Social Deixis in Translation: Social Setting Shifts in Fiction Translation

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Abstract: This paper studies the translation shifts in three Arabic translations of an English novel to emphasize the role these shifts may play in the change of the social setting of original story. The data reveal a tendency in translation towards improving the main narrator's social relationship and intimacy with characters, while increasing the non-intimate relationship between the outside frame narrator and characters. The data suggest two explanations for the shift: (i) translator's representation of his/her apprehension of the original story or probably his/her involvement with events of the original (Levý 2011, Eco 2008) and (ii) the translator's orientation to produce a more standardized language or style (Toury 1995/2012).

Theoretical Background and Methodological Issues

This paper looks at translation shifts in the social deictic elements by examining these elements in the original and comparing them with their translations. It adopts a pragmatic approach that looks at meaning not only as generated by the linguistic system but also as 'conveyed' and 'manipulated' by interactants in a communicative event (Baker 1992/2011: 230). The corpus of the study is the source text of *Wuthering Heights* by Emily Brontë (1847) and three Arabic translations of this novel; namely Ref'at Naseem (1972), Helmi Murad (1998) and Mamdouh Haqi (2011). The novel consists of thirty-four chapters, but to provide a detailed examination of the translation patterns studied, full examination of all chapters goes beyond the scope of the study. The study will therefore analyze only the first eight chapters, which contain 24,514 words.

Most existing pragmatically-oriented research which dealt with social deixis in English-Arabic translation is actually limited in a number of ways. It mostly comes from works that can be described as theoretical, but unsystematic and sometimes not oriented towards a particular product or text type (e.g. Hatim and Mason 1990, 1997; Al-Qinai 2008). In such research, regularities of 'actual translational behaviour' are not usually considered; instead, translational phenomena tend to be supported only with hand-picked examples, the criterion underlying the

selection (and sometimes invention) of an example may just be its 'persuasiveness' (Toury 2012: xii), and overgeneralization (Chesterman 2004: 34-35). Such research by definition leaves gaps between theory and practice. By contrast, this paper uses a model that is systematic, based on real-life behaviour and focused on a particular text type and product, and which therefore moves from traditional prescriptivism to the area of description and interpretation, where the findings can be testable and comparable and the study itself replicable to refine and improve the 'theory' itself (cf. Toury 2012: xi-xiii).

Following is a brief review of social deixis and a brief description of social structure of the story of *Wuthering Heights*.

Social deixis encodes the social status of the participants of the communication or the social relationship between them, which can be exemplified by the use of such items as titles of address, kinship terms, surnames etc. (Levinson 1983: 89-94, 2006: 119-21). Common social deictics that are used in the novel are the honorifics 'Mr', 'Master', 'Mrs', 'Mistress', 'Miss' and 'Sir'. The use of these social deictic elements in a certain communication can give an insight into such things as speaker-referent relationship, politeness degree, familiarity or intimacy level, social distance etc. (Yule 1996: 10-11, Renkema 2004: 122). Therefore, any variation in the translation of these elements may alter this social deictic information encoded in the original (see Fawcett 1997: 94-96). Before embarking on the analysis, a brief description of the story and its social structure will be given.

Wuthering Heights is the story of a gipsy boy called Heathcliff, who is brought up to live with a respectable family and later falls in love with their beautiful daughter, Catherine. When he loses her, he devotes all his life to taking revenge on them. The story is narrated by characters who are taking part in the events, first by Mr. Lockwood, and then by Mrs. Dean (Goodridge 1971: 16). Mr. Lockwood provides the outer framework of the whole story, and receives Mrs. Dean's narration. Mrs. Dean in turn narrates the majority of the story's events and receives other narratives by other characters such as Mr. and Mrs. Earnshaw, Catherine, Heathcliff, etc. (ibid).

Social class differentiations are actually very obvious in *Wuthering Heights* and among its most common themes that have been discussed in the literature, as discussed in Telgen (1997: 315-16) and Wasowski (2001: 77-78), is social class conflict. Consideration of social class distinctions determines for example the motivation of each character in the story. The Earnshaws and Lintons for example have their own estates and servants, but the gypsy boy 'Heathcliff' has nothing. Mrs. Dean, Joseph, or Ellen, are servants and from the lower middle-class or manual laborers. Catherine decides to marry Edgar because he is rich and of a higher social class, but marring Heathcliff, as she says, will degrade her. Heathcliff's decision to take the Earnshaws and Lintons's houses to degrade them is related to class issues. So the following analysis will show if translation brings about changes in such features of the original.

The model adopted in this paper will look at how the different social deictic expressions in the story are translated by the three translators, exploring different types of shift in their translation, such as omission, addition, substitution etc. It will explore the effect of shifts in the social settings of the original story. It will examine what effects the trend of shift may bring to the stylistic features of the original and also try to suggest what translational behaviors can be linked to the trend of shifts.

Analysis and Discussion

Indeed, the study finds that there are 72 instances of translation shifts in social deixis; which could suggest an alteration in certain implicit social relationships of the original. The data reveal that 47 deictics have been omitted, and other 25 have been added to text. The omission shifts involves removing (i) honorifics titles mentioned by the narrator before the names of characters and (ii) honorifics titles used between the characters themselves. Observe the following two examples.

1. **ST:** …, and then she looked round for Heathcliff. <u>Mr.</u> and <u>Mrs. Earnshaw</u> watched anxiously their meeting... (CH 7: 47)
   Haqi's Translation: thumma akhadhat tanẓuru hunā wa-hunāk baḥthan 'an hīthklif, wa-kāna <u>akhūhā wa-zawjatuhu</u> yurāqibāna liqā'ahumā bi-lahfah, ... (65)
   [**Gloss:** then she started looking here and there (high and low), searching for Heathcliff, and <u>her brother</u> and <u>his wife</u> were watching their meeting anxiously]

2. **ST:** …, while I was assisting <u>Miss Cathy</u> to arrange her dress …. (CH 8: 62)
   Naseem 's Translation: wa-kuntu waqta'idhin usā'idu ḵātī 'alā irtidā' malābisiha ...(75)
   [**Gloss:** and I was then assisting <u>Cathy</u> in putting on her dress]

In example (1), Mrs. Dean is narrating to Mr. Lockwood that Catherine's brother, Hindley, and his wife were watching anxiously how she will meet her friend Heathcliff after her manners and appearance have changed a great deal after staying at Thrushcross Grange. Mrs. Dean, the narrator and a servant at the house, uses here the honorific titles 'Mrs.' and 'Mr.' with the surname 'Earnshaw' to refer to Hindley and his wife. This choice signals her respect to the persons being talked about and reflect their higher social rank relative to her. However, in Haqi's translation, the translator's choice 'akhūhā wa-zawjatahu' (her brother and his wife) deletes the honorifics and conceals the narrator-character social relationship encoded in the original utterance.

In example (2), Mrs. Dean is using the honorific 'Miss' to address Catherine. Likewise, the honorific 'Miss', which conveys here difference in social status between the narrator and the referent is dropped from the text in Naseem's translation. The deletion of the social deictic

elements in these two examples has led here to a target utterance that portrays no or less social contrast in social status between the narrator and other participants compared to the original.

The omission shifts also involve on the other hand some honorific titles used by characters in the story. Observe the following two examples.

3. **ST**: 'Next time, <u>Master Edgar</u>, take the law into your own fists – it will give you an appetite!' (CH 7: 53)
   Haq's Translation: idhā i'tadā 'alayka marratan thāniyatan yā <u>idgar</u> fa-'āqibhu bi-nafsak.
   [**Gloss:** if he offends you another time, <u>Edgar</u>, punish him yourself] (72)

4. **ST:** 'But the doctor says <u>missis</u> must go: he says she's been in a consumption these many months.' (CH 8: 58)
   Haqi's Translation: wa-lākinna al-ṭabība yaqūl: inna <u>wālidatahu</u> satamūt ḥatman, fahiya tu'ānī min dā'i al-silli mundhu biḍ'ati shuhūr. (77)
   [**Gloss:** but the doctor says: <u>his mother</u> will definitely die, she has been suffering from consumption since few months]

In Example (3), Edgar Linton visits Earnshaw family and quarrels with Heathcliff and gets offended, and then Hindley beats Heathcliff up and tells Edgar to punish him himself if he ever does it again. In the story Edgar is from a wealthy and upper-class family and his presence in Wuthering Heights is very welcome by Earnshaws. For Catherine, for instance, a man like Edgar 'will be rich, and I shall like to be the greatest woman of the neighbourhood, and I shall be proud of having such a husband' (CH 9: 82). Therefore in this context, the use of the honorific 'Master' by Hindley to address Edgar conveys his respect for Edgar and maintains the social standing he has. However, in the given translation, the honorific is dropped from the source text, deleting one of the linguistic items used to decode this social relationship between the characters in the story.

In (4), a servant-girl comes and tells Mrs. Dean that Mr. Hindley's wife, Frances, has given birth to a beautiful baby, but the doctor says that she may not survive because she has been sick. The use of the honorific 'missis' to address Frances in this utterance, though in the informal and inappropriate speech of a servant-girl, is indicative of the higher social status of Frances with regard to the servant-girl. But in the given translation, using 'wālidatahu' (his mother) instead of the honorific similarly deletes this social-deictic information from the text and conceals the social distance between the two characters signaled in the original.

With regard to the addition shifts, the study found that they also involve the relationship between (i) the narrator and characters or (ii) the characters themselves. The addition takes place

through two ways. Firstly, some of these social deictics have been simply attached to the names of characters. Observe the following examples.

5. **ST:** 'I hope it will be a lesson to you to make no more rash journeys on these hills,' cried Heathcliff's stern voice from the kitchen entrance. (CH 2: 12)
   Haqi's Translation: wa-idhā bi-al-sayyīd hīthklif yaṣīḥu min al-maṭbakhi bi-ṣawtin ajashsh: ...
   [**Gloss:** then Mr. Heathcliff cries with stern voice from the kitchen: …] (23)

6. **ST:** '*you*! I should be sorry to ask you to cross the threshold, ...' (CH 2: 13)
   Haqi's Translation: yā sayyiadtī anā lā as'alukī ijtīyāza hādhihi al-'atabata min ajlī fī mithli hādhihi al-laylah, ... (22)
   [**Gloss:** oh sir, I do not ask you to cross this threshold for my convenience on a night like this]

   In the examples above an honorific title is added before the name of the person being addressed or referred to in the source text. In Example (5), Mr. Lockwood is talking about his first and uncomfortable visit to his new landlord, Mr. Heathcliff, at Wuthering Heights. After being compelled to stay the night there because of the snowstorm, Heathcliff tells him that this journey in such weather will be a lesson to him next time. Mr. Lockwood here refers to Mr. Heathcliff without using the honorific 'Mr.', but in Haqi's translation, the translator uses it. Mr. Heathcliff, as he appears in the beginning of the story, is not socially distant from Mr. Lockwood, and therefore the use of the honorific here can more likely signal the formality of relationship between them than social difference.

   In (6), Mr. Lockwood can not find his way home and asks for a guide. Heathcliff's daughter-in-law thinks that Mr. Lockwood means her, for which he then apologizes. The replacement of 'you' with the honorific 'sir' in Haqi's translation, in addition to conveying a level of politeness (see Leech 1983 and Brown and Levinson 1987) which is not expressed in the original, could further signal the non-intimate or formal relationship between Mr. Lockwood and the people at Wuthering Heights who are strangers to him.

   Secondly, some other social deictics are added through the use of a form that conveys deictic information that is not explicitly expressed in the original. See the following two examples.

7. **ST:** Heathcliff lifted his hand, and the speaker sprang to a safer distance,.(CH 3:32)
   Murad's Translation: fa-rafa'a hīthklif yadahu, baynamā wathabat al-sayīdah ilā masāfatin ta'manu fīhā min tilka al-yad, … (31)
   [**Gloss:** Heathcliff lifted his hand, while the Mistress sprang to distance to be safe from that hand]

8. **ST:** I might have seen there was too great a disparity between the ages of the parties …
(CH.2: 10)

Haqi's Translation: Kāna yanbaghī lī mulāḥaḍatu al-fāriqa al-kabīr bayna 'umri al-sayyid wa- al-sayyidah hīthklif … (20)

[**Gloss:** I should have noticed the big disparity in the age of Mr. and Mrs. Heathcliff]

In Example (7), in his first visit to Mr. Heathcliff, Mr. Lockwood narrates when Mr. Heathcliff wanted to slap his daughter-in-law, Cathy, while she was talking back to him. The term 'the speaker', which Mr. Lockwood uses here to refer to Cathy, does not entail any social information about the referent. However, in Murad's translation, this term is replaced by the social deictic 'al-sayyidah' (the Mistress), which gives the social identity of the referent in the utterance. In (8), Mr. Lockwood narrates that in the same visit he made a wrong presupposition about Mr. Heathcliff's daughter-in-law, Cathy. He uses the term 'parties' to refer to Heathcliff and Cathy, but similarly this term is translated in Haqi's translation by 'Mr. and Mrs. Heathcliff', which explicitates both the referent and its social rank relative to the narrator. Since there is no difference in the social rank between Mr. Lockwood and Mr. Heathcliff in the given context, the use of above honorific in the translation can convey the unfamiliarity between the two parties, which is social information that is not explicitly expressed in the original.

Results: Trends of Shift

The data in this study indicate that 72 social deictics (e.g. 'Mr', 'Master', 'Mrs', 'Miss' or 'Sir' have undergone shift in the three translations. As discussed before, two main types of shift are found to affect the translation of social deictics: (i) dropping a social deictic and (ii) adding a social deictic via translation. To identify the overall direction of the shift and the way in which it can affect the original, Figure (1) below will first show the occurrence of these shifts in the three translations and then a discussion of the contexts in which these shifts occur will follow.

Figure 1. COMPARISON OF ADDITION AND OMISSION SHIFTS IN SOCIAL DEICTICS IN THE THREE TRANSLATIONS

	Haqi	Naseem	Murad
omitting a social deictic	32	12	3
adding a social deictic	12	4	9
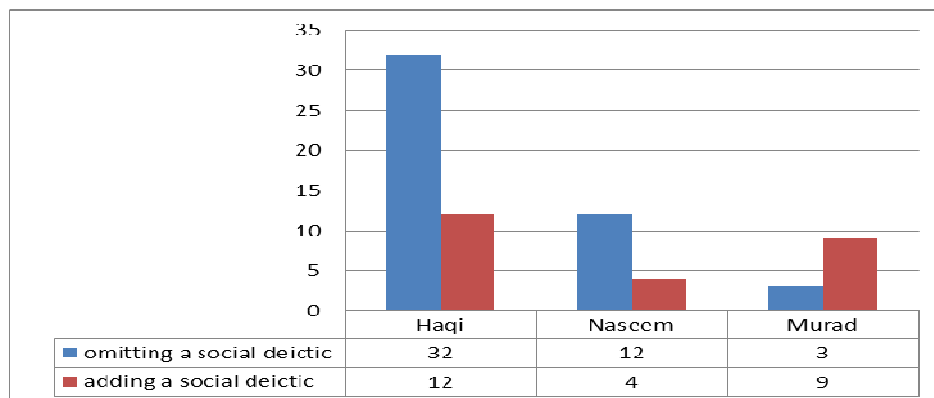
As the data above indicate, there are 47 omissions of deictics (65 % of total shifts), suggesting a tendency in the corpus to omit social deictic expressions via translating and hence a decrease in the expressed level of social distinction between the participants of the story compared to the original. This may therefore suggest a general trend towards standardization (Toury 1995/2012) in the forms of address in the translation. The trend here as the data show is manifested only in Haqi and Naseem's translations, but more remarkable in Haqi's. The trend in Murad's translation goes in the opposite direction: adding a social deictic and maintaining social identity and contrast in translation.

The context in which both the omission and addition shifts occur suggests that they are systematic in the three translations and may reflect a translator's strategy. In Haqi and Naseem's translations, the study for example finds that 41 instances (i.e. 87% of total omissions) involve honorific titles (e.g. 'Mr' and 'Miss') used by Mrs. Dean to address main characters in the story (more particularly Catherine and Hindley), while 7 instances (13 %) involve honorific titles used between the characters themselves. What this pattern of shift can suggest here is target utterances that express less distinction in social status between the narrator and the characters in comparison with the original. Mrs. Dean lives most of her life serving Mr. Earnshaw's family at Wuthering Heights, and nurses his children: Catherine and Hindley, and is Catherine's maid and friend during her marriage, and therefore is often described as very emotionally-involved in Earnshaws' affairs (Telgen 1997: 311 and Bloom 2008: 17-18). It can be suggested then that removing social deictics in this context may reflect the translator's systematic (conscious or unconscious) attempt to increase the level of intimacy or familiarity between Mrs. Dean and Earnshaws' children.

As discussed before, social class distinctions are very obvious in the *Wuthering Height*s and social class conflict can be one of its major themes. Therefore, omitting person deictics (such as 'Master', 'Miss' or 'sir') in the translation deletes some linguistic markers of the social difference between the servants such as Mrs. Dean and the higher-class people such as Earnshaws, which might weaken the social identity or differentiation expressed in the original.

With regard to the addition shifts, the study finds that among the 25 cases of addition, 21 (84 % of total additions) involve addition of honorific titles (e.g. 'Mr', 'Mrs', and 'Sir') to address people at Wuthering Heights (i.e. Heathclif and his children-in-law, Cathy and Hareton) in Mr. Lockwood's narration in the beginning of the story. Mr. Lockwood, as discussed before, is stranger who is unused to people and their rural life at Wuthering Heights, and therefore he tends to use a formal and mannered language to address people there (Gordon 1989: 194-6, see Bloom 2008: 18). Therefore, the addition of social deictics in this context may reflect the translator's attempt to emphasize Mr. Lockwood's non-intimate or formal relationship with people at Wuthering Heights and his unfamiliarity with this new place.

Conclusion

The data reveal a decrease in the expressed level of social difference between Mrs. Dean and the two characters 'Catherine' and 'Hindley' on the one hand, and an increase on the part of Mr. Lockwood and Mr. Heathcliff's family on the other, suggesting a different level of intimacy or familiarity between the narrators and characters in comparison with the original. In addition to the translation tendency to standardize the original, shifts in social deixis may be more likely associated with the translator's representation of her/his 'conception' of the realities depicted in the original (cf. Levý 2011: 27-31), after her/his own reading and 'interpretation' of the text (Eco 2001/2008), than linguistic differences between the SL and TL in the form and use of deixis.

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Appendix

Arabic Transliteration System

Arabic Letters

Arabic	Transliteration	Arabic	Transliteration
أ	a	ض	ḍ
ء	'	ط	ṭ
ب	b	ظ	ẓ
ت	t	ع	'
ث	th	غ	gh
ج	j	ف	f
ح	ḥ	ق	q
خ	kh	ك	k
د	d	ل	l
ذ	dh	م	m
ر	r	ن	n
ز	z	ه	h
س	s	و	w
ش	sh	ي	y
ص	ṣ		

Arabic Short-Long Vowels and Case Endings

Arabic	Transliteration
ا	ā
َ	a
ي	ī
ِ	i
و	ū
ُ	u
ً	an
ٍ	in
ٌ	un