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## THE CHALLENGES OF USING MACHINE TRANSLATION IN RENDERING ARABIC TEXTS INTO ENGLISH: AN APPLIED PERSPECTIVE

### 1 INTRODUCTION

Between the 1970s and 1990s, translation studies emerged in diverse forms and paradigms, sparking significant debate regarding the significance of translation as an interdisciplinary construct that intersects with various academic disciplines. Translation studies adopt a multidisciplinary approach, integrating linguistic theory, descriptive theory, equivalence-based theory, poly-systems theory, and Skopos theory, among others. The primary objective of many of these theories and translation strategies is to explore how a source language (SL) text is transformed into a target language (TL) text, whether by retaining the SL's words verbatim or by what Jeremy Munday refers to as a "sense-for-sense" rendering (Munday 2000). Within this framework, many scholars argue that a strictly literal, word-for-word translation neglects the sensibilities and nuances of the intended target readership.

Undoubtedly, a literal, word-for-word translation method often compels translators to invent new vocabulary or resort to transliteration when rendering SL texts that lack equivalence in the TL. However, employing this method frequently results in errors in terms of form and content. Willis Barnstone highlighted the duality of language, stating that it comprises two elements – words and meanings – likened to body and soul (Barnstone 1993). He noted that if both elements can be conveyed accurately, a word-for-word translation may be acceptable. However, if this is not achievable, insisting on preserving the words while deviating from their intended meaning would be illogical (Barnstone 1993: 52).

Due to the limitations of the word-for-word method, most scholars tend to prefer the "sense-for-sense" approach, and specifically in the translation of colloquial language. This method considers the needs of the readers and aims to convey the essence or intended meaning of the text. Likewise, scholars often advocate for equivalence-based theory over other translation theories, emphasizing the importance of maintaining the essence and meaning of the original text over a literal adherence to its words.

According to Christiane Nord, the idea of equivalence between source text and target language units has long been considered an essential benchmark that was rarely challenged (Nord 2010:2). However, translation experts have often scrutinized the concept of equivalence, considering it as one of the most problematic aspects in the field of translation. Accordingly, equivalence is often defined as reproducing the same situation as in the original, while using completely different wording. Despite the challenges and debates surrounding equivalence, theorists and researchers continue to emphasize its significance in the translation process, with Werner Koller introducing the following five types of equivalence that form the basis of the translation process (Koller 1995):

- Denotative equivalence, which relates to the “extra-linguistic content of a text”.
- Stylistic or connotative equivalence, concerning the “lexical choices between near synonyms”.
- Normative text equivalence, addressing different types of texts that “behave in different ways”.
- Communicative or pragmatic equivalence, linked to the target text’s communicative function.
- Expressive or formal equivalence, associated with the formal aspects and aesthetics of texts (cited in Munday 2000: 47).

These various types of equivalence serve as guiding principles, highlighting the different facets and complexities involved in achieving parity between source text and its translated counterpart.

There is no doubt that the differences between English and Arabic languages across linguistic, syntactic, semantic, lexical, structural, pragmatic, contextual, and cultural dimensions pose significant challenges in achieving suitable equivalences, and particularly in the translation of colloquial expressions. For instance, if the equivalence in the TL accurately captures the contextual meaning of the SL text without distorting the cultural context, it becomes feasible to establish linguistic equivalences.

Further, the contextual theory of translation centres on translating SL texts into TL texts using a “sense-for-sense” approach. For the sake of using this method effectively in the translation of Arabic to English, and vice versa, translators should work on analysing the focal text’s context, encompassing its various components. Mona Baker underscores the pivotal role of context in translation, suggesting that words stripped of their context may lose coherence and meaning. Consequently, she extensively studied the “study of context” and identified three types of contextual contrasts. In the first, context is perceived as an abstract cognitive construct within the mind rather than a collection of real-world entities guiding social interactions. The second contextual perspective contrasts static elements with dynamic elements, while the third examines a neutral approach versus a power-sensitive approach (cited in Melby and Foster 2010:2). These contextual contrasts provide a framework for understanding the multifaceted nature of context and

its implications for translation, aiding translators in navigating the complexities inherent in the translation into English of both modern standard Arabic (MSA) and Arabic colloquial dialects.

In a similar vein, Itamar Even-Zohar introduced the poly-systems theory as a dynamic concept, which aims at addressing the complex interplay between culture and language (Even-Zohar 1978). Influenced by Russian Formalism, which viewed literature as an integral part of various social, cultural, literary, and historical frameworks, he categorized literature as a system intersecting with other systems, including social, political, economic, historical, religious, and ideological contexts. Munday highlights Even-Zohar's view that "the position occupied by translated literature in the poly-system conditions the translation strategy" (Munday 2000: 110). This theory firmly integrates literature within broader domains encompassing socio-economic, cultural, ideological, and political orientations.

While some scholars commend the above-mentioned theory for linking literature with multiple disciplines, others criticize it for its association with the old-fashioned formalist model and reliance on abstract paradigms rather than realistic constraints faced by the text and translator. In response to such critiques, Gideon Toury advocated a descriptive approach to translation, aiming to replace prevailing studies and isolated theories (Toury 1995). Toury proposed the development of "a properly systematic descriptive branch of the discipline" that does not focus on the translation product alone, but also considers the act of translation itself as a text-generating activity. He emphasizes that translation, as an activity, may vary in its position within the host culture concerning factors such as centrality, prevalence, prestige, and peripherality (Toury 1995:13). This perspective highlights the importance of considering translation not only as a product but also as a process within cultural and societal frameworks.

Further, the descriptive approach, as highlighted by Theo Hermans, focuses on exploring the "historic poetics and the role of translation" (Hermans 2009: 94). This method, praised by Munday, engages with "literary tendencies within the target cultural system" during the translation process (Munday 2000:117). However, critics of this approach argue that it overlooks or sidelines the political, ideological, and religious elements embedded in the text. Concurrently, functional approaches to translation emerged, exemplified by Skopos theory in particular. This approach prioritizes understanding the intentions of the individual or group who commissioned the translation, rather than focusing on the translation's quality.

While the descriptive approach, according to Peter Newmark, is primarily concerned with objectively analysing published translations without relating them to any specific standards of quality or moral value (Newmark 2007: 4), the functional approach, as outlined by Hermans, concentrates on questions related to who translated the text, for whom, when, where, how, and why (Hermans 2009: 95). This illustrates a shift in emphasis from

the translation product to the intentions, circumstances, and needs surrounding the act of translation.

In a similar context, Behrouz Karoubi categorized translation theories into two types: functional and non-functional. Functional theories are associated with the target text and readership, prioritizing communicative concerns. Conversely, non-functional theories focus on the author's intentions, giving weight to considerations of linguistic equivalence. These categorizations delineate the differing emphases and perspectives inherent in translation theories, accentuating either the practical communicative aspects or the linguistic equivalence elements (Karoubi 2003).

Further, there have also been advances in research on interpretation termed as the "cognitive study of translation" serving specific purposes (Alves and Albir 2010: 28). This approach incorporates linguistic and psycholinguistic factors, as well as artificial intelligence, to create a dynamic framework known as "systemic-functional linguistics" (Alves and Albir 2010: 29). It relies on a model that necessitates both short- and long-term memories for decoding source language input and encoding target language output. However, its application in the translation of colloquial dialects has faced significant challenges due to technical limitations, which are beyond the scope of this paper to discuss.

Regarding ideological translation approaches, the integration of ideology into translation has been a longstanding aspect of translation activities. André Lefevere argues that language is not the primary element in translation, and emphasizes that the crucial factors are "ideology first, followed by poetics, with language being of secondary importance" (cited in Hermans 2009: 95). Lefevere highlights the influence of the translator's ideology and the ideology imposed by sponsoring agencies on the translation process. This underscores the profound impact that ideological perspectives can have on the translation process, often superseding linguistic considerations in some instances (Lefevere 1992).

Ideology fundamentally constitutes a framework of ideas that underpin political and economic theories. In the realm of translation, Munday illustrates the inherent connection between ideology and politics (Munday 2000: 2). Conversely, researchers such as Van Dijk portrayed ideology negatively, defining it as a structure encompassing "wrong, false, distorted, or otherwise misguided beliefs" (Van Dijk 1998). Nevertheless, numerous researchers view translation as an inherently political endeavour. According to Karoubi, translation involves negotiation among various entities, including the translator, author, publisher, and other agents, reflecting its political nature.

The ideological theory of translation notably manifests in different contexts, particularly in postcolonial and feminist approaches. For instance, feminist translation seeks to manipulate language to underscore issues pertinent to the women's community. In this regard, feminist translators approach translation as an ideological endeavour. Despite its inherent bias, some scholars laud the ideological approach, with Suzanne Levine arguing

that “translation should be a critical act creating doubt, posing questions to the reader, re-contextualizing the ideology of the original text” (cited in Munday 2000: 153).

For example, during the translation of Arabic literature into English, and vice versa, translators may at times introduce modifications for ideological reasons, potentially leading to a distortion of the original text in the SL. This transformation in the TL might be a result of intentional ideological intervention, aimed at aligning the translated text with specific ideological beliefs or principles.

The act of intervention by translators does indeed challenge translational ethics, which emphasize fidelity and impartiality. However, it is widely acknowledged that all translation involves some level of intervention by the translator, driven by various motives. These interventions may include paraphrasing, omitting, adding, incorporating footnotes, and other modifications, unavailable with machine translation. Anthony Pym warns that literary translators should approach these interventions cautiously, as they can have significant consequences (Pym 2015). Nevertheless, some researchers argue that interventions are inevitable, and they perceive translation as an act where an SL text is transformed and given a new voice. In this context, the translator acts as a re-enunciator whose intervention in the text becomes unavoidable. This perspective suggests that translators inevitably impose their subjectivity onto the translated text (Hermans 2009: 97). However, the translator’s role as a re-enunciator raises important questions regarding fidelity, transparency, accountability, and the nature of intervention. It prompts discussions about the extent to which the translator’s intervention might impact the authenticity and integrity of the translated work, and how much subjectivity should be permissible in the translation process while maintaining faithfulness to the original text.

Juliane House defines intervention in translation as “a manipulation of the source text beyond what is linguistically necessary” (House 2008: 16). She argues that intervention could be acceptable if it does not violate translational ethics, explaining that intervention could serve as a “cultural filter” or form of “localization”, a method used as “a means of fulfilling the expectations of the recipients of the translation”. She elaborates further, emphasizing that there have been instances where it was not guaranteed that the target readers would accept a text that distorted the meaning of the SL message. House highlights that manipulation or intervention for ideological, socio-political, or ethical reasons could be risky, and raises the questions of who is able to judge the desirability of specific interventions and whether the recipients of a translation would prefer an equivalent source text instead. She points out the difficulty in justifying well-intentioned alterations to a text made under the guise of feminist or post-colonialist thinking from potentially biased chauvinistic or imperialist interventions, concluding that such judgments are complex and challenging (House 2008: 16). This underscores the ethical dilemmas and complexities surrounding the translator’s role in making interventions within the translation process.

Moreover, House suggests that while intervention can be acceptable when handled responsibly, in many cases it might be wiser to refrain from doing so altogether (House 2008: 16). This cautious approach stems from the recognition of the substantial differences between texts on various levels, including lexical, linguistic, cultural, structural, semantic, and syntactic. In the translation of colloquial structures, which are very common in MSA texts, pragmatic intervention becomes unavoidable for aesthetic reasons due to these differences. Intervention in translation, which involves tasks like paraphrasing, omitting, or adding footnotes, can thus be beneficial, particularly when aimed at improving readability or conveying nuanced meanings. However, intervention driven solely by the ideological biases of the translator, publisher, or sponsor can have significant consequences, ultimately violating the ethics of translation.

Moreover, in recent years new translation methods have emerged, such as the feminist approach, sparking considerable controversy. The feminist approach, highlighted by Hermans, has drawn attention for its use of language to advocate on behalf of women (Hermans 2009:100). This approach challenges established norms and has brought forth discussions on the role of language in representing gender and societal perspectives within translated works. Critics have asserted that feminist translators purposefully use translation as a tool for ideological aims, aiming to introduce ambiguity and challenge established representations of women in historical contexts. Sherry Simon highlighted that the translation of feminist texts, with the intention of advocating feminist perspectives, serves as a cultural intervention striving to generate new cultural meanings and incite social change (Simon 1996). She characterized her translation as a political endeavour aimed at empowering language to represent women, and explained that her signature on a translation signifies that every translation strategy was employed to render the feminine visible in language (cited in Munday 2000: 132).

Additionally, Suzanne Levine emphasized that a translation should function as a critical act, inducing uncertainty, posing queries to the reader, and re-contextualizing the ideology present in the original text (Levine 2009). The feminist translator highlights a parallel between the status of translation and other original forms of writing, drawing a comparison with the status of women, often repressed in both society and literature. These perspectives underscore the feminist translator's intention to challenge established norms, prompt reflection, and reshape language to address gender representation and societal roles.

Feminists certainly utilize translation as a tool to express and promote their ideological viewpoints (Munday 2000:131), while anti-feminist writers have criticized this on the grounds of hypocrisy, since such feminists often denounce others who carry out interventions and manipulations of the translation process aimed solely at realizing their ideological goals (Hermans 2009:101).

Likewise, postcolonial translation operates on an ideological foundation. This approach acknowledges and addresses the power imbalances between the ex-colonizers and

ex-colonized (Munday 2000: 133). Both feminist and postcolonial translation approaches share a common interest in issues of social inclusion and exclusion (Hermans 2009:101). The connection between translation and colonization lies in the belief that translation has played a significant role in the colonization process by disseminating an ideologically motivated image of the colonized people (Hermans 2009:134). These approaches reflect a critical examination of the historical and power dynamics involved in translation practices within sociopolitical contexts.

During the pre-colonial and colonial periods, translators from colonizing nations often interpreted the literature and culture of colonized peoples in ways that served the consciences of the colonizers and validated colonization. Regrettably, these translations thus failed to accurately represent the culture and identity of the colonized peoples. Conversely, translators from former colonies, when translating texts penned by former colonizers, might modify or otherwise distort these works to suit the preferences and needs of their local readers in the post-colonial era. Consequently, these translations may not authentically depict the positive aspects of the culture of the ex-colonizers.

Tejaswini Niranjana, an Indian scholar, advocated a post-colonial translation approach that is “speculative, provisional, and interventionist” (cited in Munday 2000: 135). This suggests a method that questions established norms, remains open to new interpretations, and intervenes in the translation process to challenge existing power dynamics and colonial legacies (Niranjana 1992). It aims to offer alternative perspectives and representations that better resonate with the cultural and social context of the post-colonial era. Explicitly, the postcolonial approach to translation grapples with the concept of “hybridity”, signifying the state of displacement associated with migration, transformation, re-inscription, and an in-between existence (Hermans 2009:102). Specifically, postcolonial translators encounter challenges due to the conflict between various local languages and the predominant master language of their postcolonial world, such as English (Munday 2000:135). Translators, as Munday suggests, operate within the liminal space “between” different countries, representing both emigrants like Salman Rushdie and those who remain within the complex tapestry of their native “site” – a situation termed as the “locational disruptor”.

In this context, translation goes beyond a mere verbal transaction, as it involves the transfer of territories into different ideological frameworks, essentially overwriting one system of thought with another (Munday 2000:135). Consequently, postcolonial translation constantly involves intervention as it navigates these intricate cultural and linguistic terrains. Translation has thus evolved beyond the straightforward transference of messages from an SL text to a TL. Recent developments at the crossroads of translation and various disciplines have introduced new paralinguistic features that influence a translator’s decision-making process regarding their translation strategy. This decision-making procedure, especially in the realm of literary translations, encompasses multiple dimensions.



The colloquial dialects and slang integral to modern literary texts, combined with other culturally specific elements, significantly complicate the translation process. Translators assume the role of intercultural agents, striving to reconcile two distinct cultures and bridge the gaps between them. Negotiating these cultural nuances and maintaining fidelity to the SL literary work poses a considerable challenge for translators, particularly those who use machine translation in rendering Arabic to English, and vice versa.

## **2 THE CHALLENGES OF USING MACHINE TRANSLATION IN RENDERING MSA ARABIC TO ENGLISH**

Translation involves bilingual communication, guiding texts across linguistic and cultural barriers. It is the process of conveying concepts and ideas from one language to another, and from one cultural context to another. As such, it demands considerable expertise and reliable techniques to produce a rendition that preserves the essence of the SL while adapting to the TL. In the realm of modern translation theories, it can be argued that the translation of Arabic texts into English, and vice versa is a complex endeavour, necessitating diverse strategies, methodologies, and diligent effort. Many of the inaccuracies in Arabic-to-English translation, and vice versa, that are associated with machine translation stem from the differences between the two languages across linguistic, lexical, stylistic, semantic, syntactic, cultural, and pragmatic dimensions. Machine translation frequently encounters challenges in rendering into English not only MSA, but also Arabic vernacular expressions, and thus fails to properly translate slang, colloquial texts, folklore items, and elements from popular culture.

The Arabic language includes different layers of language constructs. The most famous and well-established form of Arabic is modern standard Arabic (MSA). This variety of Arabic is the predominant language developed in the Arab world in the late nineteenth century and into the twentieth. MSA has two similar versions in spoken and written forms, and it is used in print, literature, academia, mass media, legislation, and formal education in the Arab world. It is different from Classical Arabic used prior to the mid-nineteenth century, and is also distinguished from Arabic colloquial dialects, including the vernacular varieties of the language which are different from one country to another. MSA is the language of the Arab League, and is one of six official languages of the United Nations. MSA is the language of newspapers, magazines, and official documents, and is the written language of books, educational platforms and schools, and approximates the spoken language used in the news and official speeches. MSA – including its written version (Modern Written Arabic, MWA) – is particularly different from Classical Arabic with regard to vocabulary and lexical elements, and does not include archaic or fossilized vocabulary associated with the older form.



More specifically, MSA is distinguished from Classical Arabic in two ways linguistically: it synthesizes words from Arabic roots and adapts words from foreign languages. However, many Arab linguists and grammarians argue that MSA and Classical Arabic represent two historical periods of one language (known as eloquent Arabic, or al-‘Arabīyah al-Fuṣḥā). They associate Classical Arabic with the past, calling it Fuṣḥā at-Turāth or the eloquent Arabic language of past, while MSA is associated with the modern era and known as Fuṣḥā al-‘Aṣr, or the eloquent Arabic language at the present time. In addition to Classical Arabic and MSA, Colloquial Arabic includes many regional dialects derived from both Classical and Modern Arabic, and is considered as the first language in most Arab countries. While Arabs in all countries understand both Classical Arabic and MSA, they often encounter enormous difficulties in understanding Colloquial Arabic dialects spoken outside their own counties.

Due to the ambiguity of meaning of most of the colloquial dialects, it is recommended to avoid the use of machine translation in rendering Arabic vernacular/slang expressions and culture-bound elements from Arabic to English, and vice versa. It is advisable to disregard machine translation when dealing with vernacular or colloquial texts in particular, and use instead diverse translation approaches to establish a suitable equivalence between Arabic and English, and vice versa, ensuring an accurate conveyance of the textual meaning.

It is obvious that contemporary translation studies have expanded beyond mere strategies for converting the source text into a reasonably faithful target text. Scholars have embraced a multidisciplinary approach, integrating considerations of language traditions, discourse analysis, cultural studies, and postcolonial theories alongside philosophical theories (Munday 2000: 32). The translation of vernacular texts – unlike other forms of translation – is a demanding and complex endeavour, requiring immense dedication from the translator. It demands a high level of skill to transpose these texts from one language to another while retaining the essence and subtleties of the original source. This is because the translation of vernacular language transcends the mere transference of words or phrases and involves grappling with various elements across textual, lexical, linguistic, semantic, syntactic, cultural, and pragmatic dimensions.

As such, the translation of vernacular language necessitates creativity to effectively convey both the literal and implied meanings, stylistic elements, emotions, and perspectives from one cultural context to another. In essence, an appropriate translation of vernacular/colloquial language refers to the practice within translation studies whereby the adaptation of a message from one language to another aims to maintain its original purpose, style, tone, and contextual essence. The reconstituted vernacular message should evoke similar sentiments and provoke analogous effects in the target language as it did in the source language. Consequently, the translation of vernacular/colloquial language stands out as one of the most challenging forms of translation, given its frequent task of transposing SL vernacular lexical items into TL contents while preserving their essence.

For the reasons outlined above, it is recommended that the translation of vernacular language is not performed by machine translation, but instead human translators alone should be responsible for the translation of colloquial language items. The translation of vernacular or slang expressions requires tremendous effort because, beyond their literal meaning, translators should also navigate the intricacies of vernacular texts, striving to maintain the original structure while preserving cultural imagery, references, allegories, and other artistic elements. Undoubtedly, the translation of vernacular texts revolves around the transference of various forms of slang from one language to another, and thus translators working in this domain should possess a broad and comprehensive understanding of SL and TL cultures.

Moreover, machine translation systems lack innovation and creativity, which are indispensable traits for translators tackling vernacular language because the SL often includes texts that exhibit exceptional complexity and inherent ambiguities. The translator's creativity becomes evident in the successful translation of colloquial language, mirroring the form and substance of the original text in another language. Therefore, a translator of Arabic colloquial texts into English should possess in-depth knowledge about the cultures, vocabularies, and terminologies of both the source and target languages. This foundational knowledge streamlines the translation process, enabling the translator to consistently select terms that best suit the context of the source text, thereby saving time and effort.

Mere proficiency in two languages does not suffice for the translation of colloquial language, and translators who are involved in this should possess the capability to adjust vocabulary, decide on retaining or omitting specific phrases, or even rephrase entire passages, all while meeting the anticipated preferences of the target audience, while preserving the essence of the original work. Creating a faithful translation of vernacular language structures demands more than handling syntax and vocabulary. This process necessitates a profound understanding of the intricate meanings underpinning culture-bound items, which shape colloquial and slang terminology.

A translator of Arabic colloquial language and regional dialects should possess the adeptness to manipulate the text in suitable ways to craft a translation that communicates the essence of the source culture and satisfies the requirements of the target readers. The language spoken by a community mirrors its unique cultural values and practices, and therefore translating a text from one language to another effectively demands capturing and conveying the cultural subtleties inherent in the original language. This calls for a high level of sensitivity, flexibility in thinking, and skill in producing a translation that remains faithful to the content, tone, and identity of the source text while honouring its intended meaning. These abilities are not available with any machine translation system, and only a highly skilled translator can ensure that the message is accurately conveyed to meet the recipient's expectations.

Despite encountering numerous challenges, translators of Arabic colloquial texts working with contemporary literature and the mass media provide a valuable service

to students and enthusiasts of Arabic culture by translating works from one language into others, thereby making them accessible to a wider audience. This not only enriches cultural engagement but also contributes to overall cultural advancement by presenting vernacular texts in various translations. Such diversity encourages both scholarly circles and the public to explore and appreciate literature from different nations. Ultimately, the translation of colloquial texts fosters cross-cultural understanding and encourages an appreciation for the diverse and rich traditions of literature.

Translating MSA Arabic into English poses significant challenges, particularly regarding linguistic and cultural factors. With over 30 dialects prevalent in the Arab region, these variations are interwoven within the literary works, often leading to translation inaccuracies and errors, particularly when translators use machine translation tools. Errors often arise from the use of inappropriate translation strategies or methods that inadequately align with the source text. The array of translation approaches now available offers translators various choices, sometimes leading to discrepancies in the adopted approach itself.

Eugene Nida's exploration of the linguistic approach in translation highlights a fundamental challenge: the radical differences between languages. He acknowledges the complexities inherent in translating across languages, suggesting that it is impossible to fully convey in one language what was originally expressed in another (Nida 1964). In contrast, other linguists and anthropologists strive to uncover a shared human experience that bridges these differences, aiding comprehension, and communication across diverse cultures. However, certain texts exhibit disparities that not only outnumber the similarities, but also pose significant obstacles to understanding.

Translators using the linguistic approach often grapple with the tension between preserving form and conveying meaning. Striving to mirror the stylistic qualities of the source language may lead to a loss of the original meaning. Conversely, strict adherence to literal content risks sacrificing the nuanced stylistic elements, something that is particularly evident in translating literary works that often include colloquial dialects and slang expressions. This ongoing conflict between fidelity to form and fidelity to meaning is a persistent challenge for translators employing the linguistic approach.

Peter Newmark's distinction between translation methods and procedures provides a valuable framework for approaching different units of language during the translation process. Translation methods encompass broader approaches applied to whole texts, while translation procedures are specifically utilized for sentences and smaller language units. Newmark describes various translation methods – such as word-for-word, literal, communicative, and semantic translations – each with its focus on how to render content from the SL to the TL (Newmark 2007). However, beyond these methods and procedures, challenges in the translation of literary texts overloaded with vernacular language emerge when linguistic and cultural equivalences are absent. In some instances, certain meanings expressed in the SL may lack direct counterparts or equivalents in the TL. These gaps in

equivalence pose significant hurdles for translators aiming to convey nuanced vernacular elements, cultural references, or linguistic distinctions, especially when they have no direct parallels in the TL. This creates a complex landscape for translators where fidelity to both meaning and cultural nuances becomes particularly challenging.

Mona Baker's insight highlights a fundamental aspect of translation: the lack of a direct, one-to-one correspondence between words and their meanings across different languages (Baker 2018). This underlines the complexity of translation, where the challenge often lies in conveying the essence and nuances of meaning rather than strictly equating individual words or phrases. Eugene Nida's perspective on translation as both a process and a product emphasizes the multifaceted nature of translation, viewing it as a process which involves the complex task of reproducing the meaning and style of the SL into the TL. Achieving an accurate transfer of ideas, messages, and thoughts between languages and cultures is at the core of this process.

When translating MSA Arabic texts, particularly novels, into English, the complexities involved may necessitate employing various translation methods, with the exception of machine translation, which must be prohibited. These methods are essential tools for translators to navigate linguistic and cultural differences, striving to create an optimized product in the TL while remaining faithful to the essence of the source text. The diversity and richness of MSA Arabic prose texts often demand a nuanced approach to translation to capture its intricacies and cultural context effectively.

Translating MSA Arabic language texts into English presents significant challenges, especially due to the linguistic and cultural differences between the source and target languages. The process involves employing various translation techniques like literal, semantic, and communicative translation to approximate the intended meaning from Arabic into English. However, these efforts encounter obstacles stemming from unique linguistic and cultural elements inherent in the Arabic language and culture. The use of machine translation in this context will inevitably have very negative effects on the resulting translated texts at various levels: syntactic, stylistic, semantic, pragmatic and so on.

Arabic texts often contain words, phrases, idioms, and local dialects that lack direct equivalents in English, making it challenging to convey their exact meaning through machine translation. Additionally, the cultural references, allusions, and symbols embedded within MSA Arabic texts, and particularly literary works, carry specific cultural nuances and historical contexts that are difficult to convey accurately in English via machine translation.

Susan Bassnett's perspective sheds light on the complexity of the translation process, emphasizing that beyond linguistic considerations translators should also consider a range of extra-linguistic criteria (Bassnett 2013). This includes understanding and conveying cultural references and connotations present in the source text, which may not have direct equivalents in the TL, and this process is not available for machine translation systems. Furthermore, Bassnett highlights the importance of maintaining the essence of

the source culture without attempting to impose or modify the value system of the source culture onto the target culture. This underscores the translator's responsibility to ensure that while conveying the meaning, the translated text remains faithful to the cultural nuances and context of the original work without imposing foreign values onto the translated version, things that remain beyond machine translation.

The translation of literary and non-literary MSA texts laden with colloquial expressions poses considerable challenges, and scholars have offered diverse perspectives to tackle these inherent complexities. Peter Newmark emphasizes the significance of considering the quality of writing and the authority of the text as critical factors influencing the choice of translation method. He underscores that the quality of writing should be evaluated in relation to the author's intention and the subject matter. Newmark highlights that expressive texts, serious imaginative literature, and authoritative or personal statements demand close translation, ensuring alignment with the style, tone, and intent of the original work (Newmark 1988).

Acknowledging the demanding nature of the above-mentioned translation practices, experts such as Basil Hatim and Ian Mason stress the importance of competence on the part of the translator (Hatim and Mason 2005). Competence here refers not only to linguistic skills but also includes a deep understanding of cultural nuances, colloquial expressions, literary devices, and the context of the source text, all of which machine translation lacks. For machine translation, synonymy, for instance constitutes a major lexical challenge when translating MSA Arabic texts into English. Synonymy, the existence of multiple words or phrases with similar meanings, presents a hurdle even for human translators, who strive to capture the exact nuances and connotations embedded within Arabic vernacular expressions when rendering them into English. Understanding the nuances and multiple synonyms of words in the SL is crucial for translators, as it impacts the accuracy and richness of the translation.

### **3 THE USE OF MACHINE TRANSLATION (GOOGLE TRANSLATE) IN RENDERING ARABIC TEXTS INTO ENGLISH, AND VICE VERSA: AN APPLIED PERSPECTIVE**

#### **3.1 Using Machine Translation to Render MSA texts into English**

The use of machine translation to render modern standard Arabic (MSA) texts including simple lexical items into English resulted into different kinds of mistakes- at the lexical, semantic, stylistic, and structural levels- which distorted the SL meaning in TL translation. The following examples including Arabic sentences and phrases are simultaneously translated using machine translation (MT) and human translation (HT). According to the examples below, all the sentences and phrases rendered by machine translation

(MT) include mistakes, which disfigure the source language (SL) meaning resulting into misconception on the part of target language (TL) readers. However, the use of human translation (HT) to render the same texts from Arabic into English leads to correct TL texts as follows:

-جريدة الفجر.

Daybreak Newspaper (MT).

Alfajr Newspaper. (HT).

-ترجمة الملحقات النصية: است خدام العتبات النصية لتوجيه القراء إلى كيفية الاطلاع على النصوص الحساسة.

Translating textual appendices: Using text thresholds to direct readers on how to view sensitive texts. (MT).

Paratextual Translation: Using Paratexts to guide the reading of sensitive texts. (HT).

-خرج الغواني يحتججن ورحت أرقب جمعهه  
فإذا بهن تخذن كم سود الثياب شعارهه  
فطلعن مثل كواكب يسطن في وسط الدجنه  
(بين القصرين).

-The girls came out protesting,

and I watched their gathering,

Then they took black clothes as their emblem,

They appeared like stars,

shining in the middle of the garden. (Bain Al-Qasrain). (MT).

-Beautiful women marched in protest,

I went to observe their rally,

I found them proudly,

Brandishing the blackness of their garments,

They looked like stars,

Gleaming in a pitch-black night,

They took to the streets. (Palace Walk<sup>1</sup>). (HT).

-الكشاف الموضوعي.

-Thematic Explorer. (MT).

-Subject Index. (HT).

1 Mahfouz, N. (1991) *Palace Walk*, Trans. William Hutchins. New York: Doubleday, 374. (The citation is originally part of a poem written by the Egyptian poet Hafiz Ebrahim praising a demonstration by women in support of the 1919 Revolution leader Saad Zaghloul, and it was quoted by one of the characters in Mahfouz's novel as a comment on a similar demonstration).

-كان الرئيس في مقدمة مستقبلي جلالة الملك عبد الله.

-The president was at the forefront of his future Majesty King Abdullah. (MT).

-The president was at the forefront of the reception of His Majesty, King Abdullah. (HT).

-التقى الرئيس مع دولة رجب طيب أردوغان.

-The president met with the State of Recep Tayyip Erdogan. (MT).

-The president met with His Excellency Recep Tayyip Erdogan. (HT).

-الاعتراف بالجميل الذي منّ به عليّ.

-The recognition of the beauty that he has bestowed upon me. (MT)

-Expressing my gratitude and acknowledging the kindness he has shown to me. (HT)

-وقد فتح هذا البعد الجديد مشربا نضبا للتعرف على ثقافات جديدة ومعارف مهمة.

-This new dimension opened a rich drink to get to know about new cultures and important knowledge. (MT).

-This new dimension has opened a rich source of knowledge for learning about new cultures and important knowledge. (HT).

-ولي عهد موناكو.

-Crown Prince of Munaco Era. (MT).

-Crown Prince of Munaco. (HT).

-إنه رصيدنا الحضاري والإنساني.

-It is our civilizational and human balance. (MT).

-It is our civilizational and humanitarian asset. (HT)

-كان اللقاء في سكن سعادته في البطين.

-The meeting was at His Excellency's in the ventricle. (MT).

-The meeting was at His Excellency's residence in Al Bateen. (HT).

-دراسة الأعلام.

-Study of flags. (MT)

- Onomastics. (HT).

- التهنية بعيد الفطر المبارك.

Congratulations on Eid blessed mushroom. (MT).

Congratulations on Eid Al-Fitr. (HT).



-غادر الرئيس البلاد وكان في مقدمة مودعيه حشد من الوزراء.

-The president departed the country and at the forefront of his deposits a crowd of ministers. (MT).

-The president left the country and a congregation of ministers bid him farewell. (HT).

-الذين انتقلوا إلى رحمة الله تعالى.

-Those who moved to the mercy of God Almighty. (MT).

-Those who have passed away to the mercy of God Almighty. (HT).

-استقبل شيخ القبيلة الضيوف في مجلسه.

-The tribal sheikh received the guests in his council. ) MT).

-The Sheikh of the tribe received the guests in his Majlis. (HT).

-أقيمت الاحتفالية في قصر المشرف.

-The celebration was held at the supervisor's palace. (MT).

-The celebration was held at Al Mushrif Palace. (HT).

-قام الوزير بتسليم بيرق الشعر للشاعر الشاب.

-The minister delivered the hair shines to the young poet. (MT).

-The minister handed over the banner of poetry to the young poet. (HT).

-نجدد الرهان على قدرات شبابنا في كافة المجالات.

-We renew our bet on the capabilities of our youth in all fields. (MT).

-We renew our confidence in the capabilities of our youth in all fields. (HT).

-حضور القائد تخريج دورة جديدة من دورات الأغرار.

-The leader attended the graduation of a new session of Al-Aghrar courses. (MT).

-The leader attended the graduation of a new session of the young recruits' courses. (HT).

-نقل سعادته لدولته تحيات رئيس الدولة.

-His happiness conveyed to his country the greetings of the state president. (MT).

-HE conveyed to his excellency the greetings of the president of the state. (HT).

-حفل زفاف كريمة ربيع مفتاح إلى مطر النجار.

-The wedding of Karima spring key to rain the carpenter. (MT).

-The wedding of the daughter of Rabie Moftah to Matar Al-Najjar. (HT).

-دعم سعادته لتحريك أولى طائرات الجسر الجوي لإغاثة ضحايا الزلزال في المدينة المنكوبة.

- His Excellency supported the movement of the first air bridge aircraft to relief earthquake victims in stricken city. (MT).

- His Excellency supported the operation of the first air bridge aircraft to relief earthquake victims in stricken city. (HT).

The above-mentioned examples provided evidence to confirm the failure of machine translation to render modern standard Arabic (MSA) texts into English.

### 3.2 Using MT to Render Colloquial Arabic Texts into English

The use of machine translation to render vernacular or slang expressions or local proverbs or popular culture idioms or any form of colloquial dialects - proliferated in literary works or mass media outlets- from Arabic into English is a risky process leading to catastrophic consequences on the translated texts and distorting the SL meaning as follows:

-«ضربت المرأة كفاً على كف وقالت:  
أصابتك عين، ماذا حصل لعقلك يا ابني؟  
(السكرية).

- “The woman struck palm on palm and said:

You have an eye injury, what happened to your mind, my son? (Sukkariyya). (MT).

- “The woman struck her hands together and riposted, ‘The evil eye has struck you. What ‘s happened to your brain, son?’ (Sugar Street)<sup>2</sup>. (HT).

-“كفاية ضحك، سكتنا له دخل بحماره”  
(السكرية).

- “Enough of the laughter, we were silent when he entered with his donkey” (Sukka-riyya). (MT).

- “That’s enough laughter! ‘When we did not scold him the first time, he brought his jenny’” ((Sugar Street). (HT).

-صاح ماجد بنرفزة: “ما بقى فيني احملها واحمل طبعها يا شيخ. شو عامل لربنا حتى يعتري هالتعتير، ويشحرنى هالشحار. خلصني يا ابن عمي بالتى هي أحسن.”  
(حكاية زهرة).

-Majid shouted angrily: “I can no longer bear it and bear its nature, Sheikh. What can I do to God that makes me suffer this taunt and make me angry. Save me, my cousin, with what is best” (Zahra Story). (MT).

-Majed yelled out, ‘I can’t stand her or her behaviour! What have I don’t that God should punish me in his way? Help me, cousin, and let you and I remain good friends’ (The Story of Zahra)<sup>3</sup>. (HT).

2 Mahfouz, N. (1997) *Sugar Street*. Translated from Arabic by William Hutchins. Cairo: American University in Cairo Press, 107.  
Ibid., 227.

3 Al Shaykh, H. (1986) *The Story of Zahrah*. Translated from Arabic by Peter Ford. London: Quartet Books, 83.

- "أضحك مع اللي ضحك والهيم طاويني  
طية شنون العرب لا قَطَرُوا ماها".  
(القارورة).

- "I laugh with those who laugh, and worry takes me away."  
Tayya Shnoun al-Arab, do not distill its meanings" (the Bottle). (MT).  
- "I laugh with those who laughed before me,  
Though troubles they abound,  
Now I'm wrung dry like a Bedouin's water skin,  
I don't think I'll stick around" (Munira's Bottle<sup>4</sup>). (HT).

- "عمر الشقي بقي والأعمار بيد الله...و محسوبك شقي وأهي هانت، فاضل يبجي ٣ أيام كمان وألم فلوس  
القسط".  
(تاكسي).

- "A miserable life is left, and life is in God's hands... and I think you are miserable, and now it is in vain. Fadel will come for 3 more days, and the pain of the installment money" (Taxi). (MT).  
- "The rogue has nine lives, and our lives are in God's hands,' he answered. 'And yours truly is a real rogue. I'm nearly there, just some three days to go and I'll have made the money for the instalment" (Taxi<sup>5</sup>). (HT).

- "اجلس عيني، كلنا مو خطر هنا، هذا مثل بيتنا وكلنا أهل. نادر عيني ترى أنت نحيف مثل أمك، شنو أنت  
ما تأكل هناك؟"  
(المحوبات).

- "Sit down, dear eye, Mu khtaar-none of us are guests here, it might as well be home and we're all family. Nader, I dearie, why on earth are you as thin as your mother, shnu inta ma takul Hunak? You must eat nothing over there! Why?" (Lovely Ones). (MT)  
- "Sit down, we are not all dangerous here. This is like our home, and we are all family members. Rarely do I see that you are as skinny as your mother. Why don't you eat there?" (The Beloved Ones<sup>6</sup>). (HT).

-فقلت: «في ستين داهية». (موسم الهجرة إلى الشمال).

- She said: "In sixty shrewd ones" (Migration Season to the North). (MT).  
- "Good riddance! she said" (Season of Migration to The North<sup>7</sup>). (HT)

4 Al-Mohaimeed, Y. (2010) *Munira's Bottle*. Translated from Arabic by Anthony Calderbank. The American University in Cairo Press, New York, 31.

5 Alkhamissi, K. (2006) *Taxi*. Translated from Arabic by Jonathan Wright. Dar El Shorouk, Cairo, 14.

6 Mamdouh, A. (2007) *The Beloved Ones*. Translated from Arabic by Marilyn Booth. Feminist Press at the City University of New York, 189.

7 Salih, T. (1969) *Season of Migration to The North*. Translated from Arabic by Denys Johnson-Davies. Penguin Books, 128.

فتخلصت من يده مقاومة من ناحيته هذه المرة، وحدقت إليه طويلاً ثم ابتسمت وتمتمت:  
عصفوري يا أمه عصفوري لألعب وأروي له أموري  
(بين القصرين).

-So, I got rid of his hand in resistance on his part this time, and stared at him for a long time, then smiled and muttered:

My bird, mother, is my bird to play with and tell him my affairs (Bayn al-Qasrain). (MT).

- "She escaped from his hand without any resistance this time. She gave him a lengthy look. Then she smiled and recited softly:

My sparrow, Mother, my little bird,

I'll play and show him what I have learned" (Palace Walk<sup>8</sup>). (HT).

وتناول السيد الدف، ومسح عليه براحته مبتسماً، وبدأت أصابعه تنقر عليه في مهارة على حين انطلقت آلات  
الطرب عازفة، ثم غنت زبيدة وهي ترنو إلى الأعين المحدقة إليها:  
على روحي أنا الجاني وخلي في الهوى رماني  
(بين القصرين).

-“The master took the tambourine and stroked it with his palm, smiling, and his fingers began to tap on it skillfully, while the musical instruments started playing, and then Zubayda sang, looking up at the eyes staring at her:

On my soul, I am the culprit, and he left me in the air (between the palaces). (MT).

- “Mr. El-Sayyed took the tambourine and smiled as he rubbed it with the palm of his hand. His fingers began to strike it skilfully and then the other instruments started playing. Zubayda glanced at the eyes fixed on her sang:

I'm an accomplice against myself,

When my lover steals my heart" (Palace Walk<sup>9</sup>). (HT).

Obviously, the above-cited examples confirm the impossibility of using machine translation in rendering colloquial Arabic texts, proverbs, idiomatic and expressions and slang language into English. The preceding extracts reveal examples from different dialects used in a variety of Arab countries. The examples are cited from canonized Arabic fiction written by well-established novelists from Egypt (Naguib Mahfouz and Khaled Alkhamissi), Saudi Arabia (Y. Al-Mohaimeed), Sudan (Tayeb Salih), Lebanon (H. Al Shaykh) and Iraq (Alia Mamdouh). As demonstrated above, the use of machine translation in rendering Arabic vernacular language into English results into a wide range of errors at all levels-linguistic, lexical, structural, semantic, syntactic, stylistic- therefore it is a risky and unpredictable procedure, which should be avoided.

8 Mahfouz, N. (1991) *Palace Walk*. Trans. William Hutchins. New York: Doubleday, 96.

9 .Ibid., 103.

### 3.3 Using MT to Render English texts Into Arabic

Based on experiment and the applied examples above, machine translation failed to render correctly Arabic texts into English including a variety of modern standard Arabic (MSA) styles, colloquial dialects, proverbs, popular sayings, idioms, and vernacular/slang expressions. Similarly, and as shown below, machine translation -contrary to human translation-failed to render selected English texts into Arabic correctly. These texts include simple phrases, idiomatic and proverbial expressions, acronyms as well as slang and offensive lexical items. The first line in Arabic under the English item below shows the erroneous machine translation followed by the correct human translation as follows:

#### -The Waste Land

-أرض النفايات (ترجمة آلية)  
-الأرض الخراب (ترجمة بشرية)

#### -Achilles heel

-كعب أخيل (ترجمة آلية)  
-نقطة ضعف (ترجمة بشرية)

#### -It rains cats and dogs.

-تمطر قططاً وكلاباً (ترجمة آلية)  
-تمطر بغزارة شديدة (ترجمة بشرية)

#### -Holy shit.

-سحق ملأ فرقلا- (آي لا قم جرت)  
-يا للهول (ترجمة بشرية)

#### -He had an access of despair.

-كان لديه وصول اليأس (ترجمة آلية)  
-كان يشعر باليأس (ترجمة بشرية)

#### -The tail is wagging the dog.

-الذيل يهز الكلب (ترجمة آلية)  
-عندما يتحكم المرووس في الرئيس (ترجمة بشرية)

#### PPP

-تعاذل القوى الشرائية. (ترجمة آلية)  
-شراكة القطاعين العام والخاص. (ترجمة بشرية)

#### BOT

-العودة للموضوع. (ترجمة آلية)  
-البناء-التشغيل- النقل. (ترجمة بشرية)

**-Where it is so outside the consciousness of the living present that there can be no inter-textuality with the postmodern novel.**

-حيث لا يمكن أن يكون هناك اختلاط جنسي مع رواية ما بعد الحداثة خارج الوعي الحاضر الحي. (ترجمة آلية).  
 -حيث لا يمكن أن يوجد تناس مع رواية ما بعد الحداثة خارج الوعي بالحاضر الحي. (ترجمة بشرية).

## 4 CONCLUSION

The above arguments about the challenges confronting machine translation in rendering Arabic into English underscore the multifaceted nature of the translation of MSA texts and colloquial expressions, emphasizing the importance of linguistic proficiency, cultural sensitivity, and an acute understanding of the source text's nuances to produce a faithful and meaningful translation.

Due to the considerable disparities between English and Arabic, numerous errors resulted from using machine translation in rendering Arabic into English, and vice versa across various linguistic, cultural, and contextual aspects. This paper examined most of these mistakes by using an applied approach, and provided numerous examples from MSA and colloquial Arabic dialects. It contends that these translation errors primarily stem from linguistic and cultural differences between Arabic and English, and notably from the difficulty of using machine translation in rendering SL to TL, particularly regarding vernacular expressions. With more than thirty dialects prevalent in the Arab region, these variations are interwoven within literature and mass media, often leading to translational inaccuracies. Undoubtedly, errors might arise from the use of inappropriate translation strategies or methods such as machine translation, which inadequately align with the source text. The array of translation approaches available offers translators various choices, but they sometimes lead to discrepancies in the adopted approach itself.

As illustrated in the last part, this paper examined potential translation errors in excerpts from a variety of literary and non-literary texts written by canonized Arab authors and translated by first-tier translators, most of whom are of Western origin. The examples reveal several categories of translation errors at different levels, and these can be attributed to many reasons such as the lack of TL equivalents – linguistic and cultural – and textual/contextual as well as semantic ambiguities inaccessible to machine translation.

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## POVZETEK

### IZZIVI UPORABE STROJNEGA PREVAJANJA PRI PREVAJANJU ARABSKIH BESEDIL V ANGLEŠČINO: UPORABNI PRISTOP

Ne glede na nedavne argumente o širokih zmožnostih umetne inteligence v sistemih strojnega prevajanja (MT) nekateri strokovnjaki še vedno podcenjujejo ta novi pristop, drugi pa v njem vidijo priložnost za razvoj in izboljšanje prevajalske industrije. Ni dvoma, da je strojno prevajanje močno vplivalo na prevajalsko stroko in korenito spremenilo način, kako ljudje komunicirajo prek jezikov. Zato se prevajalci, univerzitetni profesorji in prevajalska podjetja skušajo prilagoditi tem velikim spremembam na področju prevajalskih študij. Ne glede na prednosti MT se ta še vedno sooča z velikimi izzivi, zlasti pri uporabi za specifična besedila v različnih kontekstih, zlasti za pogovorno arabščino, ki je zelo pogosta v sodobni literaturi in množičnih medijih. Na podlagi tega in kot odgovor na ponavljajoče se trditve o visoki učinkovitosti MT in njegovem izjemnem potencialu, da natančno in natančno pretvori katerokoli besedilo iz enega jezika v drugega, ta članek poudarja nezmožnost sistemov MT za pretvorbo arabskih besedil v angleščino in obratno. V prispevku je poudarjen škodljiv vpliv uporabe MT pri prevajanju v angleščino ne le pogovornih arabskih narečij, temveč tudi sodobne standardne arabščine (MSA). V prispevku so izpostavljene tudi napake pri prevajanju, ki so posledica uporabe MT pri prevajanju sodobnih angleških besedil v arabščino in obratno, s poudarkom na prevajanju idiomatskih izrazov in pregovorov. V članku kot primeru uporabne študije so uporabljena različna besedila, vzeta iz različnih literarnih in neli-literarnih virov/kontekstov, ki so prevedena s pomočjo Googlevega prevajalnika, da bi se pokazale pomanjkljivosti MT, ki so povzročile izkrivljanje pomena SL besedil, prevedenih v TL. Z drugimi besedami, namen prispevka je odkriti napake, ki so posledica uporabe MT pri pretvorbi tako MSA kot pogovornih arabskih izrazov v angleščino in obratno. Argumentacija prispevka je sestavljena iz štirih delov, med katerimi so uvod, v katerem so predstavljene sodobne teorije prevajanja, sledi razprava o izzivih, s katerimi se sooča arabsko-angleško prevajanje, in primeri arabsko-angleških/arabskih prevodov, ki so jih naredili strojni in človeški prevajalci, poleg tega pa sledi še sklep.

**Ključne besede:** strojno prevajanje, umetna inteligenca, teorije prevajanja, sodobna angleščina, sodobna standardna arabščina, pogovorni jezik, sleng, ljudski jezik, uporabni pristop

**ABSTRACT****THE CHALLENGES OF USING MACHINE TRANSLATION IN RENDERING ARABIC TEXTS INTO ENGLISH: AN APPLIED PERSPECTIVE**

Regardless of recent arguments about the wide-scale capabilities of artificial intelligence introduced into machine translation (MT) systems, some professionals still underestimate this new approach, while others scholars see it as an opportunity to develop and improve the translation industry. There is no doubt that machine translation has massively impacted the translation profession and radically changed the way people interact through languages. Therefore, translators, university professors, and translation companies are all seeking to adapt to these radical transformations in the field of translation studies. Regardless of the advantages of MT, it still confronts huge challenges especially when applied to specific texts in different contexts, and particularly the colloquial Arabic that is very common in contemporary literature and mass media. On this basis and in response to repeated claims about the high efficiency of MT and its extraordinary potential to render any text from one language into another with accuracy and precision, this paper emphasizes the inability of MT systems to render Arabic texts into English, and vice versa. The paper emphasizes the damaging impact of using MT in rendering into English not only colloquial Arabic dialects but also modern standard Arabic (MSA). The paper also highlights the translation errors resulting from the use of MT in rendering modern English texts into Arabic and vice versa, with a focus on the translation of idiomatic expressions and proverbs. As an applied study, the paper uses a variety of texts selected from various literary and non-literary sources/contexts and translates them using Google Translate to show the drawbacks of MT, which caused a distortion of the meaning of the SL texts translated into TL. In other words, the paper aims to uncover the mistakes resulting from the use of MT when converting both MSA and colloquial Arabic expressions into English, and vice versa. The argument of the paper consists of four parts, including an introduction, which introduces contemporary translation theories, followed by a discussion of the challenges confronting Arabic-English translation, and examples of Arabic/English/Arabic translations carried out by machine and human translators, in addition to a conclusion.

**Keywords:** machine translation, artificial intelligence, translation theories, Modern English, Modern Standard Arabic, colloquial, slang, vernacular, applied approach