The Translation of Mythical and Folkloric Entities in Naguib Mahfouz's Novel *Layali Alf Layla* into English

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ABSTRACT

Mythology and folklore are essential parts of any culture. They evoke a tremendous amount of informative and expressive meanings and encapsulate various cultural backgrounds using a few lexical items. The mythical and folkloric lexical items (M&FLIs) found in literary discourse present an excellent opportunity to investigate the cultural concepts of these lexical items within a vivid literary context. Thus, the process of translating myths and folklore is better considered as an endeavour to aesthetically recreate the culture and literature of the source language (SL) and render them into the target language (TL) using appropriate translation strategies (TSs). The current study is an attempt to investigate the translatability of myths and folklore from Arabic into English. More specifically, it aims to examine the mythical and folkloric entities (M&FEs) in Naguib Mahfouz's novel *Layali Alf Layla* and to explore the strategies used to translate them into English. This study relies on the methodology for systematic descriptive translation studies (DTS) and Baker's taxonomy (2018) on the one hand and James's (1980) two-step procedure of contrastive analysis (CA) on the other. The Arabic lexical items are located, listed, and described within their cultural and linguistic context to carry out the study. Their counterparts in the English translation are also located and discussed, taking into consideration their cultural and linguistic background. The corresponding pairs are then compared to identify the relationships between the lexical items and to examine the TSs employed. Based on the CA, the study finds that the best method to find out the M&FEs employed by an individual author in a particular text is a combination of two approaches. The first one depends on the accumulative knowledge found in the previous related literature and the second one stems from the translator's personal experience to find out the M&FEs interwoven in the text. The study also finds that twelve TSs were employed to deal with the

untranslatability of M&FLIs found in the source text (ST). Also, the findings assert the significant role of the translator as a cultural interpreter who judges the text and decides on the best strategy to be used while translating each M&FLI. Finally, the findings of the study helped in drawing a suggested three-phase outline of the process of translating myths and folklore, which are: identifying the M&FEs, translating the M&FLIs, and conducting a textual analysis of the coupled-pairs to minimise the translation shift.

KEYWORDS: Arabic literature, literary translation, mythical and folkloric entities, Naguib Mahfouz, translation strategies

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