The Untrodden Way: Unexplored Challenges in Poetry Translation

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Abstract

While much ink has been spilled over the various issues involved in poetry translation by both Western and Eastern translation theorists, it seems no attention has been given to the unknown obstacles a translator may encounter in rendering Arabic literary texts in general and Omani poems in particular. To this end, the current paper sheds light on unknown and unfamiliar problems translators face in translating Omani poetry and maintains that—in addition to the linguistic, cultural, and aesthetic problems of poetry translation—literary translators also encounter difficulties in the translation of unnoticeable religious and cultural meanings and aspects in poems. For this purpose, an interview with an Omani translator and a questionnaire to 35 students with a Translation major (10 males and 25 females) at Sultan Qaboos University served as research instruments to identify unknown problems in translating Omani poetry. Given the results, the paper concludes with a recommendation that poetry translators provide footnotes to translate religious terms and explain unclear or unfamiliar religious phrases.

Keywords: poetry translation, linguistic problems, cultural problems, aesthetic problems, religious problems

1. Introduction

Literary translation is no doubt one of the most complex types of translation, particularly poetry translation. Many translators encounter difficulties while translating poems, such as linguistic, cultural, and aesthetic problems. Thus, experts consider poetry translation to be a highly complicated process, as the translator is responsible for preserving the form and content of a poem while transferring text from one language to another. According to Hariyanto (n.d.), for instance, literary translation is the most difficult task a translator can face and translating poetry is the most complicated genre in terms of translation since both the form and the meaning of a poem has to be taken into consideration. Although translation theorists have made considerable endeavors to explore the cultural, aesthetic, and linguistic obstacles involved in translating Arabic poems from Arabic into English, very few studies have shown concern for the specific religious challenges a translator may face when rendering Omani poems. Hence, the main concerns of this paper are to bring perspective to the religious problems encountered by translators from translation students' standpoints, identify their causes, and present solutions and recommendations to reduce these unknown translation difficulties.

2. Literature Review

Most translation theorists and practitioners, like Tisgam (2014), Jafari & Karimnia (2015), and Hariyanto (n.d.), share the view that translating poetry is impossible due to the cultural and linguistic differences between the source text and the target text. They classify the myriad problems in translating poetry into three main categories: linguistic, socio-cultural, and aesthetic.

2.1 Linguistic Problems

Languages do not share the same linguistic features or terms (Tisgam, 2014; Bassnett, 2005). Specifically, Arabic and English are different in terms of their linguistic aspects (Khalifa, 2015). According to Hariyanto (n.d.), two aspects of language in particular must be taken into account—collocation and syntactical structure. Based on Hariyanto's idea, translators should use equivalent collocations as well as syntactic structures in the target text that are similar or close to the structures of the source text. Thus, finding similar structures and equivalent words is a very complicated process, particularly if two languages are different. Tisgam (2014) also argues that the word order between the source text and the target text is very important. Due to the differences

between languages and their word order, translators find obstacles in translating a poem by using the same order of words. This results in the loss of the meaning of the poem being translated since the meaning often depends on the word order. Not only do the syntactical structures and the word order create problems for the translator, but capitalized letters or words are another difficulty in poetic translation. In the article, "Translating Poetry: Possibility or Impossibility," Tisgam (2014) points out that "the importance of the capitalized word in SL is completely lost in the TL one" (p. 521). In addition, linguistic deviation and breaking the rules of the English language are also obstacles to the translation of a poem. Shafii puts it: "linguistic deviation should be considered important because in some cases a literary work may gain its influence and importance from linguistic deviation" (as cited in Jafari & Kirmnia, 2015, p. 57).

2.2 Aesthetic Problems

Another difficulty translators face in poetic translation is that of aesthetics. It is a well-known fact that the language of literature is unique and different and that poetry is one of the genres with very special literary features and values including imagery, sound, rhythm, and rhyme, etc.

Literary or aesthetic issues are highly problematic; indeed, translators have to take into consideration the aesthetic values, such as word choice, word order, and sounds during the translation due to the importance of these values in poems. Sometimes translators find it difficult to preserve these elements in the target texts. As a result, the beauty and the form of the original poem are affected (Hariyanto, n.d.; Tisgam, 2014). Moreover, at the aesthetic level, many translators encounter another difficult task while translating poetry, which is conveying the feeling and the hidden message of a poem (Tisham, 2014).

In addition, there are factors involved in aesthetic problems that encumber the process of translating poetry. In his article, "Problems in Translating Poetry," Hariyanto (n.d.) highlights three important factors at the literary level—poetic structure, metaphorical expression, and sound. The first factor is poetic structure, which means the shape of a poem and the structure of each line in a poem. Hariyanto goes on to state that translators need to keep the original structure of each sentence of a poem in the target text. This may cause the translator to sacrifice other factors or elements. Furthermore, Hariyanto (n.d.) points out "how far a translator can modify the author's metaphorical expressions," since these metaphorical words have hidden meaning (p. 5). The less important factor, as Hariyanto (n.d.) explains, is sound, which is related to the rhyme, rhythm, and onomatopoeia of a poem. In this case, translators have to retain them in their translation in order to preserve the beauty of a poem.

2.3 Cultural Problems

A further difficulty poetry translators face are those of culture. Larson (1984) states that both culture and language are integral parts of each other since the meaning cannot be transferred without taking into consideration the cultural aspects of words (as cited in Tisgam, 2014). According to the relationship between language and culture, during the translation process, translators combine two languages and two cultures together to reflect the cultural concepts in the target texts (Lado, 1957; as cited in Tisgam, 2014). Before discussing cultural differences and how these differences cause difficulties for translators, the concept of culture is worth identifying. As defined by Newmark (1982), culture is "the way of life and its manifestations that are peculiar to a community that uses a particular language as its means of expression" (as cited in Almasaeid, 2013). From the above definition of culture, it seems each language differs from all others due to its specific cultural and linguistic characteristics.

Due to the huge gap between some cultures, the translation of literary texts, especially poetry, becomes more difficult and challenging (Tisgam, 2014; Almasaeidi, 2013). Thus translators are challenged to find proper equivalents of words or phrases that convey the cultural aspects of the source texts into the target texts (Jafari & Karminia, 2015). Additionally, translators of poetry encounter obstacles when they attempt to translate "words or expressions that contain culturally-bound words" (Hariyanto, n.d., p. 7). Furthermore, Almasaeidi (2013) and Tisgam (2014) highlight another problem that many translators face at the cultural level, which is lack of knowledge about a particular culture during the translation. In this case, translators have to understand and experience the culture they are translating into. However, the case will be different if the two cultures have similar concepts and aspects and the translators will easily translate the cultural aspects to the target texts because both languages have equivalent terms (Jafari & Karimnia, 2015). In short, translating cultural expressions or terms in a poem is a serious and hard task for translators because of the huge gap between cultures.

2.4 Solutions to Reduce Poetic Translation Problems

By suggesting different approaches to the problems translators encounter when they translate poetry, researchers and scholars developed relevant strategies and methods to face them. As indicated by Dervishi (n.d.) and Tisgam (2014), Lefevre's suggestion of methods that can be adopted in translating poetry are useful if one of the sources is English. Some of Lefevre's methods consider the form of a poem like the literal, rhymed, and metrical translation while the other four strategies are concerned with conveying the exact meaning of a poem. Thus, translators have the choice to use the strategy that suits their intentions about the form or meaning when they translate poems (Dervishi, n.d).

Besides Lefevere's seven famous strategies, several other strategies have been suggested to diminish the problem of poetry translation. For instance, Hariyanto (n.d.) proposes that understanding the deep structure of a poem and examining the structure of each phrase and clause are the basic steps to deal with the linguistic issues. In the case of aesthetic problems, Hariyanro (n.d.) suggests that in order to give readers a chance to understand the meaning of certain cultural words in poems, "the translator has to supply the cultural equivalent in the target text" (p. 8). Equally important, translators of poetry, according to Dervishi (n.d.), should make the right decision during the translation of poetry in order to face the difficulties of translating poetry. In other words, translators must be able to distinguish between reference meaning and poetic meaning and "translators of poetry must reproduce the original metaphor scrupulously" (p. 304). Dervishi & Dryden conclude that translators should be poets in order to achieve a precise poetry translation (as cited in Tisgam, 2014).

Other useful suggestions to solve the cultural problem in translating poetry are as follows:

1)   to visit the places that the poets mentioned in their poems and imagine himself/ herself living the situations and sufferings of the poets.

2)   to read and investigate several references and books that are concerned with the pre-Islamic poetry and literature, rather than depend on one reference.

3)   to study the biography, emotions, relations, behaviors, and feelings of the poet, which leads to avoiding rendering the meanings literally.

4)   to meet tribal people and analyze what they say about the desert life and the connotations of some words. (Almasaeidi, 2013, p. 200)

In conclusion, there is a great need to conduct further studies and research to identify other unknown problems that translators encounter while translating Omani poems, and to suggest possible solutions and strategies to solve these problems. To this effect, a questionnaire was distributed to SQU Translation Major students to identify different views and perceptions on the problems of poetry translation, and to come up with new ideas and findings. Additionally, interviews with anOmani translator will identify the real problems of translating Omani poems to other languages.

3. Methods and Procedures

3.1 Introduction

Based on the argument and data discussed in the previous section, many researchers and scholars have identified various problems that translators encounter in translating poetry. Since translators face difficulties in translating poetry, many researchers emphasize that poetry is untranslatable. According to some researchers, e.g., Tisagam (2014) and Hariyanto (n.d.), poetic translation problems can be classified into three main categories—linguistic, cultural, and aesthetic. However, the results may be different if the study investigates problems that translators face in translating Omani poetry in particular. Therefore, interviews with Omani translators were performed to identify unknown problems of translating Omani poetry and to reveal some strategies to solve the issue. In addition to the interviews, a questionnaire was designed and distributed to SQU students with a Translation major to get different views and perceptions about Omani poetic translation problems and how they deal with these problems.

3.2 Aims

The main objective of this research paper is to shed light on problems that translators face while translating Omani poetry. As a result, the main question of this study is: what are the problems translators face in translating Omani poetry? With regard to the main question, several sub-questions arise:

1)   What is the most dramatic problem in translating Omani poetry?

2)   What are the possible solutions or strategies to solve or reduce the difficulties of translating Omani poetry?

3.3 Methodology

This study involved SQU Translation Major students in order to collect the required data that serves the aim of the study. The questionnaires were distributed to 35 students. The respondents were of both genders and from different academic years. It included 10 males and 25 females to get various views. They also ranged from third-year to fifth-year students. However, most of the respondents were from fourth year. The following table shows the number of participants according to their academic year.

Table 1. The number of participants according to their academic year

Academic Year	Respondents	Percentage
First	0	0%
Second	0	0%
Third	5	14%
Fourth	21	60%
Fifth	9	26%

The questionnaire was divided into five sections. The first section included personal information questions about the gender and academic year of participants. The second section focused on problems translators encounter while they translate Omani poetry. It shows whether or not translating Omani poetry—which has its own distinct features—leads to difficulties in different aspects. The third section focused on students' experience in translating poems, their personal views on whether poetic translation is difficult or not, and which approach they tend to use in translating poems. The fourth section focused on the participants' views on the most difficult genre of literature, and their perceptions on categorizing the problems of poetic translation according to the most dramatic one. The last section of the questionnaire examined a student representative translation of a stanza from "Abi Assufi Diwan" by the Omani poet Al-Majizi. It also provided a chance for respondents to write their opinions on the difficulties of translating Omani poetry and the methods or strategies used to deal with such problems.

3.4 Instruments

The first section of the questionnaire asked about personal information on participants, i.e., their gender and academic year, in order to achieve various views and perspectives. In addition, this section of the questionnaire explored different findings and results due to the differences in respondents' gender and academic year.

The second section of the questionnaire included eight items focusing on different problems of translating Omani poetry and to what extent the linguistic, aesthetic, and cultural characteristics of Omani poems led to difficulties in translation. Besides that, these questions determined the percentage of respondents who are more concerned with the form of poems rather than meaning in translating Omani poems.

The third section of the questionnaire included five Yes/No questions that focused on the respondents' experience in translating poetry in order to show whether or not they found translating poems difficult. Moreover, it showed whether they gave priority to the form or the meaning when they translated poems and examined if they used or supported literal translation in the process of translating poetry. These are some of the questions respondents answered with a yes or no:

1) Have you ever translated a poem

2) Do you think translating poetry is difficult?

3) Are you concerned about the form in translating poetry?

4) Are you concerned about the meaning and the content while translating poetry?

5) Do you support the literal translation of Omani poems?

The fourth section of the questionnaire consisted of two ranking questions that focused on the difficulties in translating poetry. This section investigated whether poetry is the most difficult genre of literature in translation and determined the most dramatic problem in poetic translation, such as linguistic, cultural, or aesthetic issues.

The last section of the questionnaire included three open-ended questions exploring more specific problems of translating Omani poetry and possible solutions to deal with these problems. Additionally, in this section, one question asked the 35 participants to translate a stanza from an Omani poem by Al-Majizi in order to compare different translations. This question was asked to identify the approach that each respondent prefers. In other

words, it shows whether respondents value the form more than the meaning or vice versa while translating poetry.

4. Results

4.1 Analysis of the Questionnaire Data

4.1.1 Distribution of Students According to the Gender and Academic Year

Participants were asked to provide some background information related to their gender and academic year in order to collect various responses. To start with, 71% of participants were females and only 29% were males.

4.1.2 General Translation Questions

In the second section, participants were asked general questions about the difficulties encountered in translating Omani poetry. A high percentage of respondents agreed that translating Omani poetry is possible and very few of them agreed that poetry is untranslatable.

Furthermore, there were three questions focusing on different problematic aspects with regard to the translation of Omani poetry, such as linguistic, cultural, and aesthetic problems. The majority of students agree that the linguistic and aesthetic aspects of Omani poems represent major difficulties in the translation process. However, regarding the cultural aspect of translation, about 57% of the students agree that it does not cause any obstacles for translators while they translate Omani poetry.

Moreover, this section showed whether translators of Omani poetry are more concerned about the form than the meaning of poems. The majority of students agreed that translators convey the meaning while only 21% disagree with this. Conversely, in terms of the form, about 52% of students disagreed that translators retain the original form into the target texts and 48% agreed that translators are concerned with the form.

Participants were also asked about their view on whether a translator must be a poet; about 80% of respondents disagreed with the idea that translators of poetry must be poets, while the rest of them agreed that translators must be poets to be able to translate poems.

4.1.3 Personal Translation Experiences

This section showed participants' experiences in translating poems and how they found this kind of translation. Only 37% of students have attempted to translate poems while the rest have not translated poems. Therefore, one may expect that translators believe that translating poetry is difficult.

Then, participants were asked if they found translating poetry difficult. The majority of students—approximately 83%—believed that translating poetry is difficult and that the difficulty is related to the linguistic, aesthetic, and cultural problems.

As for the form and content in poetic translation, most students' responses showed that they gave equal importance to both the meaning and form in translating poetry. In addition, participants were asked about their own views on translating poetry by using literary translation and the results showed that about 63% of students support literary translation. However, about 37% of them do not use it for the reason that it might not convey the real meaning into the target texts.

4.1.4 Translation Elements

In this section, participants were asked to rank two different elements according to their difficulty in translation, which are genres of literature and problems of poetic translation.

Table 2. The most difficult genre of literature in translation

Respondents' Choices	Short Stories	Novels	Drama	Poetry
First	2	0	3	30
Second	2	21	12	0
Third	1	14	17	3
Fourth	30	0	3	2

The above table shows the number of students according to their ranking of literature genre based on the most difficult type of translation. Additionally:

- A large number of students (about 80%) responded that poetry is the most difficult genre. Whereas about the same percentage of students said that short stories are the least difficult genre in translation.

- Novels come in the second rank in terms of difficulty in translation.

Table 3. The most dramatic problem in translating poetry

Respondents' Choice	Linguistic Problems	Cultural Problems	Aesthetic Problems
First	12	7	16
Second	13	11	11
Third	10	17	8

From the above table, we can conclude that the linguistic, cultural, and aesthetic difficulties are the most recurrent and encountered problems that any translator faces in translating poetry.

4.1.5 Impromptu Poem Translation

In the last section of the questionnaire, participants were asked to translate a stanza from Al-Majizi's "Abi Assufi Diwan" to investigate whether translators are more concerned about the form or meaning in poetry translation and to determine to what extent they found translating poetry difficult. Many respondents experienced difficulty in conveying the exact meaning of the original poem, even though they tried to be more concerned about the meaning than the form. However, few of them retained the form and style of the stanza. The samples of translations also show the difficulty in finding proper equivalents and do not show any aesthetic values in the target text. Here is a representative example of students' translation of the stanza:

Have insidious ladies seen his beauty, they would not be satisfied to uproot their sight

Describe what you saw with memorable things, I said, but is there anyone that remembreth?

Is there pressure in your ears or you are blind and none is sensible

This is the great king of earth, the sultan of heaven and arbiter, but nay, no refuge for thee

Has God given you the command of fate, or a deterrent force

So withdraw your tails of eternal wonder, for I am in the palms of God the Almighty. (ll. 54-59).

In addition, this section presented students' opinions about problems translators encounter in translating Omani poetry and possible solutions to face these problems and difficulties. Table 4 shows the main difficulties translators face while they translate Omani poetry according to students' responses. It is divided into three types of problems—linguistic, cultural, and aesthetic. A large number of respondents (about 24 students) identified some linguistic cultural and aesthetic problems. It appears that most participants faced linguistic difficulties when they translated the stanza of the poem.

Table 4. Students' opinions about the problems encountered in the translation of Omani poetry

Types of problems	Problems	No. of students
Linguistic problems	Difficulty in finding equivalents for some terms.	8
	Different grammatical and sentence structures between languages of the source and target texts.	5
	The content is difficult to understand due to ambiguous vocabularies.	11
Cultural problems	Omani culture is implied in most Omani poetry.	3
	Differences between cultures that cause difficulty in understanding a certain culture.	2
	Difficulties in understanding and explaining cultural concepts that exist in Omani poems.	2
	Lack of knowledge about Omani culture.	5
Aesthetic problems	Showing the aesthetic aspects or elements in the target texts (metaphor and allusion).	4
	Difficulty to convey the form and the style of Omani poems (metric, rhyme, and rhythm).	4
	Difficulty in balancing between the form and meaning of poems.	2

The last question in this section provided suggestions to solve problems encountered in translating Omani poetry according to the respondents. Table 5 shows some possible solutions that help translators to deal with difficulties while they translate Omani poetry as suggested by respondents. It appears in the table that respondents propose myriad ways to solve problems of poetry translation from different linguistic and cultural aspects.

Table 5. Students' opinions about solutions suggested to solve problems of poetic translation

Solutions	No. of students
Studying course about poetic translation	2
Being familiar with Omani poetry by reading a lot of Omani poems	11
Translators must be poets (has the ability to write both Arabic and English poetry)	3
Being aware of Omani culture (understanding Omani culture)	4
Show concern for both the form and meaning while translating Omani poetry	6
Adapting some Omani terms by using English language (Adaptation)	1
Looking up for available translated Omani poems	2
Providing explanation of some vague expressions in translation	2
Translators must be interested in poetry	1
Practicing a lot in translating Omani poems	4
Contacting poets for a better understanding of the source text	3
Keeping some elements of Omani poetry in the target text to sustain the aesthetic value of a poem	2
Having knowledge of the style and the form of Omani poems	3
Showing concern for the meaning and making it clear to achieve a successful translation	6
Being aware of every idiomatic expression	1

4.2 Analysis of Interview Data

An interview with five M.A English translation majors was performed, consisting of different questions related to the research topic. It was designed to identify the main problems translators face in translating Omani poetry with possible solutions. Within the interview process, various new ideas and findings were revealed.

At the very beginning of the interview, students claimed that translating poetry is not difficult, but it requires a special set of skills and a special sensitivity to language. Regarding the problems that translators encounter in translating Omani poetry, they argued that problems are tremendous when it comes to poetic translation. They identified a few problems a translator may face when translating Omani poetry and how to preserve both the form and meaning of a poem. In other words, they maintained that the real concern about translation should be on how translators can balance between the form and content of poems in their translation. They pointed out that both the form and meaning should be taken into account while translating poetry and that it is difficult to convey aesthetic values in poetic translation.

In addition, and based on their personal experience in the translation of poetry, students referred to cultural problems in translating Omani poetry and they claimed that Omani poems generally include many cultural terms and phrases. As a result, it would be difficult for translators to transfer the cultural and social concepts into the target texts, particularly if translators do not have enough knowledge about the Omani culture. Students also stressed that not only do translators face aesthetic and cultural problems, they also face religious problems. They explained that there are some religious terms in Omani poems that deal with religious issues and it is a real problem to find equivalents or even to translate religious terms or words due to the differences between religions.

Students concluded by suggesting solutions to the problem of translating religious and cultural aspects of Omani poems. They proposed that translators should overcome religious and cultural issues by using footnotes, which clarify the meaning of key religious terms and cultural aspects in poems. This translation strategy implies giving long details about unfamiliar religious terms, images and phrases borrowed from the holy Quran. The footnote should be given down at the bottom of the page because there are Islamic religious items which need to be fully explained so that the target reader receives the accurate meaning of the poem. The religious phrases "is there anyone that remembreth?", "the great king of earth", "Is there pressure in your ears" and "the palms of God the Almighty" in lines three, four, five, and six, respectively, from the translated stanza should be accompanied by a footnote that provides target readers with a religious discourse borrowed from several verses in the Quran and more specifically from Surah Yusuf: verse 31, Surah Al-Qamar: verse 15, Surah Loqman: verse 7 and Surah Al-Kiyama: verse 11.

5. Findings and Discussion

This study has demonstrated that the main problems translators encounter in translating Omani poetry are mainly linguistic, cultural, and aesthetic. However, in terms of cultural problems, respondents identified some unknown difficulties that are specific to cultural and religious issues in Omani poetry. Most translation students claimed that Omani cultural aspects are everywhere in the poem, unlike many other poems in which culture and religion are not dominant. They also argued that the lack of knowledge about the Omani culture may lead to a

misunderstanding of the cultural aspects, a mistranslation of Omani poems, and ultimately, a murder of its culture and assassination of its poets. M.A translation interviewees identified unknown aesthetic problems of translation and insisted that the style and form of Omani poems are different and therefore difficult to translate into the target text. They also pointed out that the language of poetry itself is unique and complex and that understanding the poetic, religious, and cultural discourse in Omani poems is time-consuming, particularly if translators are not Omani. In addition, they contended that there are several specific Omani terms and religious and cultural concepts that are difficult to translate or find equivalents for.

Based on the data obtained from the questionnaires and interviews, it is obvious that the linguistic, cultural, and aesthetic difficulties are the three main problems translators face in translating Omani poetry. It seems difficult to determine which aspect of translation is the most problematic since participants' responses in ranking poetic translation problems are very close. This result verifies Haryianto's (n.d.) claim that all linguistic, cultural, and aesthetic problems are present in translating poetry.

The questionnaire and interviews also addressed the controversial issue raised by many researchers regarding the form and meaning of poems in translation. Ben Zid (2014) and Dervishi (n.d.), for instance, pointed out that the difficulty of translating poetry is related to the conflict between the form and meaning of poems since it is difficult to transfer both aspects in translated poems. Similarly, the interview data showed that it is not a matter of whether translators are more concerned about the form of poems than the meaning, but that translators should balance between these two aspects in the target text. Additionally, it has been revealed from the questionnaire that students had difficulty balancing the form and the meaning in their translation. Thus, students are more concerned about the meaning than the form in translating poetry. One may conclude that the most difficult task in translating Omani poetry is how to convey both form and meaning in translated poems.

Several solutions have been suggested to face difficulties and problems of translating Omani poetry by respondents and the interviewees. These solutions include: becoming familiar with Omani culture, religion, and poetry; providing notes that explain unclear terms and phrases; using adaptation; contacting poets for a better understanding of poems before translation; reading and practicing Omani poems frequently; looking for available translated Omani poetry; and taking courses in poetic translation.

6. Conclusion and Recommendations

The present study has investigated the main problems that translators face in translating Omani poetry from the perspective of translation students at Sultan Qaboos University. Indeed, this study has found that none of the three stated difficulties is more problematic than the others. The findings of this study revealed more specific and unknown problems of translating Omani poetry in addition to the known and familiar cultural and aesthetic difficulties. It has also been found that Omani poetry has a different style and form making it difficult for translators to preserve the aesthetic values in the target text. Another important problem of poetry translation is the existence of religious concepts and terms in some Omani poems that are likely to make the task of translation more difficult.

This study has suggested several solutions in order to help translators overcome the obstacles of translating Omani poetry. The paper has recommended that translators be aware of the peculiar features of the Omani culture and religion, get familiar with available translated poems before starting translation, and take into account both the form and the meaning of a poem while they translate Omani poems to achieve a successful translation. Equally important are the recommendations that cultural institutions in Oman hold symposia to discuss important issues on poetry translation, that Omani educational institutions provide a course on translating Omani poetry emphasizing the specific problems translation majors may encounter when translating Omani poetry, and that further research on the specific and unfamiliar problems of poetry translation be conducted.

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Appendix A

Questionnaire

The main goal of this project is to know the opinions of students about the difficulties that translators face in translating Omani poetry to English and how to deal with these difficulties. It will take you only a few minutes to complete this questionnaire. The information that you provide us will be handled with confidentiality and used only for the purpose of study.

(Thank you in advance for your cooperation)

Part 1: Personal Information

Gender: - Male   - Female

Academic Year: -First   - Second   - Third   - Fourth   - Fifth

Part 2:

To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements? Please read the below items carefully and tick the appropriate box:

No.	Statements	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
1	Translating Omani poetry is impossible.				
2	Translators of poetry are usually concerned with the meaning or the content of a poem in their translation.				
3	Translators of poetry are usually concerned with the form of a poem in their translation.				
4	Arabic and Omani words/terms and vocabularies lead to difficulties while translating Omani poetry.				
5	Aesthetic imageries and poetic metrics that distinguish Arabic poetry cause great difficulties in translating poetry.				
6	Omani habits, culture, and environments make translating Omani poetry difficult.				
7	A translator of poetry must be a poet.				
8	Translating Omani poetry into English affects its meaning.				

Part 3:

Please tick (   ) in the appropriate box:

1) Have you ever translated a poem?

   ☐   Yes

   ☐   No

2) Do you think translating poetry is difficult?

  ☐   Yes

  ☐   No

3) Are you concerned about the form in translating poetry?

  ☐   Yes

  ☐   No

4) Are you concerned about the meaning and the content while translating poetry?

  ☐   Yes

  ☐   No

5) Do you support the literal translation of Omani poetry?

  ☐   Yes

  ☐   No

Part 4:

Given below are ranking questions; please read them carefully and rank them from 1 downwards based on your priority:

1. Rank the following genre of Omani literature according to the difficulty of translating them:

  ☐   Short stories

  ☐   Novels

  ☐   Drama

  ☐   Poetry

2. Rank the following problems of poetic translation according to the most dramatic problems:

  ☐   Linguistic problems

  ☐   Cultural problems

  ☐   Aesthetic or literary problems

Part 5:

Please answer the following questions briefly:

a) Please translate the following stanza from "Abi Assufi Diwan" by the Omani poet Al-Majizi:

b) Have insidious ladies seen his beauty, they would not be satisfied to uproot their sight

  Describe what you saw with memorable things, I said, but is there anyone that remembreth?

  Is there pressure in your ears or you are blind and none is sensible

  This is the great king of earth, the sultan of heaven and arbiter, but nay, no refuge for thee

  Has God given you the command of fate, or a deterrent force

  So withdraw your tails of eternal wonder, for I am in the palms of God the Almighty. (ll. 54-59).

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c) In your point of view, what are the problems or difficulties that translators encounter in translating Omani poetry?

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d) In your opinion, how can translators deal with the problems of Omani poetry translation?

Appendix B

Interview Questions

1) Do you think translating poetry is difficult?

2) Do you think poetry is the most difficult genre in comparison to other genres of literature? Why?

3) Do aesthetic, imageries, and poetic metrics that distinguish Omani poetry cause difficulties in translating poetry?

4) Is it possible to convey both the form and the meaning of a poem while translating poetry?

5) Could translators achieve a successful poetic translation by focusing on the form or the content of the poem?

6) Do Omani culture and customs play rules in poetic translation?

7) Do you support literal translation in translating Omani poetry into English? Does this type of translation convey the meaning of the poem?

8) Do you think translators of poetry must be poets in order to achieve a successful translation?

9) What are the main problems translators encounter in translating poetry?

10) How can the cultural problems in translating Omani poetry be solved?

11) In your point of view, how can translators deal with the problems of translating Omani poetry?