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Overcoming the non-performability/non-acceptability of some absurd elements: The feasibility of committing ST shifts in a French-Arabic and an English-Arabic translation of Samuel Barclay Beckett's self-translated play *Waiting for Godot* (1952) /*En Attendant Godot* (1948)¹

ABSTRACT

Overcoming the non-performability/non-acceptability of some absurd elements: The feasibility of committing ST shifts in a French-Arabic and an English-Arabic translation of Samuel Barclay Beckett's self-translated play *Waiting for Godot* (1952) /*En Attendant Godot* (1948)

The initial norm of performability/acceptability is usually at the back of the minds of play translators. This study is specifically conducted on Samuel Barclay Beckett's self-translated play, *Waiting for Godot*. The play was written by Samuel Beckett in French, and then he translated it into English. It is argued herein that the availability of two source-texts has led to the appearance of the phenomenon of using two source-texts of the same play, occasionally and momentarily, to produce an Arabic translation. The study argues that third-language translators commit these shifts in order to avoid rendering unperformable absurd ideas and structures. The study specifies the Absurd elements that trigger the shifts and explores the feasibility of the employment of source-text shifts in the preservation of some

1| The present article is the adjusted version of the second chapter of the author's unpublished MA thesis titled "*Waiting for Godot: A Comparative Study between the French and English Versions by Beckett and Selected Arabic Translations*" (Department of English, Faculty of Arts, Cairo University), under the supervision of Prof. Omayya Khalifa and Prof. Heba El-Abbadi. It was defended in December 2021.

of the themes of the Absurd theatre. It is proven that in many instances these shifts lead to changing the source-text themes. For this purpose the study compares two Arabic translations of *Godot*. The source-text for the Arabic target-text by Azher Saleh is the English self-translation, while that for the Arabic target-text by Paul Shaoul is the French original.

Keywords: self-translation, allusions, idioms, repetition, shifts, adequacy, acceptability

Beckett's language in *Waiting for Godot* is confusing even for an English or French audience. This confusion is done deliberately by Beckett to deliver themes derived from the main theme of the absurdity of existence through distorted language and miscommunication. Many accounts have been written about Beckett's language usage in the play. A great number of them speak about the way language conveys certain existential, religious, and philosophical themes in the play at both the micro-textual and the macro-textual levels. Yet a small number of these studies list qualities of Beckett's confusing language usage that pose a challenge for translators of his work. Although no mention of translation is made in these writings, they provide great insight into the difficulty in understanding his language.

Beckett's play is not easy to render into any language because of its special linguistic structure that deviates from the norm and is even not clear in some instances. James Eliopulous (1975), Kathrin Stokes (1988: 55), and Dina Sherzer (1978: 276) show in their studies the characteristics of his language, where repetition is the most referred to incongruity. According to Sherzer, in *WfG* Vladimir and Estragon repeat synonymous curse words to insult each other then they repeat non-curse homophones to evoke comedy and to play a verbal game as a pass time (1978: 277). The following exchange is an example:

VLADIMIR: Moron!

ESTRAGON: Vermin!

VLADIMIR: Abortion!

ESTRAGON: Morpion!

VLADIMIR: Sewer-rat!

ESTRAGON: Curate!

VLADIMIR: Cretin!

ESTRAGON: (with finality) Critic! (Beckett 2014: 109).

Repetition also, as Stokes writes, shows the disintegration of dialogue in the piece as the characters constantly forget what was said and need others to reiterate it. Hence, she adds that Didi every once in a while has to remind Gogo that they are waiting for Godot. The repetition of the same events of act one in act two also reflect the futility of waiting where no development or improvement of the predicament of the two characters occurs (Stokes 1988: 56).

According to Niklaus Gessner, the second most discussed feature that aims to show the inadequacy of Beckett's dialogue is "cliché" (Esslin 1961: 45–46). Eliopulous (1975: 95) argues that clichés work "in close relationship" with pratfalls, as clichés that imply a pratfall most of the time follow a display of sentiment in the play. This is done by Beckett to obliterate any expression of "tender human emotions" in his play and for a comic effect (ibid.). For example when Vladimir is about to embrace Estragon, the latter retreats and tells his friend that he "stinks of garlic" (Eliopulous 1975: 95). The cliché also serves as a game that the two vagabonds play where one of them says part of it and the other completes the other part (ibid.). Different clichés that bear the same meaning are also uttered to "satirize the vacuity of everyday conversation" and its "monotony" (Eliopulous 1975: 96). The following exchange is an example:

ESTRAGON: And what did he reply?

VLADIMIR: That he'd see.

ESTRAGON: That he couldn't promise anything.

VLADIMIR: That he'd have to think it over (Beckett 2014: 19–20).

Sherzer (1978: 276) argues that the reciprocated utterance of "synonymous clichés" also resembles a "verbal ping-pong game" that distracts the characters from their dilemma and offers them a respite where "verbal virtuosity and creativity replace[s] pragmatism". In addition, clichés are also used "to prove a point" (ibid.). A cliché just like any utterance is used to momentarily overcome silence that reflects the void and meaninglessness of the characters' life. Helen Penet-Astbury (2008: 191) also highlights the fact that Beckett's clichés often reflect a certain theme in the play. For example the expression "dead and buried" evokes the theme of death in *Godot* (Beckett 2014: 75).

Thirdly, Gessner believes that "misunderstanding[s]" by the characters in *Godot* leave a baffling effect on the audience (Esslin 1961: 45). Stokes (1988: 54) agrees with Gessner's remark. In the play characters are unable to understand each other's words. For example when Vladimir tells Estragon to raise his pantalon, the latter asks what the former means and even thinks he wants him to do the opposite and instead, lowers his trousers. A fourth feature that constitutes a great problem in translating Beckett is the illogical organization of unrelated components in his writing, which Gessner calls "telegraphic style" (Esslin 1961: 45) and in Eliopulous's (1975: 90) words is dubbed "intentional syntax". According to the latter, this quality is evident in the "stream of consciousness dialogue", "interrupted dialogue of pairs", "syntactical ambiguity", "abrupt non-sequiturs" and "tautologies" (ibid.). Gessner confirms that these techniques involve jarring linguistic mistakes such as; irregularities of grammar, and absence of "punctuation" (Esslin 1961: 45). Sherzer (1978: 273) and Stokes (1988: 54–58) maintain that they are also evident when a character asks a question and is ignored by the other character, and even when he is given an answer, the reply

is irrelevant to the topic, has no logical relation to the preceding statement, has no causality, and leads to no conclusion or complete ideas or sentences.

A fifth element of perplexity in *Godot* is the characters' constant inability to find the right words (Esslin 1961: 45–46; Stokes 1988: 57). The characters in the play suddenly stop talking and say that they are struggling to find a certain word to express their thoughts in a monologue or a conversation. Stokes (1988: 57) affirms that most of the time, the word that they finally find is very trivial and banal. Moreover, there is a sixth quality that especially brings to mind the theme of the failing memory, which is “the characters' inability to remember what has been said” (Esslin 1961: 86). Seventhly, Eliopulous (1975: 107) and Stokes (1988: 54) argue that contradiction is another logic defying element in *Godot*. The dialogue in the play is incoherent because the characters contradict themselves and contradict each other. For example, Didi and Gogo say that they are moving to a different place, but they stay where they are. Beckett's usage of the “indelicacies of language” such as; “fecal puns”, “scatological speech”, “irreverencies toward the Classic-Christian tradition”, “obscenities of language and obscenities of situation” is an eighth feature that makes Beckett's language controversial and not accepted by everybody (Eliopulous 1975: 107). The references are utilized by Beckett because of the themes they concretize and their striking comic effect. Due to the provocative, shocking and offensive nature of Beckett's language, Shaoul and Saleh are usually inclined to censor these references to guarantee the acceptability of the readers and to save face.

There are a few situational blunders committed by the characters in *Godot*, that can be grouped under a ninth factor of language disruption; which is their lack of a “sense of propriety” and inability to “maintain the proper politeness and the proper social distance which make for a delicate balance characteristic of most natural conversation” (Sherzer 1978: 278–280). These mistakes, result from the disharmony between the utterance and context of utterance (Sherzer 1978: 280). For example, despite the fact that the two tramps are strangers to Lucky and have just met him, they talk inappropriately about his “physical defects” (ibid.). This way of talking to a stranger is unconventional. Another example is the fact that despite barely knowing the vagabonds, Pozzo asks them if they “smell [...] bad” and he does not apologize for the indecency (Sherzer 1978: 279). Disgust is usually not expressed to a stranger one has just met. Moreover, when a character wants to know information about another character, they ask a “third character” despite the presence of the person in question. Also, characters of inferior status give orders to their seniors (ibid.). Politeness is used in unsuitable situations. For example, when the two men are about to hang themselves, they “exchange formulas of politeness” where each of them tells the other that he can go first (Sherzer 1978: 282). This would be appropriate when you want to compliment someone, but it does not make sense in the context of suicide and rather provokes laughter.

The present study looks into two Arabic translations of *Godot* to determine how the third-language translators overcame the challenge of rendering the illogical language of Beckett's drama in a performable way. While it can be translated as it is, an Arabic translator would be tempted to dispel the confusion and make the dialogue of his play more logical to avoid baffling the readers of his translation. The Arabic translator will fear lest his audience, despite being aware of the conventions of the theatre of the absurd, would not accept the text or be offended and not enjoy reading/watching such a perplexing play. They might also think that it is the translator's lack of skill that leads to the fragmented language in the target-text. Given Beckett's confusing language usage, it is argued that the third-language translators commit source-text and semantic shifts to remove the confusion in the play, and produce an easily intelligible and performable play. This paper analyzes instances where the Arabic translators shift from their proclaimed STs and use the other source-text, English or French. The analysis illustrates how translators benefit from the dialogic view of self-translation to produce a performable translation.

Beckett himself and Mirna Sindičić Sabljo are proponents of the dialogic view of benefiting from the existence of two source-texts. Uchman (2012: 48–49) writes that the Irish author, as reported by Antoni Libera, said that in the case of *Waiting for Godot/ en Attendant Godot*, future “translations [...] [of his work] should be based on his two original texts.” On the other hand, Sindičić Sabljo (2011: 175) prescribes that concerning Beckett's works where there is a great difference between the English and French versions, the translator can choose one version that is more familiar to the target-culture; but he has to prove that he has read both versions and note the differences between them and even use parts from one of the versions to clarify the other. Sindičić Sabljo and Beckett's accounts show that using more than one ST is a possibility for the third-language translator.

In this study, the two translators availed themselves of the English and French. The researcher asked Shaoul², about using both texts and he replied considering the French his main source-text yet consulting the English in some parts. On the other hand, Saleh, when asked the same question by the researcher³, said that the English was his source-text and that he did not consult the French version. Nonetheless, it is hypothesized that he has indirectly consulted the French source-text since he mentions in his introduction that he reviewed two Arabic translations of *Godot* that preceded his translation (Beckett 2012: 1). This hypothesis is made due to the evidence found in his translation of the French source-text's influence. When queried by the researcher⁴, Saleh could not recall the names of the translators he has reviewed their texts. It is

2| In private correspondence between 3 and 6 June 2021 via Whatsapp.

3| In private correspondence from 7 June 2021 via Facebook.

4| In private correspondence from 7 June 2021 via Facebook.

noteworthy that Shaoul committed more source-text shifts than Saleh, therefore there are more examples cited in Shaoul's section of the data analysis because we cannot analyze the same number of examples in both sections. Hence, the imbalance in the number of examples in the two sections. Shaoul and Saleh shift to the other source-text when they find that omitting, adding, replacing or paraphrasing an utterance will produce a more performable target-text.

In order to know whether the themes of each Arabic translator's proclaimed source-text are maintained or not, as a result of the shifting of source-texts, excerpts of ST shifts committed by Shaoul, from the French to the English text and by Saleh, from the English to the French text will be analyzed. The analysis of each excerpt will be comprised of a contextualization of the excerpt, explaining the type of linguistic distortion at play in the excerpt of the presumed source-text, showing the themes conveyed in the presumed source-text, explaining why the other source-text is more performable and the themes it conveys. The findings will be used to determine whether the source-text shifts led or did not lead to changing the intended themes of each third-language translator's proclaimed source-text.

The findings will also help answer the following questions: How far did the existence of two STs help the translators produce a performable translation without changing the themes? To what extent were some of these strategies related to a consistent change in themes? What are the features of language distortion that urged the translators to commit shifts?

The first main section in the data analysis will focus on the source-texts shifts made by Shaoul. The second main section will be focused on Saleh's source-text shifts. Shaoul's source-text shifts section is divided into four subsections, namely; addition source-text shifts, omission source-text shifts, paraphrase source-text shifts and replacement source-text shifts. In the forthcoming section, examples where Shaoul opted for adding parts from the English self-translation are analyzed. Shaoul's main source-text is the French original.

1. ST shifts by Shaoul

1.1. Addition ST shifts

(1)

French:

"VLADIMIR. — On dirait un saule" (Beckett 1952: 17).

English:

"VLADIMIR: I don't know. A willow" (Beckett 2014: 13).

شاوول

"فلاديمير: لا أعرف - كأنها صفصافة"

(Beckett 2009: 47).

In this scene, Estragon asks Vladimir what type of tree is the one at which they are supposed to meet Godot. Vladimir replies by saying that he is not sure what kind of tree it is, but he suspects it is a willow. The French response is an elliptical construction used in a conversation. If translated into Arabic it would be rendered as “قد نقول صفاً”. Shaoul adds the underlined part of the English reply. He does so, because, as far as performability is concerned, the English one is clearer. The English utterance, like the French one, conveys first the fact that Vladimir is not certain about the species of the tree, and then in another sentence, he suggests it is a willow. The uncertainty of the kind of the tree echoes that of the “spot” where they are to meet Godot (Seixas 2008: 201). The theme of uncertainty is foregrounded in English by the addition of “I don’t know”.

(2)

French:

ESTRAGON. — C’est la mienne peut-être? (Beckett 1952: 69).

English:ESTRAGON: And whose is it? Mine? (Beckett 2014: 69).

شاؤول

“الاسترجون: و غلطة من؟ غلطتي”

(Beckett 2009: 104).

In this scene, Estragon is rebuking the boy the first time he comes to tell them Godot will not come today but will definitely come tomorrow. Estragon is outraged because the boy, according to him, arrived at a late hour, but the boy tells him that it is not his mistake. So Estragon replies in the French version by scolding him saying “C’est la mienne peut-etre?” and in the English one “And whose is it? Mine?”. Estragon’s French utterance, which can be translated as “maybe it’s mine?”, contradicts his outrage as it shows that he has doubted for a second the fact that it could be because of him that the boy arrived late. Had Shaoul rendered the French one as it is, the sarcasm will not be obvious in the written text. The irony will only be clear in the intonation when the play is performed on stage, according to the vision of the director. Shaoul, perhaps, shifted to English to avoid misunderstanding. The English version is more direct and parallels Gogo’s fury by invoking sardonic humor that pokes fun at the boy. As a result, Shaoul’s target-text maintains the themes of the French text as well as adding the themes of the English one. The Arabic text and the original both highlight the theme of uncertainty, because Estragon suspects that maybe he was not waiting where he should, so as a result; the boy could not find him. The English text has an additional theme which is the absurdity of accusing others of wrongdoing when there is nobody to blame. Estragon blames the boy for the delay, even though it is not his fault. The boy arrived late because of an unknown reason.

(3)

French:

VLADIMIR. — Que faire pour fêter cette réunion? (Il réfléchit.) Lève-toi que je t'embrasse. (Il tend la main à Estragon.) (Beckett 1952: 10).

English:

VLADIMIR: Together again at last! We'll have to celebrate this. But how? (He reflects.) Get up till I embrace you (Beckett 2014: 5).

شاوول.

فلاديمير: معاً من جديد في النهاية! علينا أن نحتفل بهذه المناسبة، لكن كيف؟ (يفكر) انهض كي أعانقك (يمد يده إلى استرجون)
(Beckett 2009: 39).

This is a scene at the outset of the first act, where Vladimir and Estragon meet for the first time in the course of the play. In both the original and the self-translation, Vladimir wonders how they can celebrate this reunion and tells Estragon to get up so he can hug him. Vladimir is elated because they have finally met. However, his feeling in the English version is not very clearly expressed in the French version. This elation is exhibited in the utterance: “Together again at last!”. In the French text, Vladimir is not very polite because he does not adequately express his happiness with the return of his friend. To respond to Estragon’s declaration that he thought he would not be able to make a come back, Didi only says “Que faire pour fêter cette réunion?”.

In the English version, however, to show the extent to which Vladimir wishes to console his friend, Beckett adds a phrase; so the utterance becomes “Together again at last! We’ll have to celebrate this. But how?”. In producing his Arabic translation, Shaoul adds “together again at last!” in his Arabic translation, an utterance that is not found in his assumed ST; the French original. He borrows the utterance from the English self-translation. The themes of the French text are maintained in the Arabic target-text. Because both the original and the self-translation reveal the “comedy of the married couple” as referred to by Anthony Cronin (1966: 391), where one of them wishes to celebrate their relationship but the other, in this case Estragon, does not feel as celebratory saying “Not now, not now” (Beckett 2014: 5). Also the English text stresses the false sense of achievement felt by Vladimir because of the reunion with his friend; also conveyed in the French version because of the utterance “Que faire pour fêter cette réunion?”.

Yet additional themes could be inferred from the English version. That is because in both versions Beckett accounts for Didi’s will to celebrate and embrace Gogo, but he does not include Vladimir’s additional outburst of relief at being once again in the company of his comrade, in the French text. Speaking of the self-translation, the sentence added by Beckett asserts the togetherness

and friendship between the two tramps and the fact that they have finally met after a long separation. In the French version this communal aspect is not emphasized. Also, the fact that they waited a long time before reuniting, which is reflected in the words “at last”, is downplayed in the original. Dan O. Via, Jr writes that Vladimir and Estragon’s friendship reflects man’s “unfulfilled search for community” (Via 1962: 34). The failed search is further stressed by Ciaran Ross (2006: 82) who explains that the added sentence, “Together again at last!”, which reflects the joy of the return of hope after a long waiting, is followed by “they didn’t beat you?”; a question to remind the audience of the unknown menace that threatens and jeopardizes their company.

(4)

French:

VLADIMIR (se penchant). — C’est vrai. (Il se boutonne.) Pas de laisser-aller dans les petites choses (Beckett 1952: 11).

English:

VLADIMIR: (stooping). True. (He buttons his fly.) Never neglect the little things of life” (Beckett 2014: 7).

شاوول

فلاديمير: (منحنياً) هذا صحيح . (يزرر بنطاله) علينا ألا نهمل الأمور الصغيرة في الحياة (Beckett 2009: 41).

In this scene Estragon expresses his anger to Vladimir because he does not help him take off his boot. Vladimir gives the excuse that he is in pain. Then Estragon tells Vladimir to button his fly; in response, Vladimir buttons it and says, “never neglect the little things in life”. The word “life”, however, is not in the French original. The French utterance is ambiguous because it is not clear what Beckett is referring to by “les petites choses/ the little things”. The addition of the word “life” in the English text shows that Vladimir means the unbuttoning of his zipper by “the little things”.

In the original and the self-translation there is a reflection of the characters’ glorification of absurd acts. In explaining this line, Katharine Worth writes that Didi is interested in the way trivial events that happen to people can be mused upon to find a “profound [...] meaning of life”(Worth 2001: 3). In both versions Vladimir considers the zipper: “les petites choses/the little things”; however in the English version there is an additional humorous dimension to the utterance where he suggests that taking heed of petty things, such as; buttoning his fly, can lead to a change of his predicament and a consequence that embetters his condition in “life”. Shaoul obviously adds the word “life” in his Arabic version for the purpose of clarifying and reducing the vagueness in the French version or because he is aware of the humor involved. The theme of the original is maintained in the Arabic target-text.

There is another example of an addition ST shift numbered as example 5. In addition to addition shifts, Shaoul uses replacement source-text shifts. In this case he replaces an utterance in the French, his main source, with an utterance from the English self-translation. The examples in the next section demonstrate this kind of source-text shifts.

1.2. Replacement ST shifts

(6)

French:

ESTRAGON. — Je n'ai pas compris s'il veut le remplacer ou s'il n'en veut plus après lui (Beckett 1952: 47).

English:

ESTRAGON: Does he want someone to take his place or not? (Beckett 2014: 46).

شاؤول

استرجون : هل يريد أن يحل أحداً غيره مكانه أم لا؟
(Beckett 2009: 79).

In this scene Pozzo tells the two tramps that Lucky was so generous to him, aided him, amused him, and was angelic but that now his slave is only “killing” him (Beckett 2014: 45). Pozzo at this moment cannot bear Lucky’s presence. So Estragon asks Vladimir if by this he means that Pozzo wants somebody to be with him instead of Lucky. In the French version, Vladimir does not hear the question “Est-ce qu’il veut le remplacer?” (Beckett 1952: 47), which is “Does he want to replace him?” (Beckett 2014: 45) in the English version and says “comment? / what?”; so Estragon repeats it in a convoluted, wordy and tautological form in French, saying “Je n’ai pas compris s’il veut le remplacer ou s’il n’en veut plus après lui” which means in English “I do not understand if he wants to replace him or if he doesn’t want any more after him”.

Both the French and English utterances, according to Katherine H. Burkman, show that “Estragon, who despairs whenever he is reminded by Vladimir that they must wait for Godot, would prefer the physical bondage of Lucky, who gets the bones, to the existential anguish of his waiting for an uncertain fate. At one point he even seems interested in taking Lucky’s place” (Burkman 1986: 41). Hence, Estragon seems to embrace Lucky’s “voluntary slavery” (ibid.). This could reflect Beckett’s cynical view of modern-day slavery; where employees willfully become somewhat enslaved by their employer, if they are not well compensated. The theme of the failing mental capabilities of man or dementia, is also reflected by both source-texts, because Gogo has to repeat the same question to Didi. Moreover, both texts include the theme of abuse, since Pozzo is going to forsake Lucky after he had taken advantage of him.

Despite the fact that the French text conveys additional themes not found in the English one, Shaoul adopts the English form to create a more speakable,

concise and straightforward translation. That is because the repetition of the same information twice in the French version would not be as performable and might bore the audience. Accordingly not all the themes of the French text were maintained in the Arabic translation. Estragon in the French text uses some sort of tautology/repetition of information in his answer in order to make sure his statement would be easily understood and remembered by Vladimir. This reflects the theme of friendship between the two tramps and their fluctuating care for one another. Therefore, the English text does not convey this theme because it is in the form of a very short question with no superfluous words.

(7)

French:VLADIMIR. — Malgré qu'on en ait (Beckett 1952: 90).**English:**VLADIMIR: Try as one may (Beckett 2014: 91).

شاؤول

فلاديمير : حاول قدر الإمكان

(Beckett 2009: 123).

In this example when the vagabonds see a charnel house, they try to avoid looking at the skeletons. Vladimir however tells his friend that no matter how much they try, they will not be able to avoid looking at them because they catch their eyes. In the French text, according to *Larousse* dictionary, Vladimir's argument is a very old expression that is only found in very old literature. Hence it is not known to all the French readership and would not be understood literally ("malgré prép").⁵ The idiom is "Malgré qu'on en ait" which can be translated word for word as "despite having some". The real meaning of this expression according to *Larousse* dictionary is, that things might happen against one's will ("malgré prép."). The English utterance "try as one may" is a more performative alternative because it makes sense even if it is translated literally which Shaoul does. Shaoul renders it as "حاول قدر الإمكان". Shaoul's rendering however, delivers the opposite of the intended meaning. The English idiom means that, no matter how much you try, the end result will be failure. Shaoul's rendering, on the contrary, encourages the listener to keep on trying, as if there is a possibility that he will succeed. The English idiom could be rendered by an equivalent idiom or by a paraphrase such as "مهما حاولت سوف تفشل". The English and French utterances both reflect the themes of death and futility. The two tramps are surrounded by corpses, which is an image of their death-in-life kind of existence. The fact that they cannot stop themselves from looking at the bones around

5| <https://www.larousse.fr/dictionnaires/francais/malgré%C3%A9/48886>.

them, reflects the futility of man's attempts to avoid seeing death, as it is the fate he is predestined to meet.

(8)

French:

ESTRAGON. — Il bave. [...]

ESTRAGON. — Il écume (Beckett 1952: 34).**English:**

ESTRAGON: Look at the slobber. [...]

ESTRAGON: Look at the slaver (Beckett 2014: 32).

شاوول.

[...] ! استرجون : يُرِيل

.استرجون : انظر إلى اللعاب

(Beckett 2009: 66).

In this excerpt Estragon and Vladimir are speculating about Lucky's condition. They wonder if he is sick, injured or rather retarded. Lucky's drooling makes the two tramps suggest that he suffers from "cretinism" or a "goiter". In the French text, to describe the fact that Lucky drools, Beckett uses stichomythia, synonyms and anaphora, where Gogo says "Il bave/ Il écume". Estragon repeats the same meaning two times with different words to draw his friend's attention to the fact that Lucky must be suffering from some ailment. Shaoul uses at first the "il bave/ يُرِيل" then instead of rendering French "il écume" as "يسيل لعابه" he opted for the English structure "look at the slaver/ انظر إلى اللعاب". Shaoul seems to have done this to give the dialogue a sense of development, as if the drooling could not be seen at the beginning but now, it is visible. The fact that Shaoul uses the English structure, confirms that he has benefited from the explicitation that Beckett uses in composing his self-translation.

The usage of the English text, however, did not help Shaoul convey the theme of the French text. According to Vicki K. Janik the tramps' "stichomythic dialogue" and "anaphora" induce "humor" and a sense of "isolation" in the original text (Janik 1998: 14). In this particular example she says that the use of the rhetorical devices enables them to delineate Lucky's torment "yet show fool-like non-involvement because of the artifice of their language; their figured words distance them from the victim" (ibid.). The anaphoric effect could have been maintained in the Arabic translation if the redundancy was kept and rendered as "انظر إلى الريالة/ il bave" and "انظر إلى اللعاب/ il écume". The non-existence of an anaphoric effect in Shaoul's text, implies the theme of human empathy; because a real feeling of concern on the part of Estragon for Lucky can be felt. Beckett, on the contrary, intended the original to convey the theme of indifference. It also removed the poeticism of the dialogue created by Beckett. Given the existence of a rhyme in the English text which cannot be recreated in the Arabic text because there is no rhyme in the French original.

(9)

French:ESTRAGON. — Il s'est retenu tout seul (Beckett 1952: 48).**English:**ESTRAGON: He would have burst (Beckett 2014: 47).

شاؤول

استرجون : كان يمكن أن ينفجر.

(Beckett 2009: 80).

In this scene, Pozzo is angry that Vladimir left the stage without saying good bye. He uses the phrase “Vous auriez du le retenir” meaning “you should have held him back” to blame Estragon for not telling his friend to stay. The usage of the verb “retenir” brings confusion. This confusion is the result of a pun intended by Beckett in using this particular verb. Estragon does not understand that Pozzo was rebuking him for Vladimir’s exit so he responds saying “Il s’est retenu tout seul” meaning “he held it back on his own”, as if Pozzo is angry that Didi cannot hold himself from urinating. According to Julian A. Garforth (1996b: 164) there is a *double entendre* where the verb “retenir” is used by Pozzo to refer to “Vladimir’s departure” and by Estragon to refer to “Vladimir’s bladder” in the original version. Pozzo tells Estragon “Vous auriez du le retenir/you should have held him back” and then Estragon replies with the same verb saying “Il s’est retenu tout seul/he holds himself by himself”, to refer to the fact that Vladimir could not stop himself from leaving as well as from urinating.

The pun, however, is not present in the self-translation. In the English text Pozzo says “He could have waited” and Estragon answers “He would have burst”. While the humor resulting from the joke about Vladimir’s “weak bladder” is obvious in English, “the pun is lost” (Garforth 1996b: 164). This example shows an instance in which Shaoul imitates Beckett’s translation to English and swaps the French utterance with the English one. Magdalena Winkler (2010: 101) states in her study that Beckett changes the English text here, due to the vagueness of the verb “retenir” which means in French to “hold oneself”. If rendered using the same words, the English text would not make sense; therefore, Beckett communicates an equivalent idea that disambiguates the French text and is more straightforward. Shaoul benefits from this straightforwardness in English, and uses the English text because he believes it is a pictorial interpretation of the bland language in the French one. The theme conveyed by Estragon’s reply in the French text is different from that in the English text. In the original the theme of the absurdity in being independent while accomplishing petty endeavors is foregrounded, as Gogo seems to say that his friend is a grown up man who does not need his help and can hold himself from passing water on his own. The English version, on the other hand, sheds light on the theme of the adult-child,

because Estragon suggests that Didi is like a little boy who will explode if he does not go to the toilet. The two themes, however, reflect the absurdity of life.

(10)

French:ESTRAGON. — J'en prends le chemin (Beckett 1952: 54).**English:**ESTRAGON: I couldn't accept less (Beckett 2014: 53).

شاوول

استرجون : لا أقبل

(Beckett 2009: 86).

In this scene Estragon bargains with Pozzo to pay him not less than five francs in return for not boring him. Then he says that he “couldn't accept” lesser money in the self-translation while his reply to Pozzo in the original text is “J'en prends le chemin”. The French phrase is a rarely used very culture-specific idiom and is ambiguous. The figurative phrase could have two meanings. The first, according to *Cambridge* dictionary, is the figurative meaning: “voie qui mène à un but”, which entails that the speaker is determined to achieve a goal, and the second is that the speaker will go a certain way.⁶ Since perceiving the idiom according to the second meaning would denote that Estragon accepts the amount of money offered by Pozzo, this meaning will be ruled out and instead the idiom will be understood according to the first meaning; which confirms Gogo's refusal of Pozzo's offer. The English version, and Shaoul's translation, do not include “j'en prends le chemin”. Shaoul changes the response in his presumed source-text with the English “I couldn't accept less”. It is probable that Shaoul uses the English text because it makes clear Estragon's refusal. The themes conveyed by the second meaning of the French cliché and the English reply are the same. Hence, Estragon's response invokes the theme of human greed where Estragon is not ready to compromise and will take advantage of Pozzo.

(11)

French:ESTRAGON. — C'est qu'on ne voudrait pas vous dire une connerie (Beckett 1952 : 121).**English:**ESTRAGON: Give us a chance (Beckett 2014: 126).

شاوول

استرجون : أعطنا فرصة

(Beckett 2009: 157).

6| <https://dictionary.cambridge.org/dictionary/french-english/chemin>, accessed: 25.20.2021.

In this scene Estragon and Vladimir are arguing about what part of the day it is. Estragon believes that the sun is rising, but Vladimir tells him that it is sunset. Pozzo intervenes to ask them whether it was evening at that moment. So Estragon responds in the French text saying “C’est qu’on ne voudrait pas vous dire une connerie” and in the English text he says “Give us a chance”. In the French Gogo seems to give an irrelevant answer to Pozzo’s question. Estragon’s French reply could be translated as “we would not want to tell you nonsense/lies/stupidity”. This reply is very strange because the only possible answer to Pozzo’s very trivial question would be yes or no and not an elaborate answer that requires any kind of reflection. Hence, as Dina Sherzer highlights, among the dialogue conventions Beckett uses is the fact that “requests are not responded to [...] [and] [d]esired information is not provided” (Sherzer 1978: 273). Gogo’s reply in the English text shows him trying to know the time but needs to think further; in the French text he is unwilling to tell the time. Hence both the English and the French text reflect the theme of failure to know something as easy as telling the time. The French version has an additional theme: nihilism, which is not in the English one, because Estragon equals time to “connerie”. To avoid the confusion that Estragon’s nihilistic reply might induce in the audience, Shaoul opts for the more relevant English answer. The English answer shows Gogo actively doing an effort to know the time although still uncertain; however the French one is an unusual rejection of the importance of knowing the time. Everybody takes its importance for granted.

(12)

French:

POZZO (soudain furieux). — Vous n’avez pas fini de m’empoisonner avec vos histoires de temps? C’est insensé! (Beckett 1952: 126).

English:

POZZO: (suddenly furious). Have you not done tormenting me with your accursed time! It’s abominable! (132).

شاوول

! بوزو : (فجأة غاضباً) ألم تنتهيا من تسميمي بأسئلتكما عن الوقت الملعون هذا؟ أمر بغيض
(Beckett 2009: 164–165).

In this scene, Vladimir asks Pozzo about the time since Lucky became mute. Pozzo angrily bursts out saying that one day he became silent and one day they will become deaf and die. According to Michel Lioure (1998: 70), it does not matter if it is the past or the future or any time because the end result is the same which is misery. In rendering Pozzo’s tirade into Arabic, Shaoul uses a word that was added by Beckett in his self-translation, which is “accursed”. The addition by Beckett of the adjective seems to be done for the sake of showing that Pozzo hates time because it brings a curse with it.

Both English and French texts show that, after losing his sight, Pozzo has become nihilistic, rejecting the importance of time (70). This is because the more time passes the worse Pozzo's condition gets. Time does not bring about improvement. The only change that happens is for the worse. The usage of the word "accursed" in the English text sheds light on the theme of degeneration by the passage of time, since it implies that it is the reason Pozzo has become blind and Lucky mute.

(13)

French:

POZZO. — Oh ! (Un temps.) A la bonne heure (Beckett 1952: 48).

English:

POZZO: Oh! (Pause.) Oh well then of course in that case ... (Beckett 2014: 47).

شاوول

بوزو : أوه ! (صمت) إذن في هذه الحالة

(Beckett 2009: 80).

In this scene Pozzo is annoyed that Vladimir has left the stage to urinate "without saying goodbye" to him (Beckett 2014: 47). So Estragon explains to him the reason why his friend had to leave abruptly. The reason is that Didi could not hold himself any longer due to his bladder problems. Pozzo responds by saying in French "A la bonne heure" and in English "Oh well then of course in that case...". The French expression is a reply that means "good" or "marvellous".⁷ Pozzo's French reply is ambiguous and can be understood in two ways. The first way is that Pozzo thinks that it is "good" that Vladimir is experiencing health problems. The second is that the ringmaster thinks that it is "good" that Vladimir left to relieve himself. The first way of understanding would delineate Pozzo as a sadistic person who derives pleasure from others' suffering. This indeed resembles one aspect of Pozzo's character. According to Lois Gordon, there is "a wide disparity between the humanity [...] [Pozzo] tries to project and his less-than-humane actions. He strives to appear dignified and genteel, professing business interests and altruism" (Gordon 2002: 162). To avoid portraying Pozzo in a negative light, Shaoul opts for the English version in which Pozzo is speechless having realized that Didi had the right to leave because he is sick. In the self-translation Pozzo gives an incomplete answer; feeling embarrassed. Shaoul also did that to make Pozzo act in a "socially acceptable" behavior instead of depicting him having "hostile feelings" (Gordon 2002: 161–162). The Arabic translator chooses this interpretation of the English text in particular because the self-translation is an improved more performable text in which Beckett avoids showing Pozzo having contradictory character traits. Also, the fact that

7| <https://www.larousse.fr/dictionnaires/francais-anglais/heure/39762>, accessed: 25.10.2021.

Pozzo finds out he was at fault for being annoyed by Didi's departure also stresses, according to Katherine Weiss (2013: 20), "Beckett[s] [...] parody of polite bourgeois society [...] [represented by] Pozzo, the slave to [...] formality and etiquette". Pozzo puts himself in an awkward situation.

(14)

French:ESTRAGON. — Ma foi, là tu m'èn demandes trop (Beckett 1952: 91).**English:**ESTRAGON: I'm not a historian (Beckett 2014: 92).

شاوول

استرجون : أنا لست مؤرخاً

(Beckett 2009: 124).

In this scene Vladimir asks Estragon to remind him of what they have been speaking the day before. Estragon tells him in English "I am not a historian" but in French he tells him "frankly, you ask too much". Estragon, in that sense, in both the original and the self-translation is annoyed from the question. The French reply "you ask too much" by Estragon is not logical because it implies that Vladimir is asking his friend to do a real effort when in fact remembering their discussion does not require so. English "I am not a historian" is a more logical response as it suggests Gogo's process of recalling the events and topics they talked about. Speaking of the English text, Helen Elam (1998: 31) states that Beckett is alluding here to the concept of the non-existence of time where in the play the two tramps cannot "tell events in a sequence", or history, as they do not know what day it is that they are waiting for Godot nor what day the day before was. According to Lee Oser (2007: 79), Estragon's reply also reveals an aspect of his characterization that is; of his loss of "the good of the intellect"; as recalling history requires certain mental abilities. Estragon noticeably does not remember any of the memories his friend recalls about their time spent together picking grapes. However, the French text does not reflect the theme of the inability of remembering because Gogo does not bluntly express his abrogation of trying to know the topic they discussed earlier, as he does in the self-translation. The French text reflects the theme of dependency in friendship, as Estragon mentions that Vladimir asks him for too many favours. It also deals with the theme of miscommunication borne from his inability to comprehend his companion's query. This theme is not maintained in Arabic or English texts, in which Estragon understands and gives a logical answer to the question. Nevertheless, the theme of dependency is preserved in the Arabic translation; as Vladimir needs his friend to respond to his questions to acknowledge his existence.

(15)

French:

ESTRAGON. — Je ne sais pas. Ailleurs. Dans un autre compartiment. Ce n'est pas le vide qui manque (Beckett 1952: 92).

English:

ESTRAGON: How do I know? In another compartment. There's no lack of void (Beckett 2014: 93).

شاول

استراجون: وما أدراني؟ في منطقة أخرى. ليس الفراغ هو الذي ينقص (Beckett 2009: 125).

صالح⁸

⁹استراجون: وكيف لي ان اعرف؟ في مكان آخر. فالخواء في كل مكان (Beckett 2012).

In this scene Vladimir asks Estragon if he knows where they were the day before; in act one. Estragon says that he is sure they were not at the same place. He also says in French “Je ne sais pas” meaning “I do not know” and in English his reply is “How do I know”. In Both original and self-translation, he clarifies that it was in a “void”. Shaoul in rendering the target-text, chooses to use the English structure as it not only shows that Gogo does not know the place, but also that there is absolutely no way for him to know because it was a place that resembled a void with no landmarks. The French one, however, implies that if Estragon does some effort he would be able to remember where they were. Shaoul perhaps used the English version to highlight the impossibility of remembering on Estragon's part, where the only one in the habit of remembering things is Vladimir. It is noteworthy that in rendering the word “void” Shaoul could capture the multiple connotations of the word rendering it as “الفراغ” which means both physical emptiness and idleness. Yet, Saleh only showed the desolateness of the place by translating it as “خواء”.

(16)

French:

VLADIMIR. — Ça tombe à pic. (Il va vers le tas, suivi d'Estragon.) Enfin du renfort ! (Beckett 1952: 108).

English:

VLADIMIR: At last! (**He goes towards the heap.**) Reinforcements at last! (Beckett 2014: 112).

8| The researcher does not provide in-text citation for Saleh's examples, in the entire article, because the translator's/author's name is mentioned in Arabic and the quotation is taken from Saleh's personal blog, so it has no page numbers.

9| Saleh's herein quoted Arabic translations are identical to the ones published on his blog.

شاوول.

استرجون : أهر جردو؟ وأخيراً! وأخيراً نجدة
(Beckett 2009: 143).

When Lucky and Pozzo enter in act two, Estragon and Vladimir mistake their arrival for the arrival of Godot. Lucky drops all the luggage and pulls Pozzo to fall with him to the ground. Vladimir then comments in French “Ça tombe à pic” and in English he says “at last!”. The cliché used in the original text is *very culture-specific*. In French the idiom “Ça tombe à pic” bears a double meaning (Winkler 102, 43). The French idiom generally means that something happened, just at the right time. The idiom was derived precisely from a game called “du jeu de paume”, meaning; “the palm game”. At some point in this game a point is given to the player when he/she drops the ball in the right place at the right time. Applied to the context of the play, in the original text the idiom gives two meanings. The verb “tomber” equivalent to the verb “to fall”, refers to the actual falling of the two characters. This meaning makes it appear as if the two clowns are happy that Pozzo and Lucky have fallen which is an inappropriate behavior. The second meaning is the same meaning that the English comment by Vladimir denotes, which is that he thinks that Godot has finally arrived. Shaoul decided not to denote only the second meaning of the act of falling; by translating the idiom literally as “وقعا في الوقت المناسب”. He also could not find an Arabic idiom equivalent to the French one. So he used the English phrase. Both French and Arabic texts suggest the theme of the arrival of salvation, as the tramps thought it was Godot who entered the stage. In the French text, however, there is another dimension to salvation not conveyed in Shaoul’s text which is that Pozzo and Lucky’s collapse to the ground saves them from the boredom of waiting, as it gives them something to occupy themselves with.

(17)

French:

VLADIMIR. — Essayons toujours (Beckett 1952: 118).

English:

VLADIMIR: No harm trying (Beckett 2014: 123).

شاوول.

فلاديمير : لا خسارة في المحاولة
(Beckett 2009: 154).

In this scene Estragon suggests they get up on their feet. Getting up for them seems to be an arduous task; however they are soon startled at how easy it was for them to perform the action. Before they stand up, Vladimir replies to Estragon saying in French “essayons toujours”. The French utterance means in English that they are “always trying”. It reflects the fact that the two friends are

constantly attempting endeavors and failing. The English reply by Vladimir, “no harm in trying” is more optimistic nevertheless, because it implies that the outcome of trying will be good. The French utterance *contradicts* the result of their trial which is success. Shaoul decides to opt for the English version instead of French for the English one foreshadows the fact that the two clowns succeed at standing up. The Arabic translation and the original version convey absurd themes. The theme of failure at the most trivial of things is clear in the French text. Yet in the English text the theme of the absurdity of the difficulty attributed to completing banal acts is stressed.

Furthermore, having examined examples of replacement source-text shifts, the upcoming section tackles excerpts of omission source-text shifts. In these instances, Shaoul mimics Beckett’s omission of utterances from the French text in composing his self-translation and thereby omits the same utterances in producing his Arabic translation.

1.3. Omission ST shifts

(19)

French:

ESTRAGON (avec volupte). (Rêveusement). Les Anglais disent câââm. Ce sont des gens câââms. (Un temps.) Tu connais l’histoire de l’Anglais au bordel? (Beckett 1952: 20).

English:

ESTRAGON: (voluptuously.) Calm ... calm ... The English say cawm. (Pause) You know the story of the Englishman in the brothel? (Beckett 2014: 16).

شاوول.

استرجون : (بتنشوة) هدوء ... هدوء ... (حالما) الإنكليز يغنجون في قول هدوء ... هدوء (صمت) هل تعرف حكاية الإنكليزي الذي ذهب إلى الماخور؟ (Beckett 2009: 50).

Anthony Roche (2014: 199–200) confirms that in this scene Estragon is very worried about the consequences of being separated from Vladimir, so the latter tells him to “calm” down. Estragon then repeats the word “calme/calm” twice and says that English people pronounce the word as “caam/cawm”. Then he asks his companion whether he heard the joke about the “Englishman” who visited a “brothel”. The above mentioned elements of the conversation are all present in the original and self translation.

The English and French utterances are identical except for a sentence, “Ce sont des gens câââms” that Estragon says in the French but not in the English version. This sentence is neither included in the English text nor in Shaoul’s target-text because it is a cliché that refers to an archaic “joke” that some people, from the English and the Arabic audience, may not be familiar with (Löwe 1995:

14). Hence, it is a *very culture-specific cliché* resulting in semantic ambiguity. Also in the omitted expression there is a repetition of the transcription “câââms” which would have been found in the English text as “cawm”. The repeated word is a parody of English pronunciation of the word calm. This transcription does not exist in English. Hence, the reader would not understand that it is a parody if it was not preceded by the correct/Irish pronunciation of the word.

The omission of the cliché leads to a more performable rendering, because the removed reference is a prelude to a joke about a Briton who visited a whorehouse. The reader of Shaoul’s translation could possibly not understand that Beckett is referring to a specific joke that makes fun of the reputation of calmness attributed to English males. Marianne Drugeon (2013: 91) writes that Beckett omitted the sentence out of his belief that while some of the “French audience” can relate to the parody of the stereotypical conception of the English character’s quality of self-control and “phlegm”, the “English audience” would not understand the “cultural humor”. Drugeon’s account is not fully valid, however, since N. F. Löwe explains that the joke, of which the omitted sentence is a preamble, was very popular in England and France. The removal by Shaoul of the repetition of the parodic transcription of English pronunciation of calm, “cawm”, also serves performability.

The themes in the French text are evoked by the joke. According to Löwe, there are two versions of this joke. He explains that in the first version; an English man visits a brothel and the pimp offers the man choices and each choice leads him to a door to enter and be faced with other options until he opens one of the doors and finds himself back in the streets (Löwe 1995: 16). In the second version of the joke; an English man visits a brothel and is asked by the pimp if he wants a blonde woman, a dark haired woman or another with red hair, the English man replies that he wants a boy. Appalled, the pimp says to him that he will bring the policeman, so the man responds, by saying, “O no, they’re too gritty” (Löwe 1995: 16). Hence, the omitted line in which the calmness of the Briton is ridiculed serves as an introduction to the funny stories. In addition the stories also echo “the futility” of any undertaking, here it is seeking illegal pleasure (Löwe 1995: 15). Hence, the theme of futility in the original, is not maintained in Shaoul’s target-text, as a result of omission.

As for the themes evoked by the repetition, Anthony Roche (2014: 199) says that Beckett’s reference to the difference between the British and Irish pronunciations of the word “calme”, is an attestation “to the linguistic colonization which Ireland has undergone historically”. Hence, Beckett/Estragon is an Irish man who also speaks French. Thirthankar Chakraborty (2020: 45–58) in alignment with Roche’s remark, notes that the reference to the pronunciations reflects the reality of the existence of many “Englishes” as a result of the appropriation done by “postcolonial” communities, whereby the author identifies himself as

an Irish man using Irish and not British English. The emphasis by means of repetition on the cultural and linguistic resistance evident in the mentioning of the two pronunciations, is lost in the English version and Shaoul's translation because it would not resonate the same way with the English and the Arabic audience.

After analyzing Shaoul's omission ST shifts, the next section deals with the analysis of Arabic translations in which Shaoul commits source-text shifts by using in his target-text the paraphrase provided by the self-translation instead of its corresponding utterance of the original text.

1.4. Paraphrase ST shifts

(20)

French:

ESTRAGON. — Je cherche (Beckett 1952: 88).

English:

ESTRAGON: I'm trying (Beckett 2014: 89).

شاؤول

استرجون : أحاول

(Beckett 2009: 120).

In this scene, Didi and Gogo suddenly stop playing a verbal game of uttering synonymous words to describe the sounds that dead people make. They say that dead people's voices are like leaves, ashes and then that they make the sounds of rustling, murmuring, and whispering. After that, they run out of synonyms, so they stop the game. Vladimir bored of the silence, urges Estragon to say something. So Estragon tells him in French "je cherche" and in English "I'm trying" and then he changes the subject to ask the question "what do we do now?". Shaoul may have faced a problem in rendering the sentence, "Je cherche", into Arabic. Just as Beckett thought that: "I'm trying", is a better translation of: "Je cherche", Shaoul also preferred the English alternative, despite the fact that the French one could be rendered into Arabic as "ابحث عن كلمة". However, while the original can be rendered with the addition of "عن كلمة", the English text nonetheless can be rendered without additions. This reveals that Shaoul is aware of Beckett's aesthetics of terseness hence favors maintaining it. He prefers the Irish author's interpretation of the situation. Both English and French replies by Estragon show the same theme of passing the time. As Gogo in the French version says that he is searching for a synonym to continue the game that will help them kill time. In the English text he is trying to find some activity or topic to talk about that will help them occupy themselves and not feel the slow passage of time.

After analyzing excerpts where Shaoul makes four kinds of source-text shifts in creating his Arabic target-text, the next main section deals with examples

where Saleh, commits source-text shifts. This second main part of the chapter is comprised of two subsections, particularly; replacement ST shifts and omission ST shifts. The first subsection involves examples where Saleh replaces utterances in his English source-text with their corresponding ones in the French text.

2. ST shifts by Saleh

2.1. Replacement ST shifts

(1)

French:

ESTRAGON. — Pieds et poings (Beckett 1952: 27).

English:

ESTRAGON: Down (Beckett 2014: 23).

شاوول

استراجون : بأرجلنا و أقدامنا
(Beckett 2009: 58).

صالح

استراجون: من أقدامنا
(Beckett 2012).

In this scene Estragon asks his friend if they are tied. Vladimir inquires about the meaning of tied in this context. Estragon's reply in the original text is, "pieds et poings", and in the English text it is: "down". The French reply can be translated as: "feet and fists". In composing his self-translation, Beckett changes the utterance entirely. Moreover, there is syntactic *ambiguity* in the self-translation. The English reply "down", is an incomplete idiom. He should have said "tied down". Also, it is not clear how they are tied. If Saleh used the Arabic translation of English word "down" which is; "إلى أسفل", it would not give the impression intended by the author; of being in shackles. So Saleh used the original version. However, the reason for his omission of the word "poings" is unknown. A faithful rendering of the French text would have been "من أقدامنا و قبضتينا". On the other hand the original text shows that the two tramps are tied together by chains from their hands and feet which keeps them inseparable and unable to move to another location.

The themes of Saleh's presumed source-text are conveyed in the Arabic text. Estragon's answer in English and French, Julien Carriere (2005: 56–58) writes, is a reference to the fact of being "physically bound" and restrained to the ground. This meaning invokes the themes of immobility, paralysis and the characters' inability to determine their fate. There are two other meanings for the word "tied" brought about by the French utterance. The first is the fact that "[t]he two are bound by their appointment to Godot", hence the theme of

endless commitment. The second is the fact that “[t]he two protagonists are dependent upon one another for survival” (Carriere 2005: 57). In addition, even when Shaoul created his Arabic rendering, he did not include the Arabic word for: “poings”. It is possible that, Shaoul did not use English or French constructions because he might have thought that they are unperformable. Despite the fact that there is a source-text shift, Saleh like Shaoul does not include the word: “poings”.

(2)

French:

ESTRAGON (continuant à tourner autour de Lucky). — Il souffle comme un phoque (Beckett 1952: 40).

English:

ESTRAGON: He’s puffing like a grampus (Beckett 2014: 39).

صالح

استراجون: انه ينفخ مثل كلب البحر
(Beckett 2012).

Vladimir describes Lucky in the French text, saying “Il souffle comme un phoque” (Beckett 1952: 40). The corresponding utterance by Vladimir in the English text reads as “He is puffing like grampus” (Beckett 2014: 39). A translation of the French word “un phoque” would be a “seal”¹⁰ and “grampus” in English is not a seal but is “Risso’s dolphin ... [,] small cetaceans (such as the killer whale or pilot whale) [...] [or] the giant whip scorpion [...] of southern U.S.”¹¹ The English and French sentences are *very culture-specific literary allusions*. The self-translation alludes to Charles Dickens’s (Dukes 2004: 529) novel *Dombey and Son* where one of the characters suffers from asthma and is described by the author to be “coughing like a grampus” (Dickens 1858: 36). On the other hand, the French text is an intertextuality, where in the novel *La Cousine Bette* by Honore de Balzac, in order to signal Baron Hector Hulot’s physical degeneration that was triggered by his relationship to Valerie, the author says “[il] souffle comme un phoque” (Balzac 1846: 237) meaning that he is gasping.¹² Hulot also has white hair, a hunchback and wearing worn out clothes like Lucky. The significance of these utterances would not be understood by the members of an audience who are not aware of the novels.

While Saleh predominantly translates from the English ST, here, he swapped the English text with the French one to benefit from the added derogatory connotations an Arabic translation of the word “phoque” would bring to the animal

10| <https://www.collinsdictionary.com/dictionary/french-english/phoque>, accessed 25.10.2021.

11| <https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/grampus>, accessed 25.10.2021.

12| <https://www.collinsdictionary.com/dictionary/french-english/souffle>, accessed 25.10.2021.

imagery of Lucky in the play. The Arabic rendering of “un phoque” is “كلب البحر”. The theme of Lucky’s malady is not conveyed in the Arabic text. The fact that Saleh renders the word “puffing” in this sentence as “blowing” instead of “gasp-ing” reveals that, he misses the point that Beckett makes to show that Lucky is sick. So he mistakenly rendered it as “انه ينفخ مثل كلب البحر”. Beckett simply intended to delineate Lucky as suffering from a lung disease by likening his noisy breathing to that of dolphins or seals as well as showing his limited mental capabilities as that of an animal.

(3)

French:

VLADIMIR. — A Godot? Liés à Godot? Quelle idée? Jamais de la vie! (Un temps.) Pas encore (Il ne fait pas la liaison). (Beckett 1952: 27).

English:

VLADIMIR: To Godot? Tied to Godot! What an idea! No question of it. (Pause.) For the moment (Beckett 2014: 24).

صالح.

فلاديمير: بجدودو؟ مقيدون الى جودو؟ بالفكرة! محال. (وقفة) ليس الان
(Beckett 2012).

In this scene Estragon asks Vladimir three times whether or not they are tied to something or somebody. Vladimir answers every time with a repetition of the question until he finally, in the French version, denounces Gogo’s statement saying that they cannot be by any means tied to Godot, and then he pauses and adds that they could get tied to him in the future but they are not tied to him yet. However, Didi’s English reply confirms that they are tied to Godot but only temporarily. In the English text, Vladimir’s affirmation of the assumption of them being tied *contradicts* his three earlier exclamatory repetitions. The repetitions show that he finds it strange for Estragon to think that way. The English utterance “No question of it [...] for the moment”, if translated into Arabic would become “بالتأكيد. في الوقت الحالي” is not in alignment with Didi’s first reactions of unthinkability towards the query. His French response, “محال ليس الان” suits more his rejection like the first three times he was asked the same question. Saleh could not render the themes in his proclaimed source-text into Arabic. Godwin Okebaram Uwah (1989: 116) writes that, in the original, Vladimir denies the fact that they are tied to Godot, which reflects their hopes of getting separated and freed from him and from each other, hence the themes of “individuality” (ibid.). It could also be that Saleh wanted to stress the absurdity and irony of the statement; since rejecting the fact that they are tied, does not make them cease to wait for Godot. They continue to wait no matter what. But the English presumed source-text of Saleh showcases the theme of salvation, as Vladimir agrees that they are only tied to Godot for sometime until he arrives

and saves them. Despite of the English version being Saleh's source-text, here, he does not use it and instead his Arabic text is similar to the French text where the themes of the self-translation are lost.

(4)

French:

POZZO (levant la tête). — Vous n'auriez pas vu – (Il s'aperçoit de l'absence de Vladimir. Désolé.) Oh ! Il est parti !... Sans me dire au revoir! Ce n'est pas chic ! Vous auriez dû le retenir (Beckett 1952: 48).

English:

POZZO: You didn't see by any chance– (**He misses Vladimir.**) Oh! He's gone! Without saying goodbye! How could he! He might have waited! (Beckett 2014: 47).

صالح.

بوزو: (رافعا راسه) اما صادف ان رايت (يفتقد فلاديمير) اوه! لقد ذهب! ودونما كلمة وداع! تصرف! غير لائق! كان يتوجب عليه الانتظار

(Beckett 2012).

In this scene Pozzo is bothered that Vladimir makes a French exit. Although they have just met and hardly know each other, Pozzo's annoyance with Vladimir's departure suggests they are lifelong friends. Nevertheless, the original "Ce n'est pas chic" seems to make Pozzo and Vladimir more of strangers than English "How could he". Pozzo's exclamation about the fact that Vladimir could leave without telling him good bye is strange, because it seems as if they are acquaintances which *contradicts* the fact that they have just met. The French text, on the other hand, shows Pozzo keeping a little more distance. He says "Ce n'est pas chic" which means in English "that is not elegant/galant behaviour". His comment appears to be in regard to etiquette and is impersonal. Both the English and French texts convey the theme of the absurdity of social norms. While Pozzo is sad that Vladimir left without acknowledging his presence, Pozzo himself, in act two, when they meet again forgets that he had met Didi before.

The following section includes excerpts in which Saleh adopted omission in composing his Arabic translation. Although Saleh omits parts from his English main source-text, he apparently follows the French source-text, because the omitted utterances are also not found in the French text. Accordingly, Saleh might have been creating his Arabic translation under the influence of an Arabic translation he had read that was rendered from the French version.

2.2. Omission ST shifts

(5)

French:

ESTRAGON. — Quand ? (Beckett 1952: 91).

English:

VLADIMIR: What was I saying?

ESTRAGON: What were you saying when? (Beckett 2014: 92).

صالح

استراجون: متى؟

(Beckett 2012).

In this example Vladimir asks Estragon what topic the former was talking about earlier. So Estragon responds by a question, inquiring at which previous time Vladimir wanted to know what they were speaking about. However, Gogo's query in the English text gives a different significance from its corresponding French one. In the self-translation he repeats the structure and content of Didi's question, "What was I saying", to show that he is really thinking about the subject matter and is concerned about finding an answer to his friend's question. On the other hand, the French reply is a simple "Quand?" that doesn't really show much care. There is a seemingly needless *repetition* in the English text. In addition to avoiding the repetition, Saleh might have exchanged the English version with the French one in this instance to also avoid the confusion a rendering "what where you saying when?" as "ماذا كنت تقول متى؟"; using two interrogative adverbs in the same question, would bring in the Arabic translation. Nevertheless, his rendering, "متى؟" leads to the loss of a feature in the self-translation that is of great significance.

The theme of Saleh's proclaimed source-text is not maintained in his Arabic rendering because the repetition is omitted. The repetition of part of the question in the response shows the "friendship" between the two men. According to Andrea L. Yates, the two friends repeat each other to verify their existence to one another, hence they "are the only ones who recognize and remember each other" (Yates 2004: 439). Yates elaborates explaining that "repetition" in *Godot* is a "figuration of negation" that results in "silence", thus a preservation of their friendship that allows them to veil the truth of their reality of "despair" as well as "other (potential) realities [...] [such as that] Godot is not coming, [that] they cannot do without each other though they threaten to leave, and [that] there is nothing unique about them or their situation" (Yates 2004: 439–447). The friendship of the two tramps is maintained by the constant "need to repetition", which provides "comfort" to them, gives them "recognition", is an "outlet for affection" and saves them from "loneliness" (Yates 2004: 439–447).

Concluding remarks

In conclusion, some scholars cited in this paper point out features in Beckettian texts that make the text illogical, confusing and sometimes linguistically

distorted. These features function to convey themes that pertain to the theatre of the absurd. The analysis of the examples shows that each of Shaoul and Saleh committed source-text shifts to overcome the problematic features in each main source-text. Saleh used only the English text but occasionally benefited from the French text through a mediator, i.e., previous Arabic translations. Shaoul, on the other hand, chooses the French as a main source-text but also used the English one occasionally. Although Shaoul and Saleh did not change all the features, a number of features were found to be changed. They shift from the main source-text when they think that the corresponding element in the alternative source-text bears the same themes, is more acceptable/performable and they feel that the main source-text feature is too confusing. But upon analysis, it was proved that the themes of the main source-text are not always preserved when they shift.

The translators use four strategies in committing source-text shifts. The first is the addition of an utterance from the alternative source-text. The second is the omission of an utterance because it is not found in the corresponding part of the alternative source-text. The third is replacing an utterance by the utterance that corresponds to it in the alternative source-text. The fourth is using the paraphrase of the utterance found in the alternative source-text. Although omission mostly led to the loss of the themes, it could lead to preserving the themes as well. Replacement and addition were found to be more likely to preserve the themes but sometimes exceptions are found. Hence, no particular strategy was found to lead to a certain effect of the three effects on the themes that were discovered and set as a taxonomy by this study. While most shifts maintained the same theme in the target-text, sometimes the main source-texts and the Arabic translations reflected different themes or additional themes. This type of shift may also lead to the production of a target-text that conveys a mixture of the themes of the French and English texts or even the creation of new themes that are in neither source-texts. Hence a taxonomy can be formed where one of three things happen. The first is that the main source-text's themes are lost and replaced by new themes. The second is that the main source-text's themes are preserved whether with or without additional themes. The third is that the themes of the main source-text are lost and are replaced by the corresponding themes of the alternative source-text.

Hence, it would be false to claim that by occasionally shifting to the alternative source-text, each translator could faithfully and adequately deliver the themes of his main source-text. In fact, the Arabic reader is deceived into thinking that he is reading the French or English text alone because the translators do not mention in the preface that they use two source-texts. This emerges from a mistaken notion of considering the two texts, French and English, a single text. Even proponents of considering French and English versions a single

text do not say that the text should be mixed. But they rather mean that the English and French texts should be both read, nevertheless each text alone. Consequently, a thorough analysis of the effect on the themes should be made by the translator of a self-translated text and would be necessary to avoid marring the themes by committing shifts.

Last but not least, twelve elements that fall under the nine categories explained by the scholars, were found to trigger the shifts. This article suggests keeping the repetition, illogical writing, culture-specific references, misunderstandings between characters, inability to find certain words, inability of remembrance, indelicacies of language, allusions, elliptical constructions, contradictions and situational blunders in the Arabic translation if using the English alternative would change the themes. As for the culture specific clichés/idioms and double entendre as a type of illogical writing, translating by paraphrasing can be useful if using the corresponding utterance in the alternative source-text would produce different themes. The fact that Shaoul committed more source-text shifts proves that the English text was intended as a more performable version by Beckett by means of improvement, continuation and reflection. On the other hand, Saleh did not benefit much from the original text. Mostly the Arabic translations maintained the major theme of the absurdity of life.

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