The Translation of Najdi Advice Proverbs into English:
Alsudais's *A Selection of Najdi Arabic Proverbs* (1993)

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This article analyses the translation of advice proverbs in Muhammad Alsudais's *A Selection of Najdi Arabic Proverbs* (1993) to identify, in the first place, the author's strategies in rendering the various features of these highly stylized forms of Najd's folk culture and ancestral wisdom. The analysis targets also the selected proverbs' literary features to determine to which extent they are domesticated or foreignized in the target texts. The results show that two main strategies are followed by the translator to convey the meaning of his ethnographic material: literalness and paraphrase, with the effect of foreignizing most of their meaning. However, though literal translation strategy allows the transfer to the target language most of the images embedded in Najdi proverbs, paraphrase obliterates most of the markers that define their phonic identity. This result points not only to a poetic limitation in the literal and paraphrase uses of translation, but also to an aporia in the foreignization strategy advocated by Antoine Berman and Lawrence Venuti.

Keywords: *Alsudais's A Selection of Najdi Arabic Proverbs,* advice proverbs, translation strategies, foreignization and domestication, Najd

1. Introduction[1]

This paper investigates the translation of advice proverbs belonging to the Najd area, a central region in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, which includes the capital city Riyadh, and other major towns in Qassim, such as al-Bukayiryyah, and Buraidah. Proverbs are ethnographic literary forms whose

translation is highly problematic for translators. To begin with, the fixed idioms embedded within them, which often cause some translators in their search for correspondence between languages to feel torn between the two orientations that Eugene Nida (1964) has described as being the formal and the dynamic equivalences. However, equivalence alone is not always sufficient to transfer convincingly the meanings into the target language (TL). Mona Baker's In Other Words: A Course on Translation (2011) shows, among other things, that the translation of idioms might sometimes lead to the suppression of the entire idiom in the target text (TT) (2011: 85). The suppression of the idiom always ushers in a loss of meaning or the exclusion of a cultural contents, which diminishes the quality of the translation.

Furthermore, proverbial language generates connotative contents which are always strongly linked to the folk culture and language variety of the speech community from where they sprang. Those contents are most often difficult to convey to the reader of the receptor language who, as a result, often feels estranged in front of the foreign cultural codes and social norms of the source community, when they are retained literally. Indeed, as a product of ancestral folk culture, some proverbs and their cultural connotations are specific to the community where they are used, and strongly reflect peculiar social and cultural features that are not necessarily shared by other peoples, sometimes even within the same geographical area.

The specificities conveyed by proverbs are varied; they can be local, regional or national, and relate, among other things, to the variety of language or dialect in which the proverb is used, the members of the speech community, gender etc. Hence, a proverb points most often to a particular language variety, as well as to the social customs, cultural values and religious beliefs where that variety is spoken. These linguistic and socio-cultural aspects are reflected in the sample under study here, since all the selected proverbs belong to a regional variety of Arabic called Najdi Arabic and are steeped within the culture of the Najd area and its various dialects (the Northern, the Central and the Southern dialects), which differ from one another solely in terms of morphology (Ingham, 1994: xii).

One aspect of proverbs' cultural embeddedness which interests us in the present study is their didactic propensity, whereby people use them for the sake of giving advice. As underlined by oral culture specialists, the various contexts of the use of proverbs often indicate a moral purpose meant to teach and educate by the means of the popular and ancestral wisdom carried by the proverb. This proverbial function can be found in all Najdi proverbs, which most often serve as a means of socializing the young by ensuring the continuous flow of the cultural capital and perpetuating the community's traditional values.

1.1 Review of the Literature

In an oft quoted passage, Wolfgang Mieder defines the proverb as "a short, generally known sentence of the folk which contains wisdom, truth, morals and traditional views in a metaphorical, fixed and memorisable form and which is handed down from generation to generation" (1993: 5). This definition helps to underline the various features of proverbial discourse and deduce the different challenges the latter poses to the translator. In a nutshell, proverbs are highly stylized utterances, often terse and melodic, that function as repositories of the traditional cultural capital of oral societies. Their melody is realized thanks to "phonic markers", and their meaning is conveyed by a vivid and culturally embedded imagery, which confers to them an additional esthetic dimension. Therefore, for translators to correctly and convincingly transfer the form and content of proverbs, they have to cope with their context of enunciation, their cultural contents as well as their literary features. For this, two broad approaches are available, separately or jointly, to specialists to render proverbs in other languages or to study and/or assess their translations: the cultural and social approaches, on the one hand, and the literary one, on the other.

The cultural and the social approaches, respectively represented by sociolinguistics and pragmatics, complement each other in studying proverbs in translation, because societies are most often defined by their set of cultural values and social norms. Faithfulness to social norms and cultural codes, therefore, is an important criterion in evaluating translated proverbs. For this, research in dialectology and anthropology should be deployed. In the context of this research, the meanings of the Najdi proverbs under study in the ST are always culturally and socially contextualized, before they are confronted to the meanings conveyed by the TT in the light of the pragmatics of the English language. In this way, the types of the translation strategies will be singled out, and any loss or alteration in meaning will be identified.

The literary approach to study translated proverbs, on the other hand, relies on the esthetic assessment of three separate, yet interrelated, features of proverbial discourse: one, figurative language, or imagery, which includes figures of speech such as similes, metaphors, symbols, metonyms, and hyperboles; two, style, such as aspects of irony, paradox and parallelism; three, phonic markers, including alliterations, assonance and rhyme. As underscored by paremiologists, proverbs are poetic oral forms that encapsulate popular wisdom and an element of truth. However, their literary components are not interchangeable between cultures, nor are they transmissible through simple equivalence. Most often, they require from translators to combine strategies of equivalence at various levels (the word, the grammar, text... see Baker (2011)) to cope with the issue of meaning. This is why some translation theorists, such as Antoine Berman and Lawrence Venuti, often question the relevance

and appropriateness of the translators' strategies which tend to efface difference and otherness in their translation.

The challenging task of conveying cultural meanings embedded in folk poetic forms such as proverbs always draws translators to take one of two stands, or postures, on their materials; Venuti (1995) calls them foreignization and domestication, and explains that the latter is based on "violence" to the language. Whenever translators are under the spell of their culture, Venuti tells us, their translation becomes "ethnocentric" and favors "transparent" and glossed style in line with the cultural values of the target language. In this case, violence is done to the source text, and the outcome is a domesticated translation. In the second case, foreignization, it is the opposite; the socio-linguistic, literary and cultural elements of the ST are retained in the TT, and the reader in the latter is left with a sense of strangeness and exoticism. Venuti considers the second method as "an ethnodeviant pressure on (target-language cultural) values to register the linguistic and cultural differences of the foreign text, sending the reader abroad" (Venuti 1995: 20).

2. Research questions, Data and Approach

Though the scholarly interest in Najdi proverbs goes back as far as the middle of the last century (Alsudais 1950), and though the Najdi dialects have attracted a number of studies (such as Abdelmehssn 1997), rare are the scholarly works dealing with the study of Najdi proverbs in English translation. One of those works is Ahmed Albudayri's (2015) contribution, which deals with the translation problems of the area's proverbs by investigating a selection of culture-specific items embedded within them. However, even if his analysis highlights various figures of speech and explains their meanings within Najdi culture, the study falls short because the proverbs are translated by the researcher himself. Add to this, the investigated proverbs convey divergent themes, and no specific criteria seem to have been followed in their collection. Consequently, the results of the analysis are too general to warrant convincing conclusions regarding the proverbs' translation strategies and the latter's relevance in properly conveying the meaning of the ST.

Another study of the Najdi proverbs in English translation is conducted by Ismail (2017), whose scholarly interest falls on the translation of dialect words in the proverbs. Ismail raises a pertinent issue by pinpointing that it is in the nature of the dialect words to change meaning over time, and that their change prompts the translator to carefully choose the appropriate method of translation. Ismail reviews various translation approaches, such as Roman Jakobson's linguistic approach, Nida's dynamic equivalence, and Vinay and Darbelnet's (1995) comparative stylistics, to the translation of vernacular words, and dismisses them altogether, for the reason that they "partly fails [sic] to deal with the

problematic issues arising from translating texts embedded with [sic] dialectal terms and vernacular speech" (Ismail 2017: 101). Instead of all these approaches, Ismail puts forward Ever-Zohar's polysystem theory because, in his view, it is the only one to take into consideration the proverbs' cultural, linguist, historical and social elements. However, when confronted to a sample of Najdi proverbs, the author does not succeed to concretize his ambition to transfer the meaning of ST without resorting to equivalence strategies. Thus, in his concluding remarks, he recommends that "the translator has to search for an English equivalent which conveys the same concept as the Arabic" (Ismail 2017: 104).

Unlike Albudayri's and Ismail's respective works, this study does not favor one approach over others in the investigation of Najdi proverbs in English translation. It selects a specific sub-genre of proverbs and answers the following questions with regard to the procedures and strategies followed in rendering their meaning and style: what are the translation strategies used to convey their cultural contents? Do those strategies contribute to domesticate or foreignize the selected proverbs? Are the stylistic features of the proverbs (imagery, style and phonic markers) passed into the TT? If yes, how do they function in the TT? If no, why?

The sample of translated Najdi proverbs selected for this study is made of 16 advice proverbs, extracted from Muhammad Alsudais's *A Selection of Najdi Arabic Proverbs* (1993). Alsudais is a Saudi scholar whose work centers on Najdi culture. Between 1958 and 1968, he collected and recorded more than a thousand proverbs used in different cities of the Najd area. His ethnographic material was used to perform a PhD thesis titled *A Critical and Comparative Study of Modern Najdi Arabic Proverbs,* presented at the university of Leeds in January 1976. The thesis was then published in a book that constitutes one of the major academic references in the field of Najdi oral tradition.

In his book, Alsudais follows a strict and coherent methodology to deal with his oral material. Thus, he always begins his analysis by providing the social and cultural context of each proverb, mentioning its origin and specifying cases of borrowings and eventually telling the story behind it. He then proceeds to the transcription, the translation and the paraphrase of each proverb to ensure that the full picture of the utterance is given to the reader, in a form that is the closest possible to the original text.

As the number of proverbs recorded in *A Selection of Najdi Arabic Proverbs* are beyond the scope of this article, a selection is made by targeting a specific sub-genre which is explicit advice proverbs. The latter are overtly didactic statements, in the sense that they all intend to teach and perpetuate aspects of behavior based on local Najdi cultural codes and social norms by the means of traditional wisdom expressed through performative, yet sometimes melodic, utterances. Taken in their social and communicative contexts, they perfectly fall within the scope of Austin's speech acts theory, and can be

described as being "locutionary utterances", which trigger from listeners "illocutionary acts" by the means of performative verbs that cause the performance of the desired "perlocutionary acts". The performative verb takes the form of an imperative verb that explicitly enjoins, or warns against, a specific form of behavior because it is in line, or against, a local cultural code or a social norm.

Sixteen (16) explicit, or performative, advice proverbs and their translations are thus selected from Alsudais's book (see Appendix 1) to be submitted to a qualitative and quantitative analysis, which aims to understand the proverbs' meanings in both the ST and the TT, and to identify the strategies used to translate them and the frequencies of those strategies. The translation strategies' ability to convey the various aspects of the proverbs (meaning, culture and style) are then assessed, without ever neglecting or prioritizing one aspect over the others.

The following analysis of each selected proverb, or set of proverbs, always begins with the presentation of their metalinguistic features, or context of enunciation. Next to this, the pragmatic meaning is explained, sometimes by telling the story behind the proverb, if any, and by inferring the structure of its imagery. This methodology is conducted for a second time, but for the TT, in order to put the two texts in perspective and to elucidate areas of convergence or difference. In the end, a synthesis is made and conclusions are drawn as to the quality of Alsudais's translation of Najdi proverbs.

3. Results and discussion

3.1. The strategies of translation

Table 1. identifies the translation strategies used by Alsudais in rendering the Najdi advice proverbs into English and their frequency. It shows that these strategies are not varied, as they are only four in number: literal, literal with addition, paraphrase and paraphrase with addition.

Strategy	Frequency	%
Literalness	7	43.75%
Literalness + addition	2	12.5%
Paraphrase	5	31.25%
Paraphrase + addition	2	12.5%
Total	16	100%

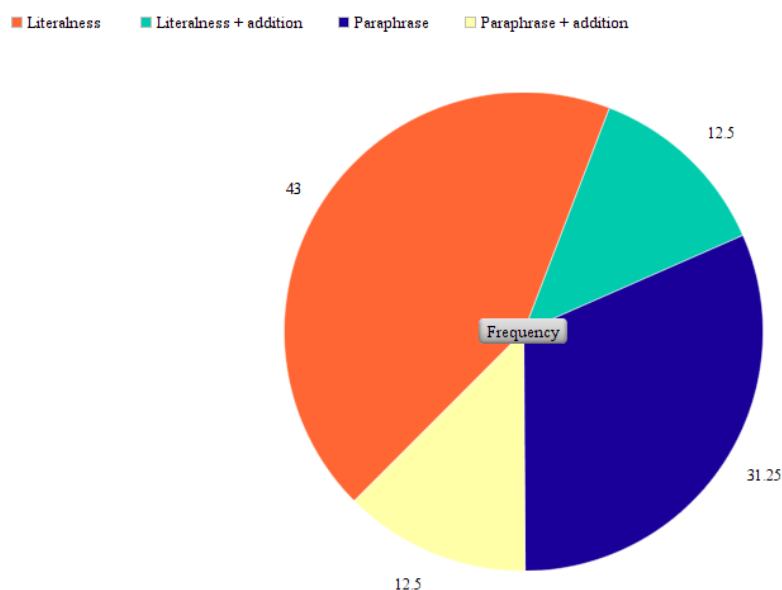*Table 1.* The translation strategies and their frequency

Figure 1. The frequencies of translation strategies of Alsudais's advice proverbs

Literal translation, used seven times, appears to be the most dominant strategy utilized by Alsudais to transfer the meanings of Najdi advice proverbs into English. Vinay and Darbelnet (1995) classifiy this procedure among the direct forms of translation, and prescribes it for a good meaning transfer. "Literalness", they tell us, "should only be sacrificed because of structural and metalinguistic requirements and only after checking that the meaning is fully preserved" (Vinay and Darbelnet 1995: 288). In most cases, however, this procedure allows Alsudais to produce translations acceptable only in meaning, because they do not have the same expressive reference as in English. This can be seen in the following sample:

1. *abʿed ʿan ad-dãb we šjerta-h* "Keep away from the snake and its bush"

Proverb 1. warns against all forms of danger and evil and advises people to stay always alert, by being careful and cautious. It is literally translated, since source language (SL) words are rendered by their TL correspondents, and the structure of the SL is kept in the TL. The result is an English statement which looks similar in meaning and form to its Najdi counterpart.

In terms of Baker's semantic fields, the superordinates involved by the snake and the bush are respectively the animal and natural worlds. As hyponyms, however, and though they have the same propositional meaning as their counterparts in the Najdi dialect, the two words are less expressive than their equivalents, because in Arabia's desert the danger and threats of reptiles like snakes and

scorpions loom everywhere and threaten peoples and travelers. This makes that snake in Arabic renders the idea of danger more expressively than its English equivalent.

2. *dãw al-hejen b-al-ʿaṣā w-an-ñsā b-an-nsā* 'Correct camels with a stick and women with women'

3. *el-ḥadjar elli mã yaʿjeb-ek yedmī-k* 'The rock you despise trips you up'

The above, too, are literal translations, even if 'heal' would have been a better word to word correspondent to dawi, and 'bleed' to 'idemeek' than 'correct' and 'trip up', respectively. The meaning encoded in 2. is discipline, as in the taming of camels by clubs. This proverb is used to encourage men to discipline women by taking other wives, so as to trigger jealousy among them and win their favors. In other words, in Najdi traditional culture, polygamy is thought to be a means to policing women for, it is believed, a woman to a woman is like a stick to a camel.

As for 3., it advocates the value of forgiveness after conflict. It is used to admonish people who stores up in their heart grudge and hatred, telling them that, one day, they will end up harming themselves.

The meaning transfer between the ST and the TT in 2. and 3. is ensured by word to word correspondence, and is made intelligible thanks to the structural similarity in the Arabic and English imperative sentence. Otherwise, these two languages belong to two different families and cultures, and are structurally and culturally very different from each other. The differences between them points to the limitations in the literal translations seen in other proverbs. Alsudais seems aware of these limitations as he develops other translation strategies to cope with them. The first of these coping strategies involves the insertion in the ST additions that help to clarify the meaning such as is done in the following two examples:

4. *en sallamt ʿalē-h ʿedd ēṣābe-k* 'If you shake hands with him, count your fingers [afterward]'

5. *ḥeṭṭ bēn-ek w-bēn an-nār mṭawwaʿ* 'Put a *mṭawwaʿ* [religious scholar] between you and the Hell-fire'

4. is used to caution people against dealings with notorious thieves, and 5. exhorts those who ignore religious issues to ask a man of religion. Both translations include additional words retained between square brackets and, as a consequence, count more words in the TTs than in the STs. This translation strategy, which seeks to render meaning by adding words, is called addition. In 4., the added word afterward serves as an English adverbial of time, and does not alter the statement's meaning. In 5., the added *mṭawwaʿ* is an Arabic word that is borrowed into the TT to function as a loan word.

In Antoine Berman's "negative analytic", the addition, named "clarification" of the ST, is "a deforming tendency" intended to explicate their meaning in the TTs. In a way, with regard to the strategic choice of the author to favor literalness over all other procedures, the additions are necessary, because they bring new words that elucidate further the meaning of the ST. However, in so doing, the translator breaks a little away from literalness which, Berman reminds us, "means attached to the letter (of works)" (Berman 2004: 288).

Advice proverbs literally translated by Alsudais and those literally translated with additions count nine in total, that is 56.25% of all explicit advice proverbs in *A Selection of Najdi Arabic Proverbs*. What remains of the sixteen proverbs are just paraphrased. Baker tells us that the paraphrase strategy "is by far the most common way of translating idioms when a match cannot be found in the target language or when it seems inappropriate to use idiomatic language in the target text because of differences in stylistic preferences of the source and target languages" (Baker 2011: 80). The following examples demonstrate that some Najdi proverbs acquire no meaning if literally translated and justify the translator's recourse to paraphrase:

6. *aḥaden tšayymu-h w-aḥaden tešayyam 'an-uh* 'Some people you should respect; others you should respect yourself because of them'

6. is a proverb of self-control and restraint for the sake of respect for self or for others. It is used in the context of a passionate argument to reclaim cold temper. As can be noticed, the word *tšayymu-h* and the verbal phrase *tešayyam 'an-uh* have no English equivalents, and their expressive meanings are different from the English word 'respect.' These differences between Najdi dialect and English have prompted Alsudais to paraphrase the proverb in English instead of searching for an English equivalent. The result is that the terse and imaged style of the original proverb is lost in the TT.

If Alsudais shies away from the use of equivalence, it is because he doesn't want to domesticate Najdi proverbs, to make them sound, in Berman's word 'natural.' Instead, he retains their foreignness for the English reader and comes close to Berman's view which considers that "the properly ethical aim" of translation is "receiving the Foreign as Foreign" (Berman 2004: 277).

1.2. Literary Analysis

The above analysis has shown that literalness and paraphrase are the only strategies utilized by Alsudais to translate Najdi proverbs into English. Now, it is interesting to know if these two strategies allow the passage of the literary features of the STs into the TTs. Part and parcel of a community's oral culture, proverbs are suitable mediums for a literary-based analysis. Steeped in the vernacular, they

are the vehicle of various images because, says Berman, "the vernacular language is by its very nature more physical, more iconic than 'cultivated' language"; therefore, the author continues, "the effacement of vernaculars is (...) a very serious injury (to the target text)" (Berman 2004: 286).

Table 2. shows the various literary features found in the Najdi advice proverbs and their number in both the STs and TTs:

	STs	TTs
Figurative language		
Metonymy	2	1
Natural imagery	2	2
Animal imagery	4	4
Body imagery	1	1
Smell imagery	1	0
Total 1	10	8
Phonic markers		
Alliteration	15	8
Assonance	0	1
Rhyme	8	0
Total 2	23	9
Style		
Parallelism	3	2
Proper nouns	2	2
Total 3	5	4

Table 2. The literary features of Najdi advice proverbs and their translations

What the table above reveals is that Najdi proverbs' phonic markers are the literary category to be the least transferred to TT. Out of 23 occurrences in the ST, only 9 passed to English. Among the three types of phonic markers selected for study, rhyme is the one that suffers the most from Alsudais's literal and paraphrase strategies; while it occurs 8 times in the ST, it is found nowhere in the TTs. The absence of rhyme in the translated proverbs obliterates much of the latter's melody, such as seen in the following examples:

7. *eḥč b-ad-dãbb u-wallm al-meglãb* 'If you speak of the snake, keep a stick ready'

8. *anfej mã bal-jēb yãti mã b-al-ġēb* 'Spend what is in your pocket, then what is in the unknown will come'

The absence of rhyme in both the literal and the paraphrased proverbs, as respectively seen in 7. and 8., demonstrates that neither strategy is suitable for rhyme transfer. To a certain extent, this result is confirmed by alliterations' transfer as well. Indeed, alliterations, too, are negatively affected by Alsudais's reliance on literal translation and paraphrase, as only 8 out 16 are found in the TTs. A sample of translated proverbs that include alliterations is the following:

9. *ʿalē-k b-aṭ-ṭayyeb lõʿalq-ek ad-dīn* 'Buy good quality at all costs'

The alliteration effect is achieved in 9. thanks to the repetition of the pharyngeal consonant called *ʿayn* in Arabic. In the TT, it is the repetition of the [k] sound which conveys it: quality at all costs. Contrary to 8., however, most of the translated proverbs contain no alliterations. An example is provided by:

10. *enšed mjarreb u-l tanšed ṭebïb* 'Consult a man of experience rather than a physician'

In 10., alliteration in the ST is ensured by the repetition of the consonant /b/. In the TT, on the other hand, no alliteration is found. An assonance is created, instead, thanks to the repetition of /a/ vowel, as is shown in the bold letters: 'man' and 'rather than.' However, as this practice is not systematic by the translator, and as an assonance can never replace an alliteration, it can be assumed that the assonance in the 10. is accidental.

The alliterations found in Alsudais's TTs are not evenly distributed between the two translation strategies used to transfer the meaning of the Najdi proverbs of advice. Table 3 indicates the number and rates of alliterations by each translation strategy:

	Literally translated proverbs	Paraphrased proverbs
Total	9	7
Alliterations	5	3
%	55.55	42.85

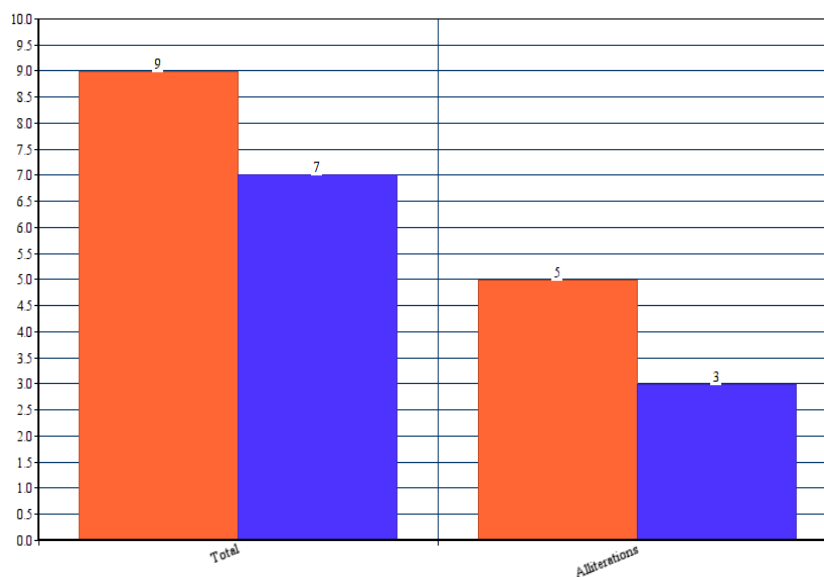*Table 3.* Numbers and rates of alliterations retained in the TT

Figure 2. The frequency of retained alliterations in literal and paraphrase translations

Table 3. shows that alliterations are mostly found in literally translated texts, where they represent 55.55% of the studied items. In the paraphrased proverbs, this rate falls to 42.85%, what means that this strategy does not retain phonic markers in translation.

The importance of phonic markers to proverbs can never be overestimated, because it is an inherent trait in proverbs, and because it is thanks to their melody that proverbs are both enjoyed and remembered by the members of the speech community. To lose them in translation is, in a way, to lose the paremiological status of the proverbial utterance as well as its mnemonic prompt.

1.3. Figurative langugae

Figurative language is the other important property of proverbial discourse, which makes them vivid and enjoyable utterances widely used and easily remembered by the members of the speech community. In literary analysis, it is formed by the structure of images carried by discourse. Table 2 distinguishes the types of imagery found in the selected sample of Alsudais's collection of Najdi proverbs: metonymy, natural, animal, bodily and smell imagery. The first of these is usually a part of an object or a concept, which conveys the whole of it. J. A. Cuddon defines it as "a figure of speech in which the name of an attribute or a thing is substituted for the thing itself." An example of a metonymy could be the word 'hand', which is only one part of the human body. Put in a sentence such as "more hands are needed to perform the task," it functions as a metonymy that means "more workers are needed."

Cuddon defines imagery as "a general term (that) covers the use of language to represent objects, actions, feelings, thoughts, ideas, states of mind and any sensory or extra-sensory experience." An image, he tells us, "may be visual (pertaining to the eye), olfactory (smell), tactile (touch), auditory (hearing), gustatory (taste), abstract (in which case it will appeal to what may be described as the intellect) and kinaesthetic (pertaining to the sense of movement and bodily effort)." The representations, or images, evoked by the proverbial words under analysis convey as many sensations in the mind and help to create a vivid effect in the context where the proverb is used.

Overall, Table 2. shows that the majority of the figures of speech found in the selected proverbs are transferred to the TTs. One metonymy upon two, however, is lost. The retained metonymy is expressed in the proverb

11. *erkab snãm w-nãm* 'Ride a hump and sleep'

The metonymy in 11. is conveyed by the word snãm, which in Najdi Arabic is the conspicuous mass of flesh on the top of the camel's body, usually used to name this animal. In English, however, this word has various meanings, and is associated with all animals which bear a protuberance on their back, not just camels. Therefore, the hum metonymy cannot function in English the same way it does in Najdi Arabic. However, the translator retains it because it confers a cultural specificity to the text that saves its foreignness. However, the second metonymy is lost in 12.:

12. *leḥeyten tšayymu-h w-aḥaden tešayyam ʿan-uh* 'You should hold yourself aloof from them because of their uncouth qualities'

Literally, 12. translates as: "A beard respect it, and another beard respect yourself next to it." However, in the paraphrase, the word "beard' is lost. In fact, this visual image in the ST functions as a metonymy meaning an adult man with or without self-respect and proper conduct. Whenever one is in presence of respectful people, the proverb advises, one has to behave properly; but, when one's company is disrespectful, one has to show self-respect by withdrawing from bad people.

Finally, as far as style is concerned, table 2 shows that parallelisms and proper nouns are retained in Alsudais's translations. Examples of the former include the following two proverbs:

13. *ḫall ḥrīmla b-čabd hal-ah* 'Leave Hrimla (and its problems) to its own people'

14. *maʿ al-ḫīl ya-šagra* '(Run) with the horses, Shagra!'

The two proper nouns mentioned in 13. and 14. are Hrimla and Shagra. Retaining them in the translations helps Alsudais to convey the local color of Najdi folk expression, and is further evidence that he is not intent to domesticate his material.

Parallelism, on the other hand, is found in proverbs 2., 7. and 15.

15. *'alē-k b-al-jādde lo ṭālat u-bent al-'amm lo bārat* 'Keep to the road, though it be long, and marry the cousin, though she be a wallflower'

The survival of parallelism in two cases against one loss might be explained by the syntactic similarity in Arabic and English imperative sentence. Indeed, in both languages, the imperative structure involves the verb followed by the object. This structure is respected in 2. and 15., but when Alsudais switches to the conditional (if clause) in 7., he breaks the parallelism of the statement.

Finally, this study cannot be concluded without mentioning proverb 16., which presents no specific literary challenge for the translator:

16. *ḫeḏ men ḥačī al-'āgel neṣf-uh* 'Accept half of what a wise man says'

As there is no specific stylistic or phonic effect to transfer in the translation of this wisdom, Alsudais renders it in the same terse expression as it is found in the ST.

4. Conclusion

"Replacing an idiom by its 'equivalent' is an ethnocentrism," writes Berman (2004: 287). This statement might explain Alsudais's choice to foreignize most of his translated proverbs by shying away from the dominant strategy in idiom translation, which relies mostly on the search for equivalents or near equivalents, as amply illustrated by Baker. Instead, he utilizes solely two strategies, literal translation and paraphrase, to transfer the meanings and the poetic features of Najd's advice proverbs into English. However, the two strategies do not fully succeed to ensure the passage of all those features to the TT. Indeed, the analysis demonstrates that paraphrase merely renders the meaning of the ST and is most often deficient in rendering the melodious beauty of folk wisdom and their vivid imagery. Nonetheless, as a Saudi ethnographer, Alsudais is not ready to domesticate his material, which would be another means, again in one of Berman's words, to exoticize Arab culture.

The limitations of literal translation to transfer into a literary form belonging to folk culture reveals the aporia of the cultural turn in translation and translation studies in the end of the last century. In order to preserve the foreignness of translation, say the advocates of foreignization such as Berman and Venuti, the translator has to sacrifice meaning. Similarly, in order to transfer

convincingly meaning into another language, the translator has to efface the traces of difference and otherness in the ST. This situation creates an impossible task, a dilemma. However, with the advance in biotranslation and online corpora (Zemni *et al.* 2020), hope is allowed to overcome this dilemma. Indeed, in spite of their limitations, particularly with respect to translation of proverbs (Bedjaoui et al. 2021: 13), online collaborative and contextual dictionaries, might offer in the future functionalities which will enable the passage of the various features of proverbs into the TL. But this in no case will entail to get rid of the translator because, as Zemni *et al.* (2021: 15) explain so well, human supervision will always be needed before, during and after the act of translating.

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Appendix 1. Alsudais' translation strategies

The proverb and its translation	Imagery, style and phonic makers in the ST and TT	Translation strategy
1. *abʿed ʿan ad-ðãb we šjerta-h* 'Keep away from the snake and its bush'	Alliteration + Animal and natural images Animal and natural imagery	Literal Translation
2. *ðãw al-hejen b-al-ʿaṣā w-an-ñsā b-an-nsā* 'Correct camels with a stick and women with women'	Alliteration + parallelism + animal imagery Alliteration + parallelism + animal imagery	Literal translation
3. *el-ḥadjar elli mã yaʿjeb-ek yedmī-k* 'The rock you despise trips you up'	Alliterations + rhyme + natural imagery Alliterations + natural imagery	Literal translation
4. *en sallamt ʿalē-h ʿedd ēṣābeʿ-k* 'If you shake hands with him, count your fingers [afterward]'	Alliteration + body imagery Body imagery	Literal translation+ addition
5. *ḥeṭṭ bēn-ek w-bēn an-nār mṭawwaʿ* 'Put a mṭawwaʿ [religious scholar] between you and the Hell-fire'	Alliteration	Literal translation
6. *aḥaden tšayymu-h w-aḥaden tešayyam ʿan-uh* 'Some people you should respect; others you should respect yourself because of them'	Alliteration + rhyme Alliteration	Paraphrase
7. *eḥč b-ad-ðãbb u-wallm al-meglãb* 'If you speak of the snake, keep a stick ready'	Parallelism + alliteration + rhyme + animal imagery Alliteration + animal imagery	Literal Translation
8. *anfej mã bal-jēb yãti mã b-al-ġēb* 'Spend what is in your pocket, then what is in the unknown will come'	Alliteration + rhyme Alliteration	Literal translation
9. *ʿalē-k b-aṭ̄-ṭayyeb lõʿ alq-ek ad-dīn* 'Buy good quality at all costs'	Alliteration + smell imagery Alliteration	Paraphrase + addition

10. *enšed mjarreb u-l tanšed ṭebïb* 'Consult a man of experience rather than a physician'	Alliteration + rhyme Assonance	Paraphrase
11. *erkab snām w-nām* 'Ride a hump and sleep'	Alliteration + rhyme + metonymy Alliteration + metonymy	Literal translation
12. *leḥeyten tšayymu-h w-aḥaden tešayyam ʿan-uh* 'You should hold yourself aloof from them because of their uncouth qualities'	Alliterations + rhyme + metonymy Alliterations	Paraphrase
13. *ḫall ḥrīmla b-čabd hal-ah* 'Leave Hrimla (and its problems) to its own people'	Alliteration + proper noun proper noun	Paraphrase + addition
14. *maʿ al-ḫīl ya-šagra* '(Run) with the horses, Shagra!'	Animal imagery + proper noun Animal imagery + proper noun	Paraphrase + addition
15. *ʿalē-k b-al-jādde lo ṭālat u-bent al-ʿamm lo bārat* 'Keep to the road, though it be long, and marry thecousin, though she be a wall flower'	Alliteration + parallelism + rhyme Parallelism	Paraphrase
16. *ḫeḏ men ḥačī al-ʿāgel neṣf-uh* 'Accept half of what a wise man says'	—	Paraphrase

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