

Contrastive Analysis of Two English Translations of an Old Arabic Poem

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Abstract: The present study aimed to provide a contrastive analysis of two English translations of the famous Arabic poem known in English as “Let days do what they will” by Mohammad ibn Idris al-Shafi’i. The two English translations were produced by two different translation scholars in the language pair Arabic and English. The analysis focused on how the translators dealt with the most important features of poetry when translating the Arabic poem into English. Such features included form, meaning, sound and imagery. The findings revealed some similarities and differences in both translations with reference to the above-mentioned features. It is recommended that more research be conducted on either Arabic-English translation of poetry or English-Arabic translation of poetry as this kind of research seems to be relatively scarce.

Keywords: Arabic poetry, al-Shafi’i, contrastive analysis, English-Arabic translation

1. Introduction

Translation is not only a linguistic activity (e.g., Catford, 1965; Nida and Taber, 1969; Newmark, 1987; Hatim and Mason, 1990; Toury, 1995; Robinson, 2003), but it is also a cultural activity (e.g., Snell-Hornby, 1988; Holmes, 1994; Vermeer, 1996; Venuti, 2008) which professional translators engage in for a variety of purposes one of which is to transmit components of a certain culture to another culture and readership. Poetry is a universal aspect of all cultures (Arp and Johnson, 2010) which is also as old as language and human life. According to history, the earliest forms of poetry were oral (Notopoulos, 1964; Goody, 1987) with poets reciting in front of crowds of people and making full use of their voices and body language. This means that poetry is meant to be read aloud before an audience in a motivational and forceful manner in order to achieve the desired outcomes. It follows then that the richer the poetic language in rhetorical and ornamental devices, the better effects it has on the audience, and the sooner the desired outcomes are achieved. Poetry depends on specific literary elements which characterize it and make it distinct from the other literary genres. The most important elements of poetry are form or structure, sound, rhetoric and imagery (Kenner, 1959; Folkart, 2007; Dickins et al, 2017; Ghazala, 2019) which are put in a highly literary language which talks to all senses. It is these distinctive features which make poetry very hard to translate from one language into another, let alone if the source language and the target language belong to two different families as in the case of Arabic and English.

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Probably the oldest English translations of Arabic poetry were produced by Professor A. J. Arberry who was interested in old Arabic poetry and wrote a book entitled *The Seven Odes: The First Chapter in Arabic Literature* which was published in 1957. In fact, he himself translated the seven famous Arabic poems known as “The Moallakat, or Seven Arabian Poems, which were suspended on the Temple at Mecca with a translation and arguments” (1957, p. 12). An old Arabic poem consists of lines of poetry each of which is divided into two halves. “The first half of the line is called the صدر ‘chest’ (also الشطر الأول ‘the first half’) and the second the عجز

‘rump’ (also الشطر الثاني ‘the second half’)” (Dickins, et al 2017, p. 121). Scholars interested in the translation of poetry (for example, Lefevere, 1975; Bly, 1982; Khalifa, 2015; Mahasneh, 2016; Ghazala, 2019) believe that poetry can be translated into other languages as either poetry or prose. However, some scholars (for example, Weissbort, 1989; Khulusi, 2000; Al-Masri, 2010; Robinson, 2010; Reynolds, 2011; Jones, 2011; Khalifa, 2015) hold the view that there are some unavoidable losses sustained in the translation of poetry in terms of form, sound, imagery, prosody and aesthetic impact on audiences and/or readers. The researcher believes that the rules of poetry writing or composition differ from language to language which inevitably results in features or aspects present in one language and culture but absent in another language and culture. In other words, there are constituent components of Arabic poetry which have no equivalents in English such as the technical or poetic terms related to the parts of an Arabic line of poetry, and the same is true for English poetry and other poetry in other languages. These peculiar aspects or features pose great challenges to translators and account for translation loss. The idea that there are no common or universal components or elements for poetry across different languages and cultures has led translation scholars to claim that there is no single unifying theory for poetry translation (Folkart, 2007; Jones, 2011). Jones, for example, stresses this idea “no single theory, however, can describe all aspects of poetry translation. To explain specific issues, various approaches are used” (Jones, 2011, p. 13).

There seems to be a consensus among translation scholars that poetry translation is a formidable task (Polk, 1974; Bly, 1982; Folkart, 2007; Jones, 2011; Ghazala, 2013; Al Salem, 2014; Dickins et al, 2017). However, there have always been translations of poetry belonging to different languages and cultures. How successful and accurate poetry translation is has also been the subject and focus of some translation scholars and critics. But, as long as a poem is composed of words and expresses the poet’s feelings, attitudes and reactions towards a certain incident or phenomenon, then a translation of such words is theoretically and practically possible. Comparative studies of translations of a specific poem produced by two or more translators are somewhat rare as per a rigorous review of the literature conducted by the researcher. In addition, there has been no comparative study on the translation of Imam al-Shafi’i’s poem “Let days do what they will” to date based on an extensive review of the literature. As there is no single theory for the translation of poetry (Folkart, 2007; Jones, 2011), and since the present study is a kind of contrastive analysis of two different English translations of a specific Arabic poem, no theoretical framework is provided, although reference will be made to some strategies for, and approaches to, the translation of poetry where appropriate.

Research objectives

The general aim of this study is to provide a comparison between two English translations of the famous Arabic poem known in English as “Let days do what they will” by Mohammad ibn Idris al-Shafi’i and examine how each translator approached the translation of poetry through his translation of the Arabic poem. With this in mind, the present study aims to achieve the following two objectives:

1 To shed light on the translation of poetry from Arabic into English;

2. To provide a contrastive analysis of two different English translations of al-Shafi'i's poem.

Literature review

There have been numerous English translations of Arabic poetry, old and new, in an attempt to increase awareness of an important component of Arabic culture and shed light on features, elements and themes of Arabic poetry. The following sections will provide a review of the literature available on English translations of Arabic poetry and topics thought to be close to the topic of the present comparative study.

To begin with, it is important to pay tribute to Arberry (1957) and applaud his remarkable efforts which culminated in producing English translations of the seven Moallakat or odes which represent the pride of Arabic poetry. It must have taken him a lot of effort, time and research to translate the earliest poems in the history of Arabic literature which belong to the pre-Islamic era. In fact, the poems or odes are too hard for native speakers of Arabic to read and understand due to the difficult vocabulary permeating them. With this distinctive feature in mind, Arberry translated the poems mostly into prose, not verse or poems probably because his main concern was to convey the meaning and message behind them and to introduce old Arabic poetry to the Western reader. He also provided other English translations of some of these poems produced by translators other than himself so that the reader would be exposed to other possible and viable translations. The scope and purpose of the present study are quite different from the scope and purpose of Arberry's work, despite the similarity in the direction of translation in both studies.

Ghazala (2019) carried out an evaluative study of the two common approaches to poetry translation which are the translation of poetry into poetry and the translation of poetry into prose. His main aim was to highlight the advantages and disadvantages of either approach through providing five English poems with different Arabic translations produced by different translators. By comparing both approaches to poetry translation, the researcher of the above study believed that translating poetry into poetry is 'more persuasive' (ibid, p. 20) than translating poetry into prose because he believed that most prosodic and sound features of poetry are observed and reflected in the translation of poetry into poetry, while they are ignored in the translation of poetry into prose. Although the present study touches briefly on these two approaches to poetry translation, it does not attempt to evaluate them or tip the scales in favor of either approach. The scope and aim of the above study are quite different from the scope and aim of the present study. Besides, the above study focused on poetry translation from English into Arabic, while the present study focused on poetry translation from Arabic into English.

Shiyab and Bader Eddin (2017) carried out a study which aimed at examining the emotive meanings in Arberry's English translation of the seven Moallaqat or odes. The researchers performed a thorough analysis of some phrases and sentences in both the source texts and the target texts with an eye to finding out whether the translator succeeded in preserving the emotive meanings expressed in the original poems. Moreover, the researchers believed that emotive meanings could be expressed at the phonological, morphological, lexical and semantic levels, so they tried to see if Arberry retained emotive meanings in his translation at those levels or not. The study came to the conclusion that although the translator succeeded in preserving emotive meanings in his translation of the seven odes, there were few instances where certain archaic Arabic vocabulary items were not very clear to him and he translated them the way he understood

them. Besides, the researchers realized, through their analysis, that the translator opted for a target text-oriented translation which could be the reason behind the mismatch which the researchers found between some vocabulary items in both the source texts and the target texts. The above study tends to be more evaluative than analytical and focuses on an examination of the English translation of the seven Moallaqat, whereas the present study is a contrastive analysis of two English translations of one famous Arabic poem with no intention of evaluating either translation.

Daragmeh, Shehab and Radi (2017) carried out an analytical study on an English translation of an Arabic poem. They aimed to “identify, classify, and describe the strategies used in adapting Arabic poetic form into rap song beats” (p. 30). They examined how rap conventions affected the translation choices made by the translator of the Arabic poem. It is worth mentioning that the translator of the Arabic poem was the rapper, Omar Offendum (2010) and that the poem he translated was Nizar Qabbani’s “The Damascene Poem”. Their study emphasized the idea that literal or semi-literal translation of poetry would not be a good choice when poetry is translated into another genre such as a rap song. They also found out that the translator made some changes so as to obey the rap conventions or rules which they thought were good choices. Those included “word addition, loosening up of the strict mono-rhyming, and rhyme redistribution... some words and phrases to account for the rapid rhythmic flow of the rapping” (p. 41). In addition, rhymed translation was also followed by the translator in order to create an aesthetic and prosodic effect somewhat similar to the one created by the original poem. The translator created an Arabic refrain from the source poem to be sung by a chorus at the beginning of each part of the rap song, i.e., the English translation. The refrain was the first two lines of the Arabic poem which were kept in their original language, Arabic, and would serve as an emphatic reminder of the singer’s identity and love for his home city. Although the topic and scope of the above study are different from those of the present study, the methodology followed in both studies and the direction of translation are similar.

Mahasneh (2016) conducted a study that aimed at testing whether political expressions with emotion-laden words in Arabic poetry could be translated into English with the same or similar impact. The researcher chose stanzas of some Arabic poems by Mahmoud Darwish, a famous Palestinian poet, and compared them to their English translations published as a book entitled *The Butterfly’s Burden* (Jouda, 2007). The researcher believed that translating Arabic poetry into English is a difficult task, but it is possible if the translator is professional and competent in the source and target languages at the linguistic and cultural levels. The study arrived at the finding that political expressions with emotion-laden words in Darwish’s poetry can be translated into English, although not to a perfect degree as the intensity of feelings cannot be completely measured. The researcher thinks there are three major reasons for the translatability of such emotive expressions. First, feelings or emotions are shared by all human beings and can be expressed in a variety of ways. Second, most themes communicated in Darwish’s poetry are universal and so they can be conveyed in another language such as English. Third, cultural and religious references or allusions which are sometimes hinted at in Darwish’s poetry can easily be understood and translated into English without losing their intended meaning. Both studies also examine the same direction of translation with regard to poetry translation. The above study and the present study both share the notion that poetry can be translated. The above study, however, tends to be more evaluative than comparative or contrastive, unlike the present study. The scope and objectives of the above study are different from those of the present study.

Khalifa (2015a) conducted a study on the problems in Arabic poetry translation. He focused mainly on discussing the vocabulary of poetry which makes great use of connotative meanings of

words, unlike other kinds of writing. He believed that Arabic poetry is full of images which pose a great challenge to English translators as they are not easy to understand and convey in their translations. He included parts of Polk's English translation of Labid Ibn Rabi'ah's ode to illustrate the difficulty of conveying images found in the Arabic poem into the same images in English. His study is a descriptive and analytical account of the attitudes of academic translators and how they approached the translation of Arabic poetry into English in different periods of time. The study also referred to culture as an important consideration for the successful translation of poetry. The above study can be regarded as a general account of the difficulties in Arabic-English translation of poetry with specific reference to poetic vocabulary and images as the most problematic aspects of the English translation of Arabic poetry. Khalifa (2015b) conducted another analytical study on the English translation of a modern Arabic poem by Ali Mahmud Taha entitled "أغنية ريفية" which was translated into "A rustic song" by two translators. The aim of the study was to show that literal translation cannot be followed in the translation of Arabic poetry into English as Arabic and English belong to two different families. Besides, the study adopted the belief that when poetry is translated, some poetic elements will be lost. The rhymed translation approach to poetry translation, as the study concluded, works far better than literal translation. The above-mentioned study cannot be regarded as a research study because it only consists of two elements; an introduction and a conclusion, with no sections on the objectives of the study, the review of the literature, methodology, and findings, whereas the present study adheres closely to all these research elements.

Al Salem (2014) conducted a study on the translation of metaphor from Arabic into English from a linguistic point of view. He selected ten poems from Mahmoud Darwish's poetry and examined their English translations with an eye to identifying the different kinds of metaphor in the source texts and the strategies used in translating them into English. The researcher adopted some theoretical frameworks for metaphor taxonomy and metaphor translation. The researcher used a questionnaire to test the reliability and intelligibility of the translated metaphors in English. His population sample consisted of 20 female participants and 14 male participants, all of whom were native speakers of English. Some were academics, and others were not academics and their ages ranged from 20 to 71. The findings of the questionnaire showed that the English translations of the Arabic metaphors were generally acceptable and accurate based on the responses of the participants. The examination of the English translations of the Arabic metaphors showed that the translators sometimes kept the original metaphors in their translations, reproduced similar metaphors or translated some metaphors literally. Although the above study and the present study are different in terms of topic and scope, they both used contrastive or comparative analysis to shed light on Arabic-English translation of poetry. The above study was evaluative to some degree, whereas the present study is purely contrastive with no evaluative aspect at all.

2. Methodology

Data collection

The data of the present study were collected from two sources; the first one was a course book written by Dickins et al (2017) and the other one was also an educational book written by Jabak (2020). The following sections provide detailed information about the source text and the two target texts.

The source text

The source text is a famous Arabic poem written by Mohammad ibn Idris al-Shafi'i (767–820 AD) known in Arabic as "دع الأيام تفعل ما تشاء" which translates into English as "Let days do what they will". The poet is a leading Muslim scholar, and his poem is well known in the Arab world as well as the Muslim world. His poem consists of thirteen lines and tackles many universal themes and topics

such as acceptance of fate, optimism, generosity, patience, loyalty, contentment and inescapability of death. The poem is characterized by simple diction or vocabulary, and sounds like a series of valuable advice on various aspects of life given to people in general.

The target texts

The target texts are two English translations of the above-mentioned Arabic poem. The first translation was produced by James Dickins, Professor of Arabic Translation currently working at the University of Leeds in the UK. His full translation appears in his book entitled *Thinking Arabic Translation: A course in translation from Arabic to English Tutor's Handbook* published in 2002. The second translation was produced by Omar Jabak, Assistant Professor in Translation. His full translation of the Arabic poem appears in his book entitled *The ABC of Translation* published in 2020. The translation was also published in *Ezra: An Online Journal of Translation* (<http://www.ezratranslation.com/volume-10-2016/>) in 2016. It is worth mentioning that Dickins was Jabak's MA supervisor in 2007 and that Jabak studied Dickins' above-mentioned book while doing his MA at the University of Salford in the academic year 2006 – 2007. Jabak also writes English poetry, and he published his first poetry book entitled *Blessings in Disguise* in 2017.

3. Discussion of findings

One of the distinctive features of poetry is form or structure. An old Arabic poem has a special form which can be easily recognized by just looking at it. Each line of the poem consists of two parts or halves (Dickins et al, 2017). al-Shafi'I's poem "Let days do what they will", which is the source text in this study, follows this structure and consists of thirteen lines. By looking at the source text below and how the lines are arranged, one can tell that it is an old poem.

Source text:

دع الأيام تفعل ما تشاء للإمام الشافعي

وَطِبَّ نَفْسًا إِذَا حَكَمَ الْقَضَاءُ	دَعِ الْأَيَّامَ تَفْعَلْ مَا تَشَاءُ
فَمَا لِحَوَادِثِ الدُّنْيَا بَقَاءُ	وَلَا تَجْزَعِ لِحَادِثَةِ اللَّيَالِي
وَشِيْمَتِكَ السَّمَاخَةُ وَالْوَفَاءُ	وَكُنْ رَجُلًا عَلَى الْأَهْوَالِ جَدًّا
وَسِرِّكَ أَنْ يَكُونَ لَهَا غَطَاءُ	وَإِنْ كَثُرَتْ عُيُوبُكَ فِي الْبَرَائِيَا
يُعْطِيهِ كَمَا قِيلَ السَّخَاءُ	تَسْتَرُ بِالسَّخَاءِ فَكُلُّ عَيْبٍ
فَإِنَّ شِمَاتَةَ الْأَعْدَا بِلَاءُ	وَلَا تُرِ لِلْأَعْدَاءِ قَطُّ دُلًّا
فَمَا فِي النَّارِ لِلظَّمَانِ مَاءُ	وَلَا تَرْجُ السَّمَاخَةَ مِنْ بَخِيلٍ
وَلَيْسَ يَزِيدُ فِي الرِّزْقِ الْعَنَاءُ	وَرِزْقُكَ لَيْسَ يُفِصُّهُ النَّأْيُ
وَلَا بُؤْسٌ عَلَيْكَ وَلَا رَحَاءُ	وَلَا حُزْنٌ يَدُومُ وَلَا سُرُورٌ
فَأَنْتَ وَمَالُكَ الدُّنْيَا سَوَاءُ	إِذَا مَا كُنْتَ ذَا قَلْبٍ قَنُوعٍ
فَلَا أَرْضٌ تَقِيهِ وَلَا سَمَاءُ	وَمَنْ نَزَلَتْ بِسَاحَتِهِ الْمَنَابِيَا
إِذَا نَزَلَ الْقَضَا ضَاقَ الْقَضَاءُ	وَأَرْضُ اللَّهِ وَاسِعَةٌ وَلَكِنْ
فَمَا يُغْنِي عَنِ الْمَوْتِ الدَّوَاءُ	دَعِ الْأَيَّامَ تَعْدُرُ كُلَّ حِينٍ

(Dickins et al, 2017, pp. 123 – 124)

As for Dickins' translation, it does not follow the form or structure of the source poem. Instead, Dickins follows the form of English poetry. Again, by just looking at the target text below (Target text 1) and the way the lines are arranged, one can easily recognize it as an English poem. It is clear that each line of the source poem is translated into two lines in English so as to adhere to the form or structure of English poems. This means that the target text consists of twenty-six lines which are

double the number of lines in the source poem. Dickins also divides the translated poem into eight stanzas, alternating between a quatrain and a couplet (the first stanza is a quatrain, the second stanza is a couplet, the third stanza is a quatrain, the fourth stanza is a quatrain, the fifth stanza is a couplet, the sixth stanza is a quatrain, the seventh stanza is a quatrain and the eighth stanza is a couplet).

Target text 1:

Let the days do what they will,
And with good cheer face fate's decree.
Let night's events cause no concern;
The world's events will cease to be.

Brave all dreads with firm decision
Loyal and generous of disposition.

If your faults be many in men's eyes
And you want a wrap to overlay,
Wrap up in magnanimity,
It hides all faults, or so they say.

Do not bow down before your foes;
Their gloating is a torment dire.
The mean cannot be generous
No thirst was ever quenched by Fire.

To wait will not reduce your daily bread;
Nor is there increase found through anxious dread.

Sadness and joy do not endure,
And neither ease, nor times of dearth,
But he whose soul may rest content
Is as the owner of the earth.

He whose house is touched by doom,
Heaven and earth will not relieve.
God's earth is vast, but at fate's fall
The whole of space gives no reprieve.

Then let the days betray at every breath;
There is no cure can cure man of death

(Dickins et al, 2017, p, 61)

As for Jabak's translation, it does not follow the form or structure of the source poem. Instead, Jabak follows the form of English poetry. Again, by just looking at the target text below (Target text 2) and the way the lines are arranged, one can easily recognize it as an English poem. It is clear that each line of the source poem is translated into two lines in English so as to adhere to the form or structure of English poems. This means that the target text consists of twenty-six lines which are double the number of lines in the source poem. However, Jabak's translated poem looks like one long stanza

which adheres to the source poem in this particular aspect, unlike Dickins' translation which consists of eight stanzas as has been mentioned earlier. So, Dickins departed from the source poem structure completely and adhered to the target poem's structure, whereas Jabak departed from the source poem's general form in terms of the number of lines, but he adhered to the source poem in terms of the number of stanzas. However, the choices made by both translators with regard to the form of the target text or poem were probably made so that the target reader could easily identify the translation as a poem by merely looking at its form or structure.

Target text 2

Let days do what they will,
 And be content when fate treats you ill.
 Don't be afflicted by nights' events,
 for transient are their short moments.
 Be a man of fortitude in adversity.
 Let tolerance and loyalty be your quality.
 If your sins multiply as time goes by,
 Let it please you to pass them by.
 Let charity cover all your sins.
 As charity covers a multitude of sins.
 Never show humiliation to the enemy,
 For his joy at your trouble is a calamity.
 Never ask a miser to be lofty,
 For fire gives no water to the thirsty.
 Patience doesn't reduce sustenance,
 Just as drudgery makes no extra finance.
 Nor sorrow or pleasure lasts forever,
 Nor wretchedness or welfare either.
 When your heart is contented,
 You and the richest are equaled.
 When one is struck by disasters,
 No earth or heaven is their protectors.
 Allah's land is big and vast.
 Yet in trouble it turns to dust.
 Let days act on stealth,
 For remedy doesn't stop death.

(Jabak, 2020, pp, 94-95)

As for the second consideration of the present study which is meaning, Dickins' translation (Target text 1) conveys the meaning of the source poem as literal translation and idiomatic translation seem to be the two most noticeable strategies adopted by the translator to do so. Examples of literal translation include 'line 1: Let the days do what they will, line 10: It hides all faults, or so they say, line 14: No thirst was ever quenched by Fire' to name a few. Examples of idiomatic translation include 'line 15: To wait will not reduce your daily bread, line 16: Nor is there increase found through anxious dread, line 25: Then let the days betray at every breath' to specify a few. It should be mentioned here that the vocabulary used in the source poem along with the structure of the sentences is simple and unsophisticated which makes the translator's task relatively easy as long as meaning is concerned. One possible reason for the clear and easy diction of the source poem could be that the poem is meant for ordinary Arab and Muslim people as it comes from a Muslim scholar who wants to give advice on general values, virtues and principles such as contentment, patience, generosity and the like. As for Jabak's (Target text 2) translation with reference to meaning, it can be said that the translator preserves the meaning of the source poem in his translation as he also seems to adopt literal translation and idiomatic translation as strategies for conveying the meaning expressed in the source poem. Examples of literal translation include 'line 1: Let days do what they will, line 11: Never show humiliation to the enemy, line 17: Nor sorrow or pleasure lasts forever' to mention just a few. Examples of idiomatic translation include 'line 2: And be content when fate treats you ill, line 10: As charity covers a multitude of sins, line 15: Patience doesn't reduce sustenance' to mention a few.

With regard to sound which is the third element of poetry under investigation in this study, Dickins' translation follows a specific rhyme scheme (a b c b, d d, e f g f, h i, j k l l, m n o n, p q r q, s s) and one has to read it in accordance with this rhyme scheme so that the audience, hearers or readers can both recognize the musicality of the poem and interact with it aesthetically. Dickins also makes use of a poetic device very common in English poetry which is alliteration in order to create another aesthetic impact on the audience, hearers or readers. Examples of alliteration include (line 1: days do, line 2: face fate's, line 15: wait will, line 23: fate's fall, line 26: cure can cure). Dickins' translation makes use of assonance which is also common in English poetry and brings about musicality and rhythm. Examples of assonance include (line 4: cease to be, line 5: with firm decision, line 7: many in men's, line 10: they say, line 11: bow down before your, line 24: gives no reprieve, line 25: then let the days betray, line 26: cure can cure man).

Jabak's translation also follows a specific rhyme scheme which is different from the rhyme scheme followed by Dickins. The rhyme scheme followed by Jabak can easily be recognized as each two lines rhyme the same or end with the same sound. So, the rhyme scheme is (a a, b b, c c, d d, e e, f f, g g, h h, i i, j j, k k, l l, m m). The translation should be read while taking into account this rhyme scheme so that it has musical and aesthetic effects on the listeners or readers. Jabak also makes use of some poetic devices related to sound in English poetry. For example, the translation shows few examples of alliteration such as (line 1: days do, line 5: of fortitude, line 14: for fire, line 24: trouble it turns to) and assonance such as (line 2: be content when, line 3: by nights, line 7: time goes by, line 9: all your, line 10: covers a multitude, line 16: just as drudgery, line 17: nor sorrow or)

The fourth element of poetry under investigation in this study with reference to Dickins' and Jabak's translations is imagery. A close examination of the target texts revealed two approaches which seem to have been adopted by both translators. These are the transference of an image in the source text to the target text, i.e., keeping the original image as it is and conveying it into the target text without making any changes to it, and the replacement of an image in the source text with a different image in the target text, i.e., changing the original image into another image in the target text which has a similar meaning and effect.

The images expressed in the third and fourth lines of the source poem are preserved in Dickins' translation which tends here to be more source-text oriented. Dickins also keeps the image expressed in the fifth line of the source poem in his translation when he says "Wrap up in magnanimity / It hides all faults, or so they say". Again, source text images are followed in Dickins' translation of the sixth line of the Arabic poem as he says "Do not bow down before your foes / Their gloating is a torment dire". Dickins also keeps the same image expressed in the second half of the sixth line of the Arabic poem as he says "No thirst was ever quenched by Fire". The images expressed in Lines 9, 10 and 13 of the Arabic poem are also preserved in Dickins' translation of these lines.

In conveying the image expressed in the second half of the first line of the source text to the target text, Dickins used a different image with a similar meaning and effect. The image expressed in "وطب و نفساً إذا حكم القضاء" is of someone who should still feel good when fate is harsh on him/her. Dickins expressed a different image when he said "And with good cheer face fate's decree". He also changed the image expressed in the first half of the second line of the source text. The image expressed in "ولا تجزع لحادثة الليالي" is of someone who should not despair because of one unhappy incident. Dickins expressed a different image when he translated this part as "Let night's events cause no concern". Dickins changed the image expressed in the first half of the sixth line of the Arabic poem in his translation when he said "The mean cannot be generous", while in the source line the image is of a miser who cannot be generous. He also changed the image expressed in the seventh line of the Arabic poem when he translated it as "To wait will not reduce your daily bread / Nor is there increase found through anxious dread", whereas the image in the source line is related to one's sustenance which is more general than one's bread. The image in Lines 11 and 12 of the source poem are slightly changed in Dickins' translation of these lines. The image expressed in the source lines is that of man's helplessness in the face of death, i.e., when one's number is up, there is no escape from death although the world is a big place!

With regard to Jabak's translation (Target text 2), it also seems that he adopted the same two approaches to the translation of images which are the adherence to the source text's images, i.e., conveying the source images without any change, and replacing the source images with different images that would sound more intelligible in the target language while maintaining a similar effect. As far as the first approach is concerned, the image expressed in the first line of the Arabic poem is also preserved in the translation "Let days do what they will/ And be content if fate treats you ill". Jabak used this strategy with the translation of the second line of the Arabic poem "Be a man of fortitude in adversity/ Let tolerance and loyalty be your quality". In adhering to the image expressed in the third and fourth lines of the Arabic poem, Jabak made use of a famous English proverb derived originally from the Bible "Charity covers a multitude of sins". The images expressed in the sixth, seventh, eighth, ninth and tenth lines of the Arabic poem are also preserved in Jabak's translation.

As far as the second approach to translating images which is the substitution of images in the source text for different images in the target text with a similar meaning and effect, a close examination of Jabak's translation revealed three examples where this approach was followed. The first example is the translation of the second line of the Arabic poem. The image expressed in the source text is that one should not despair when one is struck by an unhappy incident as such incidents never last "فَمَا لِحَوَادِثِ الدُّنْيَا بَقَاءٌ" "وَلَا تَجْرَعُ لِحَادِثَةِ اللَّيَالِي". The image expressed and stressed in Jabak's translation of this line is that of the ephemeral nature of events in general as nothing remains the same or lasts forever "Don't be afflicted by nights' events/ for transient are their short moments". The

second example of this approach is the translation of the twelfth line of the source poem. The image expressed in the twelfth line of the Arabic poem is that of no escape from fate although the earth is a big and fast place. The image is “وَأَرْضُ اللَّهِ وَاسِعَةٌ وَلَكِنْ إِذَا نَزَلَ الْقَضَا ضَاقَ الْفَضَاءُ”. The translation of this image renders a slightly different image with a close meaning and effect “Allah's land is big and vast / Yet in trouble it turns to dust”. The image expressed in this translation is that when one gets in trouble, the earth becomes of no help, despite its bigness and fastness! The third and last example is the translation of the last line of the Arabic poem. The image expressed in the source line is that of the treacherous nature of life and the ineffectiveness of medicine in the face of death “دَعِ الْأَيَّامَ تَعْدُرُ كُلَّ جِبِينٍ فَمَا يُعْجِي عَنِ الْمَوْتِ الدَّوَاءُ”. However, the image expressed in the translation is that of the stealthy nature of days/life and the ineffectiveness of medicine in the face of death. In this example, part of the image is changed probably in quest of a rhyming word for “death”.

4. Conclusion

The present study provided a somewhat critical review of the literature available on the translation of Arabic poetry into English and focused on comparing two English translations of a famous Arabic poem by Mohammad ibn Idris al-Shafi’I known in Arabic as “دع الأيام تفعل” which translates into English as “Let days do what they will”. This contrastive study compared two English translations of the above-mentioned poem in terms of form, meaning, sound and imagery. The findings revealed some differences in both translations with reference to the above-mentioned poetic features. The following table provides a summary of the main findings on these features.

Table 1. Summary of main findings

Target texts	Poetic features			
	Form	Meaning	Sound	Imagery
Dickins’ translation (Target text 1)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Follows the form of English poetry Has eight stanzas 	Preserves meaning of the source poem through two strategies: literal translation and idiomatic translation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Follows a rhyme scheme that is hard to detect for general readers/listeners Makes use of alliteration and assonance 	Uses two approaches to the translation of images: keeping source images in the target text and replacing source images with different images in the target text
Jabak’s translation (Target text 2)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Follows the form of English poetry Has one stanza (the same as the source text) 	Preserves meaning of the source poem through two strategies: literal translation and idiomatic translation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Follows a recognizable rhyme scheme as each two lines rhyme the same Makes use of alliteration and assonance 	Uses two approaches to the translation of images: keeping source images in the target text and replacing source images with different images in the target text

As the above table shows, there are more similarities than differences between the two English translations of the Arabic poem under investigation with reference to the elements of comparison targeted in this study. What is interesting about these findings is that although the translators belong to two different cultures, their approaches to the translation of the Arabic poem are very similar. Based on these findings, the researcher suggests conducting large-scale studies on the translation of other old or modern Arabic poems into English to see if similar or different results can be obtained. Other studies can examine or compare two or more English translations of one or more Arabic poems with reference to poetic elements or features other than the ones explored in the present study.

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