THE CULTURAL AND LINGUISTIC PROBLEMS IN TRANSLATING ENGLISH/ARABIC PROVERBS

BY

RANA SAMI QASSAS

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Examining Committee:

Dr. Lutfi A. Abulhaija .................................. Chairman

Dr. Khalf Makhzumi ...................................... Member

Dr. Fawwaz Al-Abed Al-Haq .................................. Member

Dr. Mohammed Farghal ...................................... Member
ABSTRACT

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Rana Sami Qassas

M.A in Translation, Yarmouk University, 1990

Under the Supervision of
Dr. Lutfi A. Abulhajja

This study aimed at discussing and analysing proverbs in both Arabic and English comparatively and contrastively in order to reveal similarities and differences between these two languages.

Moreover, this study attempted to illustrate the difficulties which face translators when translating proverbs and to introduce some suggestions as for how to overcome such difficulties.

The data in this study were drawn mainly from written texts about proverbs in both languages (i.e English and Arabic), some texts of translated proverbs, the Holy Koran and the Bible.

The related literature was reviewed and the researcher found that the Arabic library lacks studies that address the difficulties of translating proverbs in each language.

Then the classification method was used in this study to illustrate these difficulties and reveal the similarities and differences between proverbs in both languages. Proverbs were classified into four groups according to similarities and differences in function and expression giving a detailed list of examples of these classifications. There was also a classification of the sources of difficulty in translating proverbs into two groups: cultural problems
and linguistic problems. After that the researcher discussed each of these problems separately introducing a number of examples on each part of these problems.

Finally, the study introduced some recommendations and conclusions. It was found that when expressions and functions correspond in both languages and when functions correspond but expressions differ slightly, the translator can understand the proverb and can easily find the equivalent in the culture he is translating into. The second conclusion was that when functions correspond but expressions differ completely, we try to find a suitable correspondent; but if such a correspondent does not exist, we translate the meaning. The third conclusion was that when both expressions and functions differ (i.e Arabic proverbs which have no equivalents in English), we try to explain the proverb then give its meaning.