

## Self-Translation: Faithful Rendition or Rewriting in Gibran's the Prophet

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### Abstract

This study aims at investigating the act of self-translation and whether it is a faithful rendition or a rewriting process. The study examined a self-translated book from English into Arabic called *the Prophet* by the famous American Lebanese author, Gibran Khalih Gibran. This study aims to investigate the true nature of Self-Translation practice whether it is an adequate translation or a rewriting of the original version. This self-translation is examined in light of what alterations and changes are done by the writer/translator, and to which extent the translator is faithful to his source text (English version). Twenty examples were selected from Gibran's *the Prophet* and were compared to their translation in the Arabic version. These examples include words, phrases, sentences and sometimes whole paragraphs. The data were analyzed according to the Discourse Analysis (DA) Theory, especially based on linguistic and semantic perspectives. Further, the examples from both versions were compared and the differences were highlighted and discussed. The study finds that Gibran was translating rather than rewriting into Arabic.

**Keywords:** Self-Translation, Faithful, Rendition, Rewriting, Gibran, the Prophet.

### 1. Introduction

Since the emergence of translation studies as an academic discipline, the phenomenon of self-translation is rarely brought up, and it was not until recently that self-translation started getting close attention and became an object of theoretical studies. Although many well-known writers, philosophers, and scholars have translated their own works, their translations were usually not advertised as a work of self-translation, and mostly books of such kind are read without taking into consideration the fact that they were wrote and translated by the same person. Self-translation is "the act of translating one's own writings" (Grutman 2014, 323). It is often regarded as superior to conventional translations; because "the writer-translator is no doubt felt to have been in a better position to recapture the intentions of the author of the original than any ordinary translator" (Fitch 1988, 125). In other words, the degree of the ST and the TT equivalence is extremely high in self-translated works. Authors may be encouraged to self-translate due to various reasons such as cultural dominance of a specific language in a multilingual society which may encourage the minority language speakers to self-translate to the dominant language or

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due to the globalization in which a specific language dominate internationally, thus authors tend to translate their works from their national language to an internationally recognized language like English. Emigration is another reason behind self-translation and it is to be discussed through this study.

## **2. Literature Review**

### *2.1 Faithfulness (fidelity) in translation*

Translation critics have many different opinions on what faithfulness in translation is. Some said that it is just a word-for-word transmission of the message of the SL into the TL, while others believe that fidelity to the source text is achieved by adopting the free, idiomatic method in passing on the message. (Guralnik 1979, 100) says that "faithfulness/fidelity" means "the quality of being accurate, reliable, and exact". Opinions varies but in general it revolves around that fidelity in translation is passing of the message from one language SL into another TL by producing the same effect in the TL in a way that the reader of the TT would react exactly as the reader of the original ST. The relationship of fidelity between the original text and its translation was always one of the biggest concerns for translators, but the problem is that the translator cannot be faithful to all contextual factors. In their book, Farghal and Shunnaq, explains that the translator is in the center of contextual factors triangle, to show the dynamic role he plays by deciding the techniques he is going to use while translating, depending on the weight that he assigns to each of the three contextual factors. This takes us back to fidelity and the necessity of the translator to decide to whom, and to what the supposed fidelity pertains. Is it fidelity to the source culture, to the receiving culture or to the original text? And to what extent can a translator be accurate or exact in his translation? The most important question is, whether these problems will be solved if the author of the original text and its translator were the same person! And whether this author- translator will be able to add to the translation of his text what conventional translators cannot.

### *2.2 Bilingualism and Self-Translation*

Bilingualism is the phenomenon of understanding and speaking two languages. It can refer to individuals as well as an entire society. The ideal bilingual would have two completely separate linguistic systems; therefore never mix languages at any level. Bilingualism can be attained in many different ways. It could be simultaneous; this is when a child learns multiple languages simultaneously within its social environment, or successively acquired during different phases of life, or by means of instructions, like learning languages at school. It should be noted that being a bilingual does not necessarily means being a translator. People would often consider this as a lack of proficiency in the language of the bilingual person. In fact, it has nothing to do with a lack of proficiency. Usually, bilinguals learn and use each language in different situations thus, finding an equivalent to certain words in certain context requires a lot of concentration, and even then sometimes these words would not be found because they simply doesn't exist in the second language. In such case, a translator would use one of translation strategies, of which a bilingual is not familiar with; hence bilinguals are not necessarily good at translating. Being able to speak two languages means being able to step into another culture, this moves us to self-translation.

Self-translators are usually bilinguals or multilingual. In other words, they know how to attract and reach to people from different cultures, therefore know better how to translate their works to what suits the target culture and still keeps the soul of the source text and its culture at the same time. As we previously mentioned this was widely criticized and different theories and opinions about this specific point were introduced. An analysis of the self-translated novel, *I Mitriki Glossa into French La Langue Maternelle*, was presents by (Bran 2016). The novel was written in Greek and translated into French by the author/translator Vassilis Alexakis. Bran's study examined the differences between the two versions of the novel although they both almost the same in content. Bran argues that Alexakis rewrote some parts of the novel to make them more comprehensible to the French reader. He also pointed out how a work could be affected by its author's bilingualism and multilingualism, since there are many linguistic, cultural, and social and aspects that to be considered while determining the translation or rewriting act. (Bran 2016, 123) also argues that self-translators, depending on their bilingualism and multilingualism, usually "aim to (re)write texts into another language, making different linguistic and stylistic choices and applying a set of transformation techniques and strategies". He also discusses how an author that masters two (or more) languages would be the ideal person to "render the linguistic content, the meaning, the feelings and the attitudes of a literary work", simply because he/she knows better what message he/she wants to transfer and will try to translate it as faithfully as possible. after analyzing the two versions of Alexakis's, Greek and French, Bran concluded that one can simply say that Alexakis's self-translation of the novel, could be considered as an act of rewriting, and that self-translation allowed him to change some parts and add explanations, which would not be possible if translated by someone else.

Another study about Self-Translation and Bilingualism was presented by Sabljo (2011). The main concern of that study was some of self-translated works from English into Croatian language by Samuel Beckett, an Irish multilingual writer and a self-translator who wrote almost in more than four languages (French, Irish, English, and Croatian), and then self-translated his works from each language into another. Sabljo introduced Beckett as the most popular figure in Self-Translation field, and as a writer who wrote his works in two languages at the same time. The study considers self-translation as "a double writing process than a two-stage reading/writing activity". She presented, in her study, some of the theoretical studies and books about Beckett's self-translation. She discusses Beckett's choice to translate his work to the languages where he believed his work fit and the effect of that, as she believes that translating his works form English into French gave Beckett a chance to create a TLT that is different than the SLT and allowed him to control the style of the text more.

Self-translation is the translation of a work into another language by the author himself. Although that it has enjoyed a long rich history during the Middle Ages, this phenomenon has only recently become of interest to researchers. It has also been studied from an ontological point of view as a form of double representation of the writing self, and studies of particular self-translators, have explored the process as a problematic site of identity construction (Wilson 2009). Some theorists claim that it is very difficult to find what distinct self-translators of bilingual writers. Some argue that since the definition of self-translation involves the practice of translating person's own writing as (Grutman 2009) illustrates, which

by default includes bilingual writing, then, the difference between the two disappears. Many also argue that self-translators enjoy a freedom that is not given to translators of texts written by somebody else and this is not new in the literature because ownership of the text grants the author/translator a special freedom which some call "authorial freedom". For instance, Fitch observes in his study on the self-translating activity of Beckett, that the author ignored the latest version of the French text of *Bing* when he used an earlier version of it and translated it into the English *Ping*. This observation leads him to ask: "were he not also the author of the original text, would we not have said that he had 'taken liberties' with the letter?" (Fitch 1988, 77). Fitch then answers his own question, saying that "no person other than Beckett, no 'mere translator', could have produced the text of *Ping*" (Fitch 1988, 78). Many others like Anselmi, deny self-translation being an activity that allows greater freedom than conventional translation, she argues that considering self-translation as a process that gives "authorial-freedom" means forgetting that translation in general is a creative activity. Anselmi, however, admits that self-translators have more freedom when translating their works than conventional translators, but she limits this freedom to changing the text to "the requirements imposed by the new writing context" (Anselmi 2012, 51). (Bandin 2015) describes self-translation as a phenomenon that is common in postcolonial contexts, especially in African countries. This phenomenon, that she argues is neglected in the field of translation studies, was then described by her as the process where bilingual authors transfer their own work from a language into another. She also adds that, in self-translation the concepts of SL and TL are blurred because the author/translator, as she believes, is "competent" in both languages; therefore both versions of the self-translated work are to be considered original.

Bandin argues that, principles of equivalence or adequacy do not limit self-translation, and that self-translation is, more accurately to be considered, as a recreation of the original work which will give bring a "new original" to life.

Bandin confirms that there is a strong relationship between self-translation and the concepts of bilingualism, and biculturalism as well as language, culture, and society and that self-translation could not be analyzed in isolation of these concepts. Bandin also relates self-translation to the notions of "identity and hybridization" the reason is that authors/translators are bilingual due to their "bilingual identity". She also illustrates that self-translation should be analyzed from the angle of "postcolonial theory" referring to authors who have resorted to self-translation as a result to "imperialism and colonialism" especially in Africa. Bandin then introduces and examines several examples of African self-translators who translated from their mother tongue into English or French. She then clarifies that the reason behind why the authors/translators she introduced were able to write a work and translate it from the native language into English or French, is that they have what she calls "a hybrid identity" which makes them able to create a work that fits both languages and both cultures.

### 2.3 *Studies on the Phenomenon of Self-Translation over the World*

Samar Attar, a self-translator novelist, made a study where she discusses the concepts of literary self-translation, and talks about her experience as a self-translator in both Arabian and English cultures. She mentions that reason why she chose to self-translate her novels: *Lina*, and *The House On Arnus Square*

was not to exercise her bilingualism and biculturalism like Samuel Beckett did, but rather as a response to continuous attempts to silence her voice as a novelist. She also explains how the self-translation made her more visible and gave her the voice that she did not enjoy as a writer in Arabic. Attar goes further in her essay to give some reflections on how the translation process of self-translators differs from conventional translators' where self-translators do not engage the two-stage process of reading-writing, but rather a double writing process". She also argues that self-translators' emphasis is usually installed on issues such as context and textuality, history and literary conventions, whereas the emphasis of conventional translators goes on equivalence between SLT and TLT.

As he studied self-translated works for the authors Rosario Ferré and Maria Luisa Bombal, (Byrkjeland 2013) points out that the reasons of considering the self-translation of those authors as an important area to be studied is that, they both translated core parts of their own writing and, they both modified their texts during translation process, so they removed, added, and rewrote many parts of their original works. Hence, it became difficult for the reader to distinct the original and the translated version. Byrkjeland illustrates that such phenomenon is not new in the field of translation, and was known among poets of the Middle Ages who translated their works between Latin and English. Byrkjeland, also discusses the self-translated work of Rosario Ferré, which was translated from French *Malditoamor* into English *Sweet Diamond Dust* and the additions she put in the translated version for cultural purposes. He as well discusses what he called "radical changes" that was made by Maria Luisa Bombal when she translated *La amortajada* into English *The Shrouded Woman* and her adding new chapters and characters that do not exist in the original version. Byrkjeland considers what she did as unjustified act, and claimed that this is done by most self-translators.

In his study, (Byrkjeland 2013, 23) argues that self-translators should stick to their originals when translating and not to make any major changes that would make distinguishing between the original and translated version difficult. However, he also adds that he is not against any kind of changes that takes place during self- translation or translation in general, and that there is no translation that does not involve "some violence on the original, that does not make thorough or dramatic changes to the original. Through the analysis of Ferré and Bombal self-translated works, Byrkjeland, says that a translation is normally considered as a weak replacement for the original. He declares that the main reason for why self-translations differ from the originals and that self-translators feel free to make changes is that they do not consider translation as a faithful transfer of a pre-existing text from a language into another, but they rather consider self-translation as a way to "refashion" their works. As he discusses the factors that made Ferré and Bombal self-translate their works, Byrkjeland argues that Bombal's act of self-translation was "a way of reinventing *La amortajada* a decade after it was first published". He, also, claims that she was dissatisfied with a translation of the same work by another translator, therefore, decided to translate it herself. However, he mentions that to Ferré self-translation was a creative process.

Richters (2012) has made a study about self-translation. The Methods Richters follows in her study were not only theoretical, but practical as well. And in her study, she puts the light on categories and concepts related to self-translation with as she introduces some previous definitions to the phenomenon of

self-translation, and then emphasizes completely on Nancy Huston, a French writer and self-translator, as well as some of her self-translated works from French into English and German. Richter's analysis, in both English and French, looked into the reasons to consider Nancy Huston a self-translator, and the reasons behind her choosing to translate her works by herself. Many other names appeared in the self-translation field such as Vladimir Nabokov (Russian and English), Samuel Beckett (English and French), and Julian Green (English and French). (Richters 2012, 9-10) also examines the reasons for them to resort to self-translation; she believes that it seems logical to think that one of the main reasons for these authors to self-translate is to reach more audience.

When talking about modernized self-translators who contributed in bringing creative ideas to the field of self-translation, Miroslav Penkov is always mentioned (A Bulgarian-American author and self-translator whose stories have been translated in over a dozen languages), he self-translated almost all of his works from Bulgarian into English and vice versa. Penkov believes that the content determines if it could be translated by any proper translator or if the author is the one that should translate is since the content depends on his own intentions. When he was asked about the variations he found after the act of self-translation and whether any parts got rewritten in a way or another or not, Penkov (the rumpus: 2016) illustrated:

I wouldn't call it a translation because that would be disrespectful to literary translators throughout the world who try to stay true to the author's work. I took great liberties with my sentences. Because it is in first person, in essence I had to rebuild the voice, so I allowed myself great, great liberties.

### **3. Statement of the Problem**

The neglecting of self-translation led to a shortage in the studies that talk about it as well as those who self-translate their works. "Self-translator has been a relatively neglected species within the menagerie of translators" (Cordingley 2013, 1). There is an argument among translation theorists on whether self-translation can be viewed as a rewriting, translating or reediting process. This study hypothesizes that self-translation is the act of rewriting. It examines the English and Arabic versions of *The Prophet* by the famous writer Gibran Khalil Gibran as a model. The study reviews some of the most important literature on the topic self-translation and the most prominent figures involved in.

### **4. Objectives of the Study**

The study aims at achieving the following objectives:

- 1) Discussing self-translation and finding out whether the process of self-translation can be considered as a faithful rendition or rewriting and modifications.
- 2) Investigating the act of self-translation as Gibran's self-translated *The Prophet* into Arabic, by providing examples from the English and Arabic version of the book.
- 3) Explaining to which extent is self-translation a practice of an author's bilingualism and biculturalism.

## 5. Significance of the Study

The significance of the study stems from being an attempt to shed some light on a neglected but interesting aspect in translation studies which is self-translation. Self-translation is widely criticized and many arguments against self-translation claim that the person least qualified to translate a certain text, is the person who wrote it and that there is no point of writing in two languages if this will, at the end, produce the same kind of text in each.

## 6. Methodology

### 6.1 Data collection

The main concern of this study is to find whether self-translation is to be considered as a faithful rendition or rewriting. To achieve this, the researcher read thoroughly Gibran's literary work *The Prophet* and compared it to its self-translated version into Arabic *An-Nabi*. The researcher adopted this book in his study as a model to investigate the act of self-translation aiming to detect the results that may appear in self-translated works, and selected twenty examples that focus on cultural and religious aspect. Moreover, the researcher selected the twenty examples that are recognized to include some rewriting, addition or omission that don't exist in the (ST) or not translated at all in the (TT).

### 6.2 Data analysis

The collected data from the original and the translated texts was compared and analysed; then the researcher decided what differences appeared between each example and its suggested translation and whether they were faithfully translated or rewritten, then identified points of weakness in the translation based on the linguistic and semantic variations found between the original version and the translated one.

Given that the central aim of translation is to preserve original meaning, a discourse approach would seem to be of great help to describe and explain the selected examples. Discourse Analysis provides translators with resources for achieving objectivity and for making and justifying translation decisions. The study, therefore, draws on DA approach that, according to Munday (2001) gained prominent status in TS in the 1990s. The term 'discourse' as used by Hatim and Mason (1997, 216) refers to the "modes of speaking and writing which involve social groups in adopting a particular attitude towards areas of socio-cultural activity.

## 7. Analysis and Discussion

This part of the study focuses mainly on analyzing the data collected by the researcher. Twenty examples from the selected book (*The Prophet*) were introduced. Each example of the following accompanied with its Arabic translation is analyzed and discussed, taking into consideration the main concern of this study which is to find whether the self-translation action in Gibran's *The Prophet* is to be considered as a faithful translation or a rewriting process.

**Example One:**

ST: And in the twelfth year, on the seventh day of lelool, the month of reaping, **he** climbed the hill without the city walls and looked seaward; and he beheld his ship coming with the mist. **Then the gates of heart were flung open, and his joy flew far over the sea.** And he closed his eyes and prayed in the **silences of his soul.** (P: 1)

TT: وفي السنة الثانية عشرة، في السابع من أيلول (سبتمبر)، شهر الحصاد، ارتقى المصطفى التل فيما وراء أسوار المدينة، ورمى ببصره إلى البحر، فلمح سفينته تأتي مع الغمام. وهنا انفرج شغاف قلبه، وطارت فرحته بعيداً حتى رفّت على البحر، وأطبق المصطفى عينيه يردد الصلوات في محراب السكون من روحه. (ص:1)

In the example, Gibran adds in the TT metaphors and uses a flowery language. He almost changes the whole style in order to make it more natural in Arabic. He also adds another metaphor to the metaphor already exists to describe joy, as he said (رفّت) which means (moved its wings in order to fly). Gibran compares the silence of the soul with a (محراب) which is a recess that is usually found in mosques and churches and usually used to put a statue in it or for a preach to stand and give a speech. This example shows that Gibran does not literally translate all words, but rather makes some changes in order to make the TLT effective and expressive.

**Example Two:**

ST: And you, vast sea, **sleeping mother**, Who alone are peace and freedom to the river and the stream, (P: 3).

TT: وأنت أيها البحر الفسيح، بل الأم الهاجعة، يا من في صدرك وحدك يجد النهر والجدول السلام والحرية. (ص:3)

In the above example, if we look up the translation of the word (sleep) we will find that it is a One-to-many-equivalence as it could be (رقاد) (هجوم) (نوم) each word of the previous has its own meaning and denotes different meanings according to their semantic features. For instance (نوم) is the normal sleep of the body and the mind and it recurs for several hours every night and is mentioned in the Qur'an " وَمِنْ آيَاتِهِ " (Ar-Room 30:23). (رقاد) on the other hand, means the long and deep type of sleeping and is mentioned in the Qur'an in the story of the Seven Sleepers. " وَتَحْسِبُهُمْ أَيْقَاطًا وَهُمْ رُقُودٌ وَنَقَلْنَاهُمْ ذَاتَ الْيَمِينِ وَذَاتَ الشَّمَالِ وَكَلَبْنَاهُمْ بَاسِطَ زُرْعِيهِ بِالْوَصِيدِ لَوْ " (Al-Kahf 18:18).<sup>2</sup> If we now look at the word Gibran decided to use (هجوم) we will find that this word means very short sleep "كَانُوا قَلِيلًا مِّنَ اللَّيْلِ مَا يَهْجَعُونَ"<sup>3</sup> (Adh-Dhariyat 51:17). The use of this specific word is very clever; because the author/translator is creating an image of the calmness of the sea. He also keeps in mind that the sea is calm for a short time before the winds and the waves interrupt this calmness. Gibran also compares the sea to the sleeping



mother (الأم الهاجعة). The sea is the mother of all the living creatures and the mother tends to sleep lightly at night because she is always worried about her children. Here, Gibran's bilingualism is very obvious, and we can see his ability to express his feelings and give the audience the effect he wants with the same strength using the suitable words in the suitable places.

**Example Three:**

ST: And the **priests** and the priestesses said unto him: Let not the waves of the sea separate us now, and the years you have spent in our midst become a memory. **You have walked among us a spirit.** (P: 6)

TT: وانبرى شيوخ المدينة بقولهم: بريك لا تدع أمواج البحر تفرق بيننا هكذ سريعاً، ولا تجعل السنين التي قضيتها بين ظهرانينا تؤول إلى ذكرى؛ فقد كنت ظهيرة في شفقنا، (ص: 51)

In this example, Gibran translates the word (Priests), which could be literally translated as (كهنة), as (شيوخ). This word has Islamic connotation that means a person of the most influential *Ulama*<sup>4</sup>, and is authorized to give *Fatwas*<sup>5</sup>, to guide, to teach, and to initiate the Islamic faith. He also replaces the image in the SLT with a different image in the TLT. He first compares Al Mustafa to a spirit that awakens among people to brighten their world and give life to it. In the TLT, however, Gibran replaces that image with an image that gives the same effect as he uses (كنت ظهيرة في شفقنا) which can be literally translated as (You was a midday in our twilight) but it actually means (You brighten up our day when the sun does not shine). In other words, (You help us to get through our hard days). The same function is transferred but with different words and images.

**Example Four:**

ST: Yet this we ask ere you leave us, that **you speak to us** and give us your truth. (P: 8)

TT: غير أننا نسألك قبل أن ترحل عنا: أن تخطب فينا وتزودنا بما عندك من الحق. (ص: 55)

In the above example, we have (You speak to us) which means (تتحدث معنا). Gibran translates it as (تخطب فينا) and a *khutbah*/خطبة/ in Islam refers mainly to the sermon given at the mosque during the Friday congregational prayer (*salat al-jumu'ah*)<sup>6</sup>. It can also refer to the sermons in the two festival days, Eid Al-Fitr and Eid Al-Adha. The reason behind selecting (تخطب) instead of (تتحدث); may be that the person ask to do this speech (خطبة) is a prophet and it is mentioned in Islam that prophet Mohammad delivered many sermons and speeches. It should be also noted that the word *khutbah*/خطبة/ denotes public preaching which is what Almitra was asking Al Mustafa to do in the lines above.

**Example Five:**

ST: In your aloneness you have watched with our days, and in your wakefulness you have listened to the weeping and laughter of **our sleep**. **Now therefore disclose us to ourselves** and tell us all that has been shown you of that which is between birth and death. (P: 8-9)

TT: في وحدتك كنت تراقب أيامنا، وفي يقظتك كنت تصغي إلى ما يتخلل غفلاتنا من بكاء وضحك. والآن نضرع لك أن تكشف خبايانا لنفوسنا، وتطلعنا بكل ما أظهر لك من علم على ما يقوم بين المهد واللحد. (ص: 8-9)

In this example, Gibran uses the word (غفلاتنا) as a translation of (Our sleep) instead of simply using (نومنا)<sup>7</sup> which is the literal translation of the word. The reason behind this is that he saw the word (غفلة)<sup>7</sup> gives better the meaning he is trying to transfer to the reader. He also adds the word (نضرع), which means (we adjure and beg you), to the TLT. The effect in the TLT is stronger than the SLT as the author/translator is not faithful to the structure but he prefers to add a special touch to the TLT and create a new effect. We cannot say that Gibran rewrites this whole sentence and we cannot also ignore the manipulation he does in order to clarify the idea to the TLT audience. He also benefits from his bilingualism and finds a word that would affect the TLT reader better.

**Example Six:**

ST: **Verily** you are suspended like scales between your sorrow and your joy. (P: 31)

TT: لعمرى إنكم لمعلقون مثل كفتي الميزان بين أحزانكم وأفراحكم (ص: 31)

In this example, Gibran chooses to replace the equivalent word of (verily), which means (truly) in English and (صدقاً) in Arabic, with a word that suits the Arabic culture more (لعمرى) which can be literally translated as (by my life). This word is used in the Qur'an "لَعْمَرُكَ إِنَّهُمْ لَفِي سَكْرَتِهِمْ يَعْمَهُونَ" (Al-Hijr 15:72) which leads us to notice that Gibran used a more "emotive" word in order to effect and touch the TL audience as an audience from a Muslim majority countries.

**Example Seven:**

ST: Have you remembrance, the glimmering arches that span the **summits of the mind**? Have you beauty, that leads the heart from things fashioned of wood and stone to holy mountains? Tell me, **have you these in your houses**? (P: 33)

TT: أعتدكم الذكريات؛ تلك الأحناء الواهجة التي تعقد بين نرى الأفكار؟ أم عندكم الجمال يسمو بقلوبكم من أفق الأشياء التي سويت من خشب وحجر إلى الجبل المقدس؟ حدثوني أتعمر هذه الأشياء بيوتكم؟ (ص: 33)

In this example, Gibran is an author who lived most of his life abroad in an English speaking country. He is of a great wit and knows what is acceptable and what is not in the Arabic language. (Summits of your mind) could be literary translated as (قمة أذهانكم) which may be acceptable for some, but anyone who knows Arabic deeply, would immediately notice that the sentence is not fully right and

that it is odd. Gibran knows how to make sentences appear in a natural way. He translates the above as (نرى الأفكار) instead. Gibran also adds a metaphor to the TLT when he translates (Have you these in your houses) into (أتعمر هذه الأشياء بيوتكم). He compares the virtues Al Mustafa is telling his people about with columns that keeps houses stand.

#### Example Eight:

ST: But these things are not yet to be. In their fear your forefathers gathered you too near together. **And that fear shall endure a little longer.** A little longer shall your city walls separate your hearths from your fields. (P: 33)

TT: ولكن لم يحن أوان ذلك بعد؛ فقد تملك الخوف قلوب أسلافكم؛ فحشروكم حشراً. وليبقيين هذا الخوف إلى حين، وإلى حين ستبقى أسوار مدينتكم حوائل بين بيوتكم وحقولكم. (ص: 33)

The influence of the Qur'an is obvious in this example as Gibran used the style of the Qur'an instead of conventionally translating the sentence. Gibran could have translated the above sentence as ( سيدوم ) (الخوف لوقت طويل) but he used words with the same style of the words in Qur'an. For illustration, in Surah Al-Baqara " فَأَزَلَّهُمَا الشَّيْطَانُ عَنْهَا فَأَخْرَجَهُمَا مِمَّا كَانَا فِيهِ وَقَلْنَا اهْبُطُوا بَعْضُكُمْ لِبَعْضٍ عَدُوٌّ وَلَكُمْ فِي الْأَرْضِ مُسْتَقَرٌّ وَمَتَاعٌ " [2:36] إلى حين"

" [2:155] "وَلَنَبْلُوَنَّكُمْ بِشَيْءٍ مِّنَ الْخَوْفِ وَالْجُوعِ وَنَقْصٍ مِّنَ الْأَمْوَالِ وَالْأَنْفُسِ وَالثَّمَرَاتِ وَبَشِّرِ الصَّابِرِينَ"

The previous verses clarify that Gibran was highly influenced by the style of the Qur'an while translating. He tries to convince his readers by citing the Quran as much as he can. This may be due the fact that the majority of the TL audience is Muslims.

#### Example Nine:

ST: **It lulls you** to sleep only to stand by your bed and **jeer at the dignity of the flesh.** It makes mock of your sound senses, and lays them in thistledown like fragile vessels. (P: 34)

TT: فهو يهدي من حدتكم لكي تناموا، وليس له من مأرب إلا أن يقف بجوار فراشكم، هازناً بحرمة أجسادكم. ثم يضحك من حواسكم الرشيدة ويلقي بها كأنها هش الأواني بين الصخور الشائكة. (ص: 86)

The word (Lull) means to sing for a baby so he/she can sleep. It is used mainly for kids but can also mean to put someone to sleep. It is the word of which the word (Lullaby) is derived from. It could be equivalently translated as (يهدد)، but Gibran used (يهدي من حدتكم) instead which means (To calm you down). Gibran also replaced the word (كرامة), the literal translation of (Dignity), with the word (حرمة) that literally means (Inviolability). The word Gibran selected has the meaning of holiness in Arabic, and is a word that a prophet like Al Mustafa is most likely to use.

**Example Ten:**

ST: Invoke then the **master spirit of the earth**, to come into your midst and sanctify the scales and the reckoning that weighs value against value. And suffer not **the barren-handed** take part in your transactions, who would sell their words for your labour. (P: 38)

TT: ابتهلوا إلى روح الأرض الوهابة أن تحل في وسطكم، وتبارك موازينكم ومعاملاتكم مثقالاً بمثقال. ولا تسمحوا للمطففين أصحاب اليد الشحيحة بالمشاركة في معاملتكم، فيبيعوكم أقوالهم نظير أعمالكم. (38)

In this example, it is obvious that Gibran was influenced by the Qur'an. The word he chose in the TT (المطففين) is derived from the first verse of Surah Al Mutaffifin in the Qur'an, " وَيَلُ لِّلْمُطَفِّفِينَ (1) الَّذِينَ إِذَا " (Al-Mutaffifin 83:1-3), and is used to refer to those who deal with fraud in their commercial dealings. The context, in which Gibran used this word, was nearly the same as the context where it was used, in the Qur'an. Therefore, Arab readers who are mostly familiar with the Qur'an will be affected in the same way as the ST audience. In other words, Gibran prefers to transfer the effect rather than being faithful to the SLT.

**Example Eleven:**

ST: Like the **ocean** is your **God-self**; it remains for ever undefiled. (40)

TT: إن ذاتكم النورانية لكالبحر العظيم؛ إلى الأبد ستظل نقية مبرأة من الدنس. (40)

In this example, Gibran decides to replace the word (الله) which is the equivalent word for (god) with (نور) which can be literally translated as (light). He also translates the word (undefiled) into (مبرأة من ) (الدنس) which is unjustified addition. Needless to say, when the context is related to God it has a different meaning. Religious language is characterized by inertia, as it has the same and unchangeable terms and concepts. Moreover, the attempt of generating new terms or concepts is risky, because of the severe criticism from the part of religious scholars. This is why a translator of religious texts has to be careful in the process of word selection.

"This is the message we have heard from him and proclaim to you, that God is light, and in him is no darkness at all" <sup>10</sup>(1 John 1:5)

"Allah is the Light of the heavens and the earth<sup>11</sup>. The example of His light is like a niche within which is a lamp, the lamp is within glass, the glass as if it were a pearly [white] star lit from [the oil of] a blessed olive tree, neither of the east nor of the west, whose oil would almost glow even if untouched by fire. Light upon light. Allah guides to His light whom He wills. And Allah presents examples for the people, and Allah is Knowing of all things." [An-Nur 24:35]

**Example Twelve:**

ST: And how prosecute you him who in action is deceiver and oppressor, Yet who also is aggrieved and **outraged**? (P: 44)

TT: وكيف تحاكمون من تتسم أفعاله بالخدیعة والعدوان، وهو نفسه قد حل به ظلم وانتهكت عنده حرمت؟ (ص:44)

The word outraged could be translated as (تعرض للأساءة). Gibran translates it as (انتهكت عنده حرمان) which is more effective than the literary translation of the word. In the above example, Gibran seeks the functional equivalence with words loaded with emotions.

#### Example Thirteen:

ST: And How Shall you punish those whose remorse is already greater than their misdeeds? Is not remorse the justice which is administered by that very law which **you would fain serve**? (P: 44)

TT: وكيف تعاقبون من فاق تأنيب ضميرهم ما قدمت أيديهم من سوء؟ أليس تأنيب الضمير هو العدالة يقيمها هذا القانون نفسه الذي يطيب لكم أن تكونوا من سدننته؟ (ص:44)

In the above example, we have the word (serve) which means (يخدم) in Arabic. Gibran in this example translates it differently into (سدانة). This word is a proper noun related to the Ka'bah<sup>12</sup> and means taking care of Ka'bah. The researcher believes that Gibran uses the word (سدانة) intentionally to influence Arabic readers and add holiness to the situation.

#### Example Fourteen:

ST: You cannot separate the just from the unjust and the good from the wicked; For they stand together before the face of the sun even **as the black thread and the white are woven together**. (P: 43)

TT: فإنك لا تستطيع أن تفرق بين العادل والظالم أو بين الأبرياء والمذنبين؛ فهم يقفان معاً أمام وجه الشمس، كما ينسج الخيط الأسود والخيط الأبيض معاً في نول واحد. (ص: 43)

In this example, Gibran adds the word (نول) which means (a Loom) to the TLT although it does not exist in the SLT. The reason behind this addition may be that Gibran saw that the idea of the sentence would be clear if the word (نول) is added. This is unjustified addition because when the threads are woven together they have to be in one place.

#### Example Fifteen:

ST: To return home at eventide with gratitude;

And then to sleep with a **prayer for the beloved in your heart and a song of praise upon your lips**. (13)

TT: وأن تعود مع الأصيل إلى مأواك يمور صدرك بالامتنان؛

ثم تخلد إلى النوم وقلبك يسبح بمن تهوى وشفقتك تتمتتان بأنشودة الحمد. (13)

In the above example, Gibran uses Islamic expressions style in the TLT. if we look deeply to the SLT, we will find that the author is influenced by Christianity and keeps using Christian terms. Gibran manipulates the words when he translates into Arabic the religious expressions. He first changes the word (prayer) which means (دعاء) In this context, it is more suitable to translate it as (صلاة<sup>13</sup>).<sup>14</sup> However, Gibran chooses to translate it as (تسبيح)<sup>15</sup>. The intention of Gibran might be to show the effect of

repetition as the act of (*Tasbīh* / تسييح) involves repeating specific word. The author/translator uses it to create an effect of thinking, non-stop, of the beloved. Gibran also changes the word (song) which means (أغنية) to (أنشودة) which is a religious term that literally means (canticle). Gibran's intention might be to give holiness to the situation and to make that love he describes appear pure.

**Example Sixteen:**

ST: They come through you but not from you, And though they are with you, yet they belong not to you. You may give them your love but not your thoughts, For they have their own thoughts. You may hose their bodies but not their souls, For their souls dwell in the house of to-morrow, **which you cannot visit, not even in your dreams.** (P: 16)

TT: بكم يخرجون إلى الحياة ولكن ليس منكم وإن عاشوا في كنفكم فما هم ملككم. قد تمنحوهم حبكم دون أفكاركم، فلهم أفكارهم. ولقد تتوون أجسادهم لا أرواحهم؛ فأرولحهم تسكن في دار الغد، وهيهات أن تلموا به، ولو في خترات أحلامكم. (ص:16)

In this example, Al-Mustafa is denying the possibility that the people he is addressing could (visit the house of to-morrow). Instead of only restructuring the sentence, Gibran preferred to add the word (هيهات) which is a verbal nous that gives the effect that it is impossible to achieve something. Gibran saw that such word would transfer, to the Arab reader, the same effect that exists in the SL. Hence, he is again faithful to the effect rather than the structure.

Moreover, Gibran translates the first sentence (They come through you but not from you) into ( بكم يخرجون إلى الحياة ولكن ليس منكم). The translation of this sentence is not accurate. Gibran's words are about possessiveness parents often exhibit regarding their children. Parents are a vehicle through which children are born. But children are not possessions of their parents. Each of us is holding our children in trust for the future. We need to care for children till they are independent, just as our parents did for us, and our grandparents did for our parents. And so on life moves forward. Gibran could not convey the intended meaning.

**Example Seventeen:**

ST: Through the hands of such as these **God speaks**, and from behind their eyes He **smiles upon the earth.** (P: 19)

TT: وعلى فيض أمثال هؤلاء تتجلى كلمة الله، ومن خلال عيونهم تشرق بسماته على الأرض. (ص: 19)

The first thing to be noticed in this example is the use of the word (الله) as a translation of the word (God). We can also notice that Gibran uses the expression (تتجلى) to glorify the "words of God". He then adds another metaphor as he said (تشرق بسماته على الأرض) comparing "God's smile upon earth" with a rising sun that shines to brighten people's lives.

**Example Eighteen:**

ST: **When you kill a beast say to him in your heart:** ((By the same **power** that slays you, I too am slain; and I too shall be consumed. "For the **law** that delivered you into my hand shall deliver me into a mightier hand. (P: 22)

TT: حين تنحر ذبيحتك ناجها في سريرتك قائلاً: ((إن القدرة التي تذبحك هي نفسها تذبحني؛ وأنا مثلك مصيري الفناء.

فإن الناموس الذي أسلمك إلى يدي سوف يسلمني إلى يد أشد بأساً. (ص: 22)

This is another example to illustrate the influence of religious texts on Gibran's translation. The word (Kill) in the SLT is replaced by (نحر) in the TLT, which is a word used in Qur'an to denote sacrificing to God "فَصَلِّ لِرَبِّكَ وَأَنْحِرْ" (Al-Kawthar 108:2), instead of using the word (قتل), the literal translation for (Kill).

Gibran also changed the word (Power) which could be literally translated into (قوة) and used (قدرة) that means (Ability) in English. Further, he translated the word (Law) as (ناموس)<sup>17</sup> which indicates a divine law instead of using the word (قانون) which mostly refers to a law put by humans.

**Example Nineteen:**

ST: At the city gate and by your fireside I have seen you **prostrate yourself** and worship your own freedom, Even as slaves humble themselves before a tyrant and **praise him** though he slays them. (P: 49)

TT: لقد رأيتم تخرون سجداً، وتجلون حريرتكم عند أبواب المدينة، وفي ركن المصطفى في بيوتكم، كشأن العبيد، يذلون

أنفسهم أمام الطاغية، ويسبحون بحمده، مع أنه جلادهم. (ص: 49)

This example is a clear evidence that Gibran's translation was highly influenced by the Qur'an. If we look at the 15th verse form Surah Al-Sajda " إِمَّا يَوْمًا يُمْنُّ بِآيَاتِنَا الَّذِينَ إِذَا ذُكِّرُوا بِهَا خَرُّوا سُجَّدًا وَسَبَّحُوا بِحَمْدِ رَبِّهِمْ " [Al-Sajda 23:15]. We find that Gibran uses the same style of the Qur'an and even the same words to transfer his idea and to make the translation familiar to target audience.

**Example Twenty:**

ST: When you love you should not say, "God is in my heart," but rather, "I am in the heart of God" (P: 12)

TT: إذا أحببت فلا تقل: ((لقد وسع قلبي الله)) بل قل: ((وسعني قلب الله)) (ص: 12)

In this example, Gibran uses (الله) as a translation of the word (God), which is usually a common mistake in which translators, or people in general, think that the word (God) is the same as the word (الله) while it is not and Allah of Islam is not the God and Father of Jesus Christ in Christianity. However, looking at the whole translation of the SLT, it is obvious that Gibran's use of the word (الله) as a

translation of the word (God) was intended and made to suit the Arab audience who are familiar with the word (الله) rather than (الرب) for instance and who mostly believe in (الله) as Muslim majority.

## **8. Conclusion**

This study is an attempt to investigate self-translation and whether it is a faithful translation or a rewriting. The study examined Gibran's self-translated work *the Prophet* which was translated from English into Arabic *النبي*. Examples from the English versions were compared with their suggested translation in the Arabic version. The study found that the author/translator made some changes to the text but was mostly faithful. The changes which the author/translator made were mainly influenced by religious texts and their writing styles. The continuous use of the words and the style of the Qur'an may indicate that the text was mainly directed towards specific group of audience to achieve a certain goal. Metaphors and images were also added and created in the target text in order to transfer the function and the idea more clearly to the audience. It was also found that Gibran focused mainly on being faithful to the functional meaning rather than the structure as he preferred to change and replace many words. However, despite the changes that were made, the author/translator was mostly faithful. Based on the review that was introduced in this study, it became clear that a self-translator would have more freedom in translating their own text than a conventional translator would.



## الترجمة الذاتية في رواية (النبي) لجبران خليل جبران ترجمة حقيقية أم إعادة كتابة

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### الملخص

تهدف هذه الدراسة إلى التحقيق في طبيعة عملية الترجمة الذاتية فيما إذا كانت ترجمة دقيقة أم إعادة كتابة للنسخة الأصلية. وتتخذ الدراسة كتاب *The Prophet* لجبران خليل جبران نموذجاً لمناقشة الموضوع، الذي قام هيكل بترجمته بنفسه إلى النسخة العربية "النبي". وقد تمت دراسة هذا العمل تبعاً للأثار التي يتركها الكاتب الذي يترجم أعماله بنفسه على العمل المترجم، وإلى أي حد يعد هذا النوع من الترجمة ترجمة أمينة للنص الأصل. تقوم الدراسة على عشرين مثلاً مختارة من النص الأصلي لكتاب "النبي" باللغة الإنجليزية مصحوبة بالترجمة العربية لكل مثال على حدة. وتحتوي الأمثلة على كلمات وأشباه جمل وجمل وفي أحيان كثيرة فقرات كاملة. وتم تحليل البيانات في الدراسة بناء على تحليل الخطاب في تحليل البيانات من منظورها اللغوي والثقافي والديني. وكذلك تمت مقارنة الأمثلة الإنجليزية بترجماتها العربية والوقوف على الاختلافات الموجودة بينها ومناقشتها. وكانت نتائج الدراسة أن جبران في ترجمته الذاتية كان يقدم ترجمة خالصة، إلا أنه كان يضيف الكثير من العبارات الدينية والثقافية.

كلمات مفتاحية: الترجمة الذاتية، جبران، النبي، إعادة كتابة.

## Endnotes

- <sup>1</sup> (And of His signs is your sleep by night and day and your seeking of His bounty. Indeed in that are signs for a people who listen)
- <sup>2</sup> (And you would think them awake, while they were asleep. And We turned them to the right and to the left, while their dog stretched his forelegs at the entrance. If you had looked at them, you would have turned from them in flight and been filled by them with terror)
- <sup>3</sup> (They used to sleep but little of the night)
- <sup>4</sup> The leaders of Islamic society, including Imams, judges, and teachers.
- <sup>5</sup> A fatwa is a legal opinion of a *sheikh* or *alem*.
- <sup>6</sup> Is one of the prayers of which God highlighted their importance in the Qur'an, and is to be observed weekly in a gathering of believers.  
"يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا إِذَا نُودِيَ لِلصَّلَاةِ مِنْ يَوْمِ الْجُمُعَةِ فَاسْعَوْا إِلَىٰ ذِكْرِ اللَّهِ وَذَرُوا الْبَيْعَ ذَلِكُمْ خَيْرٌ لَكُمْ إِنْ كُنْتُمْ تَعْلَمُونَ"  
[Al: Jumu'ah 62:9] O you who believe, when the Congregational Prayer (Salat Al-Jumu'ah) is announced on Friday, you shall hasten to the commemoration of God, and drop all business. This is better for you, if you only knew.  
It is mandatory and required of every believing adult male who has no excuse for not doing so.
- <sup>7</sup> This word was used in the Qur'an to compare those who disbelieved with a sleeping person that is not aware of the truth and to show that negligence has occupied their whole entity. They will be awakening when the Day of Judgment comes but it will be too late.  
"اقترب للناس حسابهم وهم في غفلة معرضون" [Al-Anbya 21:1]  
"من هذا بل كنا ظالمين غفلة واقترب الوعد الحق فاذا هي شاخصة ابصار الذين كفروا يا ويلنا قد كنا في" [Al-Anbya 21:97]
- <sup>8</sup> (By your life, [O Muhammad], indeed they were, in their intoxication, wandering blindly)
- <sup>9</sup> (*Woe to those who give less [than due](1) Who, when they take a measure from people, take in full(2) But if they give by measure or by weight to them, they cause loss(3)*)
- <sup>10</sup> Christ (son of God), in this verse, reported that God is light as he is opposed to the darkness of sin; he is pure and holy in his nature and works. Opposed to the darkness of ignorance; he is wise and all knowing, and like the light, he illuminates others.
- <sup>11</sup> Imam Ali Ibn Mus-ar-Rida was asked about the interpretation of the verse, "*Allah is the Light of the heavens and the earth...*", and he answered: "*He guides both the inhabitants of the earth and the inhabitants of the heavens.*"
- <sup>12</sup> It is the most sacred site in Islam and is a building in Mecca at the center of The Sacred Mosque Al-Masjid Al-Haram, Islam's most important mosque. It is considered by Muslims to be the "House of God" *Bayt Allah*. Being the direction of prayer qiblah Muslims are expected to face the Ka'bah Wherever they are in the world, when performing Islamic prayer Salat.

- <sup>13</sup> Is regarded as the second Pillar of Islam, and a (صلاة / *Salāt* /) is any one of the daily five obligatory prayers for Muslims.
- <sup>14</sup> Literally means "invocation", and it is an act of supplication. The term is derived from the Arabic word (داء / *Da'a*) which means to 'call out' or to 'summon'. Muslims regard it as a profound act of worship.
- <sup>15</sup> (تسبيح / *Tasbīh*) in Islam is uttering, repeatedly, the formula: "Subhan Allah", which means (Glory be to Allah)
- <sup>16</sup> (*So pray to your Lord and sacrifice [to Him alone].*)
- <sup>17</sup> The word is also believed to be one of Gabriel's names in Islam. It refers as well to the Shari'a of Allah.
- <sup>18</sup> (Only those believe in Our verses who, when they are reminded by them, fall down in prostration and exalt [Allah] with praise of their Lord, and they are not arrogant.)

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