TRANSLATION OF ARABIC DIMINUTIVE INTO ENGLISH

By

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Abstract

This study aims to investigate the methods through which diminutives can be translated from Arabic into English. These methods diversify in view of the fact that the two languages exhibit convergence and divergence in respect of diminutive usage. Such incommensurability has an important influence on the process of translation.

The present study attempts to demonstrate that giving a correct TL equivalent of an Arabic diminutive lexical item depends upon the translator’s awareness of the function performed by this diminutive in the text in which it is used. To facilitate the translator’s task, the study divides Arabic diminutive functions into two categories: functions that are symmetrical with English, i.e., the minimization function, the pejorativization function and the hypocoristic function, and functions that are asymmetrical with English: the propinquitization function, the paucitization function and the aggrandizement function. The study proposes another function in this category — the aesthetic function.

The study analyzes selected texts on diminutive usage taken from a variety of sources that comprise the Holy Koran, Prophetic Tradition, newspapers, magazines, works of fiction, classical and modern poetry and books on different topics of knowledge.