the translation, the communicative meaning of offering financial support is rendered as “I’ll give you all the money you want”.

Paraphrasing procedures are also used with culturally specific collocations, such as in the following example from Girls of Riyadh:

Example Eighteen (ST, p. 14; TT, p. 5)

ماشاءالله. ملح وقبلة!

“Ma shaa Allah* God willing, no envy touch her, she’s so pretty.”

The collocation ملح وقبلة/milḥ wi qablah/means ‘pretty’ and ‘accepted’. This collocation is usually used in the Najdi and northern Saudi dialects to comment on the attractiveness of someone who has a charismatic character that makes people accept them. The translation captures the meaning of the collocation that relates to facial attributes since the word “pretty” means someone attractive; however, the part relating to character has been dismissed.

A final example of paraphrasing is the following idiomatic expression from The Open Door:

Example Nineteen (ST, p. 70; TT, p. 78)

مашاءالله. ملح وقبلة!

“Ma shaa Allah* God willing, no envy touch her, she’s so pretty.”

The collocation ملح وقبلة/milḥ wi qablah/means ‘pretty’ and ‘accepted’. This collocation is usually used in the Najdi and northern Saudi dialects to comment on the attractiveness of someone who has a charismatic character that makes people accept them. The translation captures the meaning of the collocation that relates to facial attributes since the word “pretty” means someone attractive; however, the part relating to character has been dismissed.

A final example of paraphrasing is the following idiomatic expression from The Open Door:

Example Nineteen (ST, p. 70; TT, p. 78)
And the goods on the lovely man. Son of a good family, a real plum, seemly and solid and reeking with money, no relatives alive to come sniffing around, don’t get potted, doesn’t smoke.”

Here are a few cases of paraphrasing concerning the traits the speaker uses to describe the potential husband. First, the expression /ībn ḥalāl/ means “legitimate”; however, it is used culturally to positively refer to someone as a “kind good person”. This is fairly paraphrased as “lovely man”.

The other expression is /wimʾtooʿ min shajarāh/, which has the literal meaning “he was cut from a tree” and is used in Egyptian culture mainly to refer to the fact that someone has no living relative, or more precisely that one or both parents have passed away and that there is no sibling or extended family. The character says this to imply that she wants to marry a man who does not have any relatives, since then she can live in peace without relatives bothering the couple or trying to create problems. The translator has explained this metaphorical expression by translating the expression to “no relatives alive to come sniffing around”.

**Literal Translation**

The literal and semi-literal translation is a procedure used to “convey the content unchanged while observing TL norms” (Shuttleworth & Cowie, 1997, p. 95); in other words, it keeps the same lexis by following TL grammar (Newmark, 1988). It can be seen, by some, as a useful way to remain close to the source expression by keeping its meaning. With the data analysis, the literal translation is used with dialectal cultural words or expressions (for example, proverbs) that have a metaphorical nature.

*Figure 6. Literal translation*

It is apparent from Figure six that literal translation is not present in all the selected data. The results show that around two-thirds of the novels in the study include literal translation with a frequency below 6%. This percentage demonstrates that translators in the corpus are not totally in favour of literal translation when it comes to translating LDD. Further analysis shows that literal translation is mostly used to translate proverbs in *The Open Door* and *Cities of Salt*.

The following is an example of a literal translation from *Munira’s Bottle*:

Example Twenty (ST, p. 74; TT, p. 32)

“ʿUshb al-ḥadīqat maʿat, manfūq al-sīl.”

“The grass in the garden is already dead, see. The rain won’t make any difference.”
This is a Najdi dialectal proverb that indicates that sometimes there is no point in responding after something has happened because it will not make any difference. Although it has a meaning based on its metaphorical nature, the expression can be guessed from the literal translation.

A literal translation may, however, sometimes fail to capture the functionalism of the expression. Ivir (1987) argues that “when the extralinguistic realities of the two cultures differ at a particular point, the literal translation of an expression will not in itself be sufficiently transparent to fill the gap” (p. 41). In other words, when there is no shared extralinguistic reality, the use of the literal translation may sound odd to the target readers and may provide an abstract expression. Here is an example from Girls of Riyadh:

Example Twenty-one (ST, p. 16; TT, p. 8)
المهم شوفي البنت هادي... أما عليها مواهب.

“Anyway, check out that girl – she’s got ‘talent’, all right!”

The word مواهب/ mawahib/ this word is street slang with a cultural connotation in Saudi Arabia. The meaning is more related to a description of a woman’s physical attributes, or what is rendered in English slang as “assets” rather than “talent”.

Another case of not fully capturing the meaning through literal translation is the following proverb from Cities of Salt:

Example Twenty-two (ST, p. 78; TT, p. 76)
الحق العيار لباب الدار.

Pursue the scoundrel to the door of his house.

This Bedouin proverb للقع العيار لباب الدار/ ʾalḥak al-ʿayar labāb eldār/ which means “follow the wicked to the door of his house” is used here to warn the people to be aware of a wicked human but at the same time to be patient to see whether the situation will end or not. In this case, the character is impatient with the Emir and he does not believe the excuse that is given to him. The character implies through this proverb that there is something not right here but that they should be patient and wait to see where this is going to take them. This is not clearly captured through the semi-literal meaning of the proverb.

Understanding the elements of the dialectal expression is important for clearing up any pragmalinguistic misunderstanding when rendering the literal meaning of the words. As these expressions have a metaphorical nature, the denotative meaning of the ST words should be considered when deciding which synonym to choose to avoid any loss of meaning and awkwardness in the context.

**Omission**

There are cases where translators omit a dialectal word or expression without compensation. This procedure has been used with some of the dialectal words in sentences within the dialogue.
Figure 7. Omission

Figure seven shows that omission is not present in almost half of the data. The frequency is lower than that of other procedures, with the highest frequency of 8.6% in *Where Pigeons Don’t Fly* and the lowest of 0.2% in *The Open Door*. In *Where Pigeons Don’t Fly* the omission is surprisingly not limited to sentences, as in other novels; instead, the translator chose to omit an entire song that a character was chanting in dialogue as well as a few dialectal conversations. The following example presents such omission from the translation of *Where Pigeons Don’t Fly*: dialectal conversations at the end of chapter three, where there is introductory information about why the father of the main character Fahd has been jailed and how that has affected his family, particularly his sisters, have been omitted:

Example Twenty-three (ST, p. 3; TT, p. omitted)

![Figure 7. Omission](image)

In this conversation, the narrator talks about how life has been harsh on the family of Fahd’s father because of his involvement in the seizure of the Grand Mosque led by Juhayman in 1979, which was a turning point in Saudi history that resulted in the *Sahwa* movement taking control. The above dialogue hints at how the people in Saudi Arabia have regarded and reacted to this event, and how it not only affected the father who is in jail but also brought shame to his family. The dialectal conversation is between Fahd’s grandmother and a lady whose son is engaged to Fahd’s aunt. After the incident, she visits the family to tell them that they will call off the wedding because “we didn’t know that your son is in jail!” The grandmother firmly replies, “he was imprisoned in a political issue, not an issue related to morality, honour, or religion!” The grandmother gives a strict instructions to the woman to tell everyone this, saying that “the house of Saflawy’s family is the house of honour and manhood”. The frustration of the grandmother in these sentences indicates her realisation of how stigma will be attached to her and her house because of her son, and how she should be firm about it. Although this is a brief conversation, this detail shows how the family of anyone involved in the event will be judged by society. The strict character of the grandmother and how she firmly deals with this scandal are not shown in the translation here or later.
Another example of omission occurs in *Maryam’s Maze*:

Example Twenty-four (ST, p. 20; TT, p. 10)

صرخت رضوى فردت عليها المرأة:

"أحمدي رينا أنني ساكته عليك. دا أنا قانية في بيتى مرة. دى جزاتي إني مافضحكتكش؟"  

وقضت الجملة على مريم كالصاعقة خاصة مع تصاعد المرأة وهو يسرد تفاصيل علاقات رضوى بآخرين..  

“You should thank God that I’ve kept quiet about you,” replied the woman. “Is this my reward for not exposing you?”

This last sentence struck Maryam like a thunderbolt, especially when the woman’s voice got even louder, and she started reeling off the details of Radwa’s relationships with other people… The translator has omitted the second sentence in the conversation 

دا آنا قانية في بيتى مرة /da ʾana qaniā fī bītī marah/ which means “I keep in my house a prostitute”. The owner of the house describes Radwa as مرة /marah/ which according to an explanation by a native speaker, is used in Egypt, especially in the local context of Cairo, as an extremely strong insult to a woman to indicate that she has had multiple relationships or to imply that she is not a virgin. In the ST, this is what might shock Maryam, as the word is strong and scandalous in the Egyptian context of the novel. Although it can be guessed from the translation that there has been a scandalous conversation, the strong insult itself has been omitted.

A final example of omission at the word level is from *Cities of Salt*:

**Addition and Explicitation**

The addition in the corpus involves either adding new information that was not in the LDD in the ST or adding syntactic additions that explicate the implicit information in the LDD which is obvious to the ST readers but not to the TT readers.

*Figure 8. Addition*

The addition of new information not in the ST occurs in six of the ten novels, as shown in from Figure eight, with a frequency that does not exceed 3.5%. It is used in some cases to add emphasis to the translation, such as in the following example from *Girls of Riyadh*:

Example Twenty-five (ST, p. 14; TT, p. 6)

أحلى من العروس بكثير! تصدقين أنا سمعت أن الرسول دعا للشينة؟  

She’s a good deal prettier than the bride. Can you believe it, I heard that Prophet Mohammed used to send up prayers for the unlovely ones!

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In this example, the translator has added the expression “a good deal” to emphasise the attractive traits of the girl compared to the bride. The idiom is an American spoken expression that is used when the speaker thinks something is good. The superlative statement is in the original; however, the expression has been added in the TT for emphasis. However, according to an American English speaker, this expression seems unusual to be used by a person, since it is usually used with objects.

In other cases, new information, not present in the ST, is added to the sentence in the TT for reasons either of characterisation or censorship. In the following example from A Dog with No Tail, the curse word has been omitted from the ST sentence /Hamdi alʿabīṭ bīʾwlak ... ʾumak/ which means “fool Hamdi says … your mother”. The omission could be because of censorship, at the publisher’s request, or because the author felt the readers would get the curse without openly voicing it in the written text. However, the removed curse in the ST can be guessed by readers from the sentence, as the following example shows:
Example Twenty-six (ST, p. 29; TT, p. 22)

\[\text{Hamdi the Fool says to you, “Your mother’s cunt.”}\]

In the TT, the translator has decided to complete the sentence and make the curse obvious to the readers. The word “cunt” has been added. The offense becomes visible in the translation, unlike in the ST.

Figure 9. Explicitation
Besides the addition of new information, Explicitation is also used to introduce new information in the TT that is implicit in the ST (Vinay and Darbelnet, 1958/95). Figures eight and nine reveal markedly lower rates of addition and explication compared to other procedures applied in the translations.

As an example of clarifying new information to explicitate what is implicit in ST, consider
Example Twenty-seven (ST, p. 73; TT, p. 82)

\[\text{“When’s the big day, God willing.”}\]

Here the aunt is asking her nephew when they should plan to set a date for his sister’s wedding by saying /wanīatū ʾamtaa ʾin shāʾ Allāh/. She does not ask the question directly; instead, her question means “when are you having the intention, God willing”. In the Egyptian or general Arab cultural context, particularly in Islamic families, it is usual to attach the word
“intention” نويتوا /nīatū/, which here refers to the wedding with the willing of God. This is mainly in the hope that God will bless the act. The word “wedding” is not mentioned in the conversation, and the aunt mainly asks this question to shift the conversation. In the TT, the translator makes this implicit information about the date of the wedding explicitate to the readers by adding the expression ‘the big day’ that refers to weddings.

Another example comes from Dongola:
Example Twenty-eight (ST, p. 33; TT, p. 20)
“Leave him alone – he’s just a stupid Zamalek supporter. All the servants are for Zamalek.”

In this example, the character is trying to make fun of the other person by saying he is a Zamālkāwi /Zamālkāwi/, which means he is a supporter of the Al Zamālk football team, the rivals of his team. Zamālk or calling someone Zamālkāwi can be used either to refer to an area in Cairo or to the famous Egyptian football team. As the fact that he is talking about a football team is implicit in the ST, the translator has added the word “supporter” to make this explicit for TT readers.

**Peritexts and Dialects**

Peritexts are the other texts supplied by the translator to give the reader more information about the text or the cultural and historical references in the text. Genette (1997) describes peritexts as “liminal devices and conventions, both within and outside the book, that form part of the complex mediation between book, author, publisher and reader: titles, forewords, epigraphs and publishers’ jacket copy are part of a book’s private and public history” (p. xvii). Paratextual intervention is an important aspect of translation in general and in studying the translation of dialogue it is frequently “metatranslational in nature, reflecting on the problems of translation in the text in question” (Hermans, 2014, p. 287). Pym (2011) argues that studying peritexts “can reveal a great deal about the social context in which translations are carried out, especially concerning target audiences” (p. 87). The paratextual presence in the data has been examined to indicate if the dialect was presented in these paratextual procedures or not. It was found that paratextual data varies between translators. Paratext in the selected novels is presented through three types of peritext: translator’s introduction/note; glossary; and footnotes.

**Translator’s Introduction/note**

A translator’s introduction or note is usually at the beginning or the end of the translated work. It provides background information about the author, the book itself, and the translator’s reflections on the plot, the writing style, and/or comments about any other challenges or obstacles they faced when translating the text into the TL, including the language of the ST. Of the ten novels in the corpus, only four include an introduction or note.

Table 1. Translator’s introduction/note

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Translator’s introduction</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>1- Open Door</th>
<th>2- Zaat</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Translator’s note</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Maryam’s Maze</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Author’s note</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Girls of Riyadh</td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>
Of the four, two give a detailed description of the language and varieties in the ST and how these were translated. The translator’s introduction to the *Open Door*, for example, provides introductory information about the LDD and explains how this issue was tackled in the text. The introduction gives the historical background to the debate around LDD in Egypt and positions the novel within the second wave of writing LDD in Egypt. It also explains the feminist implications behind the linguistic choices in the dialogue of the heroine, and it offers a brief analysis of the code-switching in the characters’ speech. The translator repeatedly refers to the LDD as colloquial. Another introduction that mentions the language is found in *Zaat*, where the translator comments on the dialectal nature of the dialogue, referring to it as Arabic but without being more specific. The translator presents an interesting discussion about the title, and he explains how he translated the title according to the dialectal phonetic sound of the words rather than to the actual writing of the name or the written form of the ST. Interestingly, the introduction in *Girls of Riyadh* is written by the original author Rajaa Alsanea, who is identified on the cover as a co-translator. Alsanea (2007) comments on the process of dealing with dialects in the translation:

> in my Arabic version of the novel I interspersed the classical Arabic with language that reflects the mongrel Arabic of the modern world – there was Saudi dialect (several of them), and Lebanese-Arabic, English-Arabic, and more. As none of that would make sense to the non-Arab reader, I had to modify the original text somewhat. (p. viii)

This comment is meant to give background information to the readers of the English translation and explain the translation procedures that have been done to the published translation.

**Glossary**

Translators usually include a glossary to supply more information about some content in the text; typically, this is placed at the end of the translation. The information explains some of the borrowed words, as well as certain names or historical incidents in the text. In the chosen corpus, this procedure was used in five novels: *A Dog with No Tail*, *Munira’s Bottle*, *Zaat*, *Girls of Riyadh*, and *Maryam’s Maze*. Glossaries are presented in two different ways. Starkey, Moger, and Calderbank, in their translations, use glossaries as a way to explain the borrowed and culturally specific words that they include within the text. These words are not necessarily all dialectal words, but some. The following is an example from the glossary of *Zaat* that explains the dialectal honorific title used in the dialogue:

**Example Twenty-nine (TT, p. 349)**

> “Sitt: women, old woman, grandmother. Sitti means ‘my sitt’ and implies some respect or affection.”

A similar case occurs in the glossary to *A Dog with No Tail*, which also includes dialectal words used in the dialogue of the novel, such as amm, bashmuhandis, and Maillium:

**Example Thirty (TT, p. 151)**

> “bashmuhandis: a conflation of ‘bash’ (Turkish, meaning head or chief) and ‘muhandis’ (Arabic, literally engineer) though in the novel it denotes not a narrow technical qualification but is a semiformal designation of rank indicating high social status. It is also used in general conversation to indicate respect or to ingratiatate.”

Booth and Al Sanea, on the other hand, use the glossary in *Girls of Riyadh* to explain the cultural implications of the surnames of the novel’s characters or to explain the name of the online group that the author has used to send her emails. It is not used to explain LDD words.
Footnotes

Footnotes are the least-used of all the peritexts in the translations. Even when there is a footnote in ST to explain dialectal terms, the translator sometimes tries to incorporate it as an explanation within the text itself. Footnotes are present only in Shumaisi and Girls of Riyadh. The footnote procedure is used particularly in Girls of Riyadh to explain the dialectal borrowed words from the ST. For example, within the text the translators have borrowed the word ‘E wallah’ (p. 6), about which they then give more information in a footnote:
Example Thirty-one (TT, p. 6)
“*E wallah means swearing in God’s name that something is true.”

Speech and Sound Representation

In a few translations, the translators use a number of compensation procedures that are not necessary for translating LDD, but which give a sense of conversational style that is usually already in the ST. Below, I give a general idea of how these are used in the translations.

Sound Imitation

Sound imitation is present in a few novels to imitate a conversational style. For example, in Munira’s Bottle the main character gasps when a familiar song is suddenly played on the stereo:
Example Thirty-two (ST, p. 115; TT, p. 98)

يالله .. تصدّق؟

Allah, is a borrowed word, mainly meaning “God”, but the character uses it to evoke nostalgia and to reminisce over a past event. The translator tries to capture this by adding a triple ‘aaa’, which could imitate the character’s sound intonation as she recalls the memories that had been awakened by the song.

Another example of imitating the sound intonation comes from Girls of Riyadh:
Example Thirty-three (ST, p. 49; TT, p. 43)

وبعدين معك يالميس؟ مو كفاية اللي سويتيه ا لأسبوع الماضي لما رفضتي تِعلمينا مين البنت اللي حطت الحبر الأحمر على كرسي الأبلة في الفصل؟

“So, Lamees, what are we going to do with you? Isn’t it enough, what you did last week, when you wouldn’t tell me which girl it was who put the red ink on the teacher’s chair in the class?” The ‘o’ at the end of the word “so” is tripled to reflect the angry and threatening sound intonation of the school principal.

Emphasis and Emphatic Devices

Representation of the conversational style of the dialogue is also occasionally achieved through non-orthographic features such as ellipses, exclamation marks, and dashes in most of the examined novels.

As for ellipsis, it is already in the ST and is reflected in the translation or removed from it and replaced. In some cases, it is used in STs to reflect pauses and incomplete sentences, such as in this example from The Open Door:
Example Thirty-four (ST, p. 3; TT, p. 6)

“Mama… Mama.”
However, sometimes the speech representation changes through the translation process: either the ellipsis is omitted, as is usually the case in *Shumaisi*, *Cities of Salt*, and *Dongola*, or it is changed to another emphatic device such as exclamation.

There is also a tendency in *The Open Door* to replace dots with a dash in the TT:

Example Thirty-five (ST, p. 76; TT, p. 84)

والناس مالها ومالنا ياعصام؟ أنا مش فاهمه حاجه، مش فاهمه حاجه خالص و...

“People – what have they got to do with it, or with us? No, I don’t understand anything, Isam, nothing at all, and –”

Overall, the use of these non-orthographic features varies between novels and their translations. To some extent, these devices have been reduced in the translations. It is not clear what triggers the three options of keeping, adding, or removing emphatic devices, especially with ellipses. This might be attributable to stylistic preferences in the translation.

To sum up, the data analysis shows that translators did not use a target dialect to translate a source dialect but used a variety of procedures to deal with LDD in the context. As previously demonstrated, the most common procedures found in almost all translations of the novels in the corpus include the use of marked form, standardisation, borrowing, substitution, and paraphrasing. Then comes the semi-frequent procedures that do not reach a high percentage in the novels and are found in only half of the novels, such as semi-literal translation, omission, addition, explication, and paratextual procedures. The data show that the same procedures were used in the translation of the novels regardless of the source dialect.

**Discussion**

The primary question of this project was to identify how translators deal with LDD in the translation of Saudi and Egyptian novels. The descriptive quantitative and qualitative textual analysis indicates regularities of behaviour across the translators. Overall, the analysis of the data shows that the translators for Saudi and Egyptian novels did not follow solely the previously suggested procedures to deal with LDD in the text which are using pseudo-dialect translation (Hatim & Mason, 1990) parallel dialect translation (Sánchez, 1999b) dialect compilation (Perteghella, 2012) or Standardisation Leppihalme (2000). In detail, they have opted for various procedures rather than choosing a single solution to deal with the problem, and none of the translators rendered the source dialect into a target dialect. Interestingly, however, translators do not tend to standardise or erase the conversational elements of dialogue; on the contrary, they recognise the conversational aspect and try to adhere in general to that in their translations. In fact, their procedure is one of compensation rather than a translation of the dialect. Regarding the second question investigates if the translation procedures shift with changes in dialect? the data analysis shows that fairly similar varieties of procedures were used to translate the different regional and social dialects in all the previous examples from the STs. Translators also seem to use the same procedures with dialects that co-exist in the same novel, and this shift is not always hinted at in the dialogue. One of the few attempts is in *Shumaisi* where, before the relevant sentences, the translator writes the name of the different dialect that is spoken by the Sudanese character.
The quantitative analysis shows that some procedures are more frequent than others in the translation of LDD. The most frequent categories, which are present in almost all the novels, are: using marked writing style, standardisation, substitution, borrowing, and paraphrasing. It seems that the translators in the corpus concentrate on reproducing the intention behind the use of dialect in the ST (Määttä, 2004). This is clear in the data through the translators’ focus on retaining the different layers of the structure of the novels and, in particular, on producing an informal conversational style for the dialogue while to some extent preserving the formality, to some extent, of the narrative. At the same time, the translators keep the Arabic present in the TTs and make it clear that the text is a translation by borrowing Arabic words in the dialogue and the text in general.

In considering the changes that LDD went through in the translation, the question arises of whether or not translators have the intention to adapt the LDD novels to certain poetics. The findings from the descriptive textual analysis suggest that the rewriting of LDD in the TTs is, to some extent, influenced by poetics and the universe of discourse of the TT (Lefevere, 1992b). The translators aim to produce mainly an informal conversational writing style to adhere to the general principle of the English literary system about writing informal dialogue in novels. Consequently, the translations present a reading experience that might to some extent adapt it to the TT literary productions. The LDD has changed in the translation process to become literary informal dialogue (LID).

Analysing the data within Toury’s (1995) norm framework reveals that the regularities of behaviour across the translators’ work, particularly in rewriting the LDD into informal conversational style (LID), indicates certain norms that these translators follow in relation to the translation of Saudi and Egyptian novels. It seems the regularities of behaviour have been developed to adjust the novel to the TL’s literary presentation, where it is acceptable to use a marked writing style in the dialogue of novels. The frequency of the marked writing style indicates that translators are situating LDD in the conversational sphere, so they draw on the informality of spoken elements of the dialect in the translation. However, the textual analysis is still limited and not enough to confirm if translators are following a norm. Thus, as suggested by Toury (1995) and Brownlie (2003), combining the descriptive analysis with interviews with all translators would help to examine if there is a translational norm in the case of translating LDD in Saudi and Egyptian novels. Hearing from the translators themselves will help to understand how the rewriting might be influenced by the role of patronage and what role ideology plays in the process.

Moreover, the question arises of whether, if we look more deeply than at these external results and investigate the practice of the individual translator’s style within these regularities of behaviour, an in-depth analysis of several works by the same translators can reveal variations and particularities related to individual practices? This question is especially relevant where there is, as shown in the previous analysis, an indication of variation in the application of certain procedures, such as in a translator’s use of borrowing.

A final and important limitation of this paper was related to the representativeness of the data. The selection of and the comparative data acquired by analysing the works of the translators have been used to provide an understanding of translation procedures in the translation of the work of Saudi and Egyptian novels. However, that does not guarantee representativeness, and the limited availability of the translations and the differences in the size of the corpora still means that there is a need for improvement. An element of subjectivity was inevitable in the layers of research, especially as relates to the classification of the categories. As a result, the findings of this research
should be treated as probabilistic and cannot be generalised. The detailed description of the mixed methods in the data analysis will hopefully open the door to further investigation and an alternative interpretation of the study of the translation for Literary Dialectal Dialogue (LDD).

**Conclusion**

This paper has discussed the procedures carried out by translators to deal with translating Literary Dialectal Dialogue (LDD) in the English translations of contemporary Saudi and Egyptian novels. It provided a quantitative and qualitative analysis of the data from the selected novels, with relevant examples. The paper ended by suggesting that due to the change in language communities, LDD has changed in translation to become Literary Informal Dialogue (LID). The data also show that in practice none of the translators transferred the source dialect into a target dialect. Interestingly, however, the translators do not tend to standardise or delete the conversational elements of the dialogue. On the contrary, they acknowledge the conversational aspect and generally try to retain it in their translations. Their approach is more of compensation than a translation of the dialect. In translating the different regional and social dialects, quite similar procedures were followed in all the selected STs.

**Note:** * This article is based on the author’s Ph.D. thesis (Almutairi, 2019) that was conducted in the Department of Translation at the University of Manchester.

**About the Author:**

Dr Eman Suraid Almutairi is a lecturer in translation studies at the University of Jeddah. She got her Ph.D. degree in translation and intercultural studies from the University of Manchester. Research interests include literary translation studies, translating dialects, descriptive translation studies, translation technology, and localisation.

**ORCID ID:** [https://orcid.org/0000-0001-5768-2469](https://orcid.org/0000-0001-5768-2469)

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