

**TRANSLATION NORMS OF CULTURAL
REFERENCES FROM ARABIC INTO ENGLISH
IN THE QUEUE: AN ANALYSIS USING
NEWMARK'S CULTURAL REFERENCES
AND TOURY'S OPERATIONAL NORMS**

ABDELRAUOF MEQBEL AH ALHARAHSEH

UNIVERSITI SAINS MALAYSIA

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by

ABDELRAUOF MEQBEL AH ALHARAHSEH

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

ACRs	Arabic Cultural References
CRs	Cultural References
DTS	Descriptive Translation Studies
SL	Source Language
ST	Source Text
TC	Target Culture
TL	Target Language
TNs	Translation Norms
TRL	Transliteration
TT	Target Text

TRANSLITERATION SYSTEM

Arabic consonant:	Transcription:
ا	<i>ʔ</i>
ب	<i>b</i>
ت	<i>t</i>
ث	<i><u>t</u></i>
ج	<i>j</i>
ح	<i>H</i>
خ	<i>X</i>
د	<i>d</i>
ذ	<i><u>d</u></i>
ر	<i>r</i>
ز	<i>z</i>
س	<i>s</i>
ص	<i><u>s</u></i>
ش	<i>S</i>
ط	<i>D</i>
ظ	<i>T</i>
ع	<i>Z</i>
غ	<i>3</i>
ف	<i>g</i>
ق	<i>f</i>
ك	<i>q</i>
گ	<i>k</i>
ل	<i>l</i>
م	<i>m</i>
ن	<i>n</i>
ه	<i>h</i>
و	<i>w</i>
ي	<i>y</i>

Transliteration system as proposed by Campbell (1998)

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**NORMA TERJEMAHAN RUJUKAN BUDAYA DARI BAHASA ARAB KE
BAHASA INGGERIS DALAM THE QUEUE: ANALISIS MENGGUAKAN
RUJUKAN BUDAYA NEWMARK DAN NORMA OPERASI TOURY**

ABSTRAK

Kajian ini menjurus kepada norma-norma penterjemahan rujukan-rujukan budaya daripada Bahasa Arab ke Bahasa Inggeris dalam novel nukilan Basma Abdelaziz berjudul *The Queue*. Novel ini telah dipilih untuk dianalisis kerana ia sarat dengan rujukan-rujukan budaya yang mencerminkan nilai-nilai budaya. Untuk mencapai objektif-objektifnya, kajian menggunakan dua teori penterjemahan: kerangka Toury (2012) tentang norma-norma penterjemahan dan pengkategorian Newmark (1988) terhadap ekspresi-ekspresi budaya. Ia meneroka ke dalam fungsi-fungsi norma-norma permulaan dan pendahuluan begitu juga ke dalam aplikasi norma-norma operasi dalam terjemahan novel *The Queue* ke Bahasa Inggeris, dengan menggunakan teori norma penterjemahan Toury (2012). Kajian ini bertujuan mencapai objektif-objektif berikut: pertama, untuk menggariskan fungsi norma-norma pendahuluan dan permulaan di peringkat makro. Kedua, untuk mengkaji norma-norma operasi pada peringkat mikro berkenaan linguistik teks dan anjakan penterjemahan dalam proses menyampaikan rujukan-rujukan budaya Arab ke Bahasa Inggeris. Anjakan-anjakan penterjemahan ini memberi bayangan akan perspektif peribadi penterjemah terhadap norma-norma bahasa asal dan pematuhan kepada norma-norma linguistik dan budaya yang wujud dalam konteks bahasa sasaran. Kajian mendedahkan bahawa terdapat perbezaan di peringkat makro di antara teks sumber dan teks sasaran, wujud daripada perbezaan budaya di antara Bahasa Arab dan Bahasa Inggeris. Tambahan lagi, kajian menunjukkan bahawa penterjemah novel *The Queue* berdepan

dengan beberapa cabaran dalam usaha memindahkan rujukan-rujukan budaya secara efektif kepada teks sasaran, dan ini menyebabkan wujudnya percanggahan pada peringkat mikro. Apa yang penting, dapatan-dapatan kajian menunjukkan bahawa penterjemah telah menggunakan pelbagai anjakan penterjemahan berganti-ganti untuk memastikan prosedur-prosedur terjemahan boleh diterima dan mencukupi. Mengikut model norma-norma Toury (2012), kajian ini memfokus kepada norma-norma penterjemahan dalam *The Queue*, yang menunjukkan terdapat kecenderungan untuk memilih norma-norma yang boleh diterima dari norma-norma yang memadai. Ini menampakkan adanya satu kecenderungan yang jelas terhadap strategi penterjemahan yang berorientasikan bahasa sasaran. Kajian menunjukkan bahawa rujukan-rujukan budaya dalam teks sumber sering dinyahkan atau diubah dalam teks sasaran, yang mana ini menyebabkan fungsi-fungsi asal terkesan, dan mengubah keadaan karya sastra berkenaan. Akibatnya, pembaca sasaran menerima versi teks yang telah berubah secara signifikan. Kajian ini menggariskan bahawa kebanyakan rujukan budaya telah diadaptasi agar seiring dengan penerimaan norma-norma pembaca sasaran, dan dengan itu mengintegrasikan secara kukuh penterjemahan dengan budaya sasaran. Sumbangan kajian semasa ini lahir dari aplikasi norma-norma terjemahan untuk mengkaji kaedah-kaedah dalam menterjemah rujukan-rujukan budaya dalam novel *Queue*. Ia juga menyertakan bersama satu pengkajian lengkap norma-norma penterjemahan Noury dan klasifikasi elemen-elemen budaya Newmark, di samping menginterpretasi makna yang disampaikan menerusi rujukan-rujukan budaya. Dapatan-dapatan kajian ini meningkatkan kesedaran para penterjemah, jurulatih penterjemah, dan pelajar penterjemahan tentang peri-pentingnya rujukan budaya. Tambahan lagi, dapatan-dapatan ini membantu golongan ini memperbaiki kemampuan menterjemah dan membantu mereka mendalami lagi kefahaman tentang budaya yang

berkait dengan rujukan budaya dan norma-norma penterjemahan, yang boleh mempengaruhi tingkah laku para penterjemah itu sendiri.

TRANSLATION NORMS OF CULTURAL REFERENCES FROM ARABIC INTO ENGLISH IN THE QUEUE: AN ANALYSIS USING NEWMARK’S CULTURAL REFERENCES AND TOURY’S OPERATIONAL NORMS

ABSTRACT

The present study is primarily about the translation norms of cultural references from Arabic into English in Basma Abdelaziz's novel, *The Queue*. This particular novel was selected for analysis because it abounds with cultural references that mirror cultural values. To achieve its objectives, the study adopts two translation theories: Toury's (2012) framework on translation norms and Newmark's (1988) categorizations of cultural expressions. It delves into the functions of initial and preliminary norms, as well as the application of operational norms in the translation of *The Queue* novel into English, utilizing Toury's (2012) theory of translation norms. The study aims to achieve the following objectives: firstly, to delineate the function of preliminary and initial norms at a macro level. Secondly, to scrutinize the micro-level operational norms concerning textual linguistics and translation shifts in the process of rendering Arabic cultural references into English. These translation shifts are indicative of the translator's personal perspective on source language norms and the adherence to the linguistic and cultural norms prevailing in the target language context. The study revealed that there are macro-level distinctions between the source and target texts, stemming from cultural differences between Arabic and English. Furthermore, the study illustrates that the translator of *The Queue* faced challenges in effectively transferring cultural references to the target text, leading to certain discrepancies at the micro-level. Ultimately, the findings of this study reveal that the translator employed

a variety of translation shifts interchangeably to maintain the acceptability and adequacy of the translation procedures. Based on Toury's (2012) norms model, this study investigates the translational norms in *Queue*, revealing a predominant preference for acceptability over adequacy. This reflects a clear inclination towards a target language-oriented translation strategy. The research shows that cultural references in the source text are often omitted or altered in the target text, which compromises their original functions and modifies the presentation of the literary work. Consequently, target readers receive a significantly transformed version of the text. The study underscores that most cultural references have been adapted to align with the acceptability norms of the target audience, thereby closely integrating the translation with the target culture. The contribution of the current study stems from its application of translation norms to investigate the methods used in translating cultural references within the novel *Queue*. It also includes a detailed examination of Toury's translation norms and Newmark's classification of cultural elements, alongside interpreting the meanings conveyed by cultural references. The findings of this study contribute to enhancing the awareness of translators, translation instructors, and translation learners about the importance of cultural references. Moreover, they facilitate the improvement of translation abilities and the deepening of cultural comprehension regarding cultural references and translation norms, which could influence the behavior of translators.

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Introduction

Translation plays a crucial role in enhancing cross-cultural understanding, especially in literature, by illuminating a complex web of cultural intricacies (Altarabin, 2020). Translated literature is influenced by a variety of social, cultural, and political factors, similar to other components within the interconnected polysystem of the target language, as literature is regarded as an integral part of this system (Hermans, 2019). In other words, the way translated literature is chosen, translated, and received in the target language and culture is heavily influenced by the dominant sociocultural norms within that language. Modern translation approaches have shifted away from strict equivalence towards a descriptive approach (Munday, 2016). This shift has sparked considerable scholarly interest in descriptive translation studies, prompting researchers to examine the intricate social role of translators and the pervasive influence of norms on the translation process (Katan & Taibi, 2021).

Translation conforms to norms influenced by the social, cultural, historical, and literary systems of the target language (TL), resulting in outcomes meeting the expectations of the receiving community. It mirrors the target culture, with the target language guiding translators' decisions and actions (Toury, 2012). Recent studies expand beyond translation to encompass broader translator studies, acknowledging the complexity of factors like audience, purpose, and context (Ivaska, Pięta & Gambier, 2023). Holmes (1988) played a pivotal role by introducing a systematic framework that integrated theoretical insights with practical application in translation studies (Munday, 2016). His framework categorized translation studies into theoretical,

descriptive, and applied domains, offering a holistic approach to understanding and analyzing the complexities of translation (Toury, 2012).

Translation norms and descriptive studies are crucial for cultural and literary analysis. Understanding translation involves considering norms, source text constraints, equivalence, and style, with cultural disparities potentially leading to shifts (Laviosa, 2021). Translation shifts occur when translators encounter difficulties in accurately transferring the intended meaning from the source language to the target language. These challenges often arise from cultural disparities, with norms in the target language influencing translators and leading to shifts in translation (Asghar, 2015). Similarly, Almjirab (2020) remarks that certain Arabic cultural references may be untranslatable, necessitating shifts to convey meaning effectively. Moreover, the influence of translation publishing houses can shape the translation process, with these entities often imposing norms aligned with English language and culture, according to Faiq (2016), potentially perpetuating stereotypes.

Descriptive Translation Studies (DTS), according to Toury (2012), provides an empirical and descriptive methodology distinct from traditional translation studies. Toury stresses the importance of moving beyond simplistic equivalence labels, advocating for a deeper understanding of translation equivalence based on translators' practical experiences. He argues that translated texts offer tangible evidence of the intricate interplay between source and target languages and cultures, offering valuable insights into linguistic transfer and the impact of the target culture. Therefore, discussions on translation equivalence should take into account both social context and acceptability (Al-Awawdeh, 2021).

The present study adopts the Descriptive Translation Studies (DTS) approach to examine the translation norms that impact the translation of Arabic cultural references found in *The Queue* novel. This study sheds light on the shifts in translation and the techniques employed by the translator by comparing the translated version of *The Queue* to its original text. The findings of this study are analyzed within the framework of translation norms—initial, preliminary, and operational—as outlined in Toury's (2012) theory of translation norms, alongside Newmark's (1988) classification of cultural references. Alhussein (2020) underscores Toury's impact on Translation Studies, emphasizing systematic descriptive studies and translations within their sociocultural contexts, leading to the development of DTS and broadening translational research. Translation norms, crucial in Translation Studies, allow for the analysis and description of translator practices (Al-Adwan & Abuorabialedwan, 2019). In Descriptive Translation Studies, translation is recognized as a social action with cultural significance, notably through the impact of translation norms, particularly those shaped by the target culture, on the variance between the source and target texts (Ahmed, 2019). Toury (2012) extensively elaborated on translation norms within the DTS framework, outlining various forms of norms.

1.2 Background of the study

The novel, *The Queue* by Basma Abdulaziz (2013), translated by Elisabeth Jaquette in 2016, has garnered notable acclaim, highlighting a rising interest in global dissemination of Arabic literature. The novel explores the sociocultural dynamics of Arabic societies (Murphey, 2017). In *The Queue*, Basma Abdulaziz intricately weaves cultural references (CRs) that vividly depict the sociopolitical tumult, notably in Egypt during the Arab Spring. These references, according to Riddle (2020), serve as

reminders of the complex realities faced by Arabic societies during this transformative period. Translators bear significant responsibility for preserving the original cultural content, as translation involves conveying not only language but also culture (Dickins et al., 2016). In translation, giving priority to the preferences of the target readership due to cultural and linguistic norms can affect the faithful preservation of the original text's cultural nuances. This raises questions about the translator's responsibility in bridging both linguistic and cultural gaps (Habtoor & Al-Qahtani, 2018).

Arabic novels have drawn global attention, providing profound insights into Arab society (Hasna & Hamza, 2020). Translated into various languages, Arabic novels offer readers a unique opportunity to delve into cultural subtleties and identity complexities across different nations (Al Mutairi, 2019). Translated into English, Arabic novels go beyond linguistic transformation, serving as repositories of profound sociocultural and historical insights, intricately interwoven with layers of cultural references (Al-Mubarak, 2021).

Understanding the cultural references in Arabic novels translated into English requires a deep understanding of the original texts and translation strategies (Bajouda (2020). However, translators operate within norm-governed practices and are influenced by the literary and cultural frameworks of the target language and society (Toury, 2012). Therefore, a thorough analysis of Arabic novels translated into English is essential for gaining a comprehensive understanding of the broader landscape of Arabic literature and its reception in translation (Alshehri, 2020). Further comprehensive research into Arabic literature translation is essential to ascertain whether it continues to be perceived as restricted or regulated by specific target linguistic and cultural norms (Shamma (2018). Scholars highlight a dearth of exploration into the translation norms of Arabic novels into English, despite increased

Western interest in Arabic literature following events like 9/11 and the Arab Spring (Aldawood, 2017). While there is extensive research on translation norms in journalism (Khidir, 2017; Chabbak, 2019) and political science (Alzghoul, 2018), the domain of literary translation, where Arabic novels reflect sociocultural and political changes in Arab societies, remains largely overlooked. The current study adopts a product-oriented approach to explore the translation of Arabic cultural references in *The Queue* novel into English. It analyzes translator procedures, such as shifts and text manipulation, by examining the characteristics of the target text. Toury's (2012) theoretical framework elucidates cultural norms in translation, emphasizing translator behavior patterns, notably in translation shifts. Newmark's (1988) classification of cultural items provides insights into cultural translation and reference categorization throughout the process.

1.3 Statement of the Problem

Translating cultural references to English, particularly in Arabic novels is challenging due to their rich aesthetic and cultural features (Abdelaal, 2020). Translating between Arabic, a Semitic language, and English, an Indo-European language, poses significant challenges beyond the variations in linguistic structures, grammatical rules, and lexicon. Cultural disparities, which encompass the profound impact of societal norms and values, further complicate the process of translation. (Bawardi, 2016). Translating cultural references requires more than just finding equivalents; it demands a deep understanding of the original meaning and how it is perceived in the target language (Muhammed, 2020). Yet, Arabic cultural references often lack direct counterparts in English, presenting a significant challenge. This discrepancy can lead to cultural distortion, complicating accurate translation and

restricting exposure to diverse perspectives (Qutait, 2020). Translators face the intricate task of preserving a text's cultural significance while ensuring it resonates with the target audience. This involves making translation shifts, influenced by prevailing norms in the target language, which directly impact cultural interpretation. Thus, translators must balance fidelity to the source material with relevance to the target culture (Alfaify, 2020).

Translation involves more than just transferring words from one language to another; it is a complex interplay of linguistic and cultural transfer. This process is not isolated; it is influenced by the socio-cultural and historical backdrop, significantly impacting the outcome of translations (Richard, 2018). Neglecting sociocultural contexts and translation norms in the target language distorts cultural contents of literary texts, impacting the authenticity of translations (Akan et al., 2019). According to Newmark (1988), culture is an integral aspect of language communities, molding expressions through a tapestry of traditions, beliefs, attire, and religion. In this context, translators serve as essential mediators, tasked with the intricate duty of adapting cultural cues to resonate with the target audience, all while maintaining a delicate balance between cultural norms and translation standards (Plyth & Graham, 2020). Hence, the primary concern of the current study lies in exploring how the translator of *The Queue* navigates Arabic cultural references in light of the prevailing translation norms and practices in the target language. Put simply, the study aims to investigate how the translator can maintain cultural authenticity while also adapting the text to align with the cultural norms and expectations of the intended audience.

The Queue, الطابور Al-Taboor by Basma Abdulaziz (2013), translated by Elisabeth Jaquette (2016), has recently gained significant attention, reflecting a growing interest in sharing Arabic literature globally. This novel delves into the

sociocultural fabric of Arabic societies (Murphey, 2017), presenting a dystopian narrative that captures the imagination of Arab novelists exploring societal and cultural shifts in Arabic cities (Moore, 2018). Translating *The Queue* presents a formidable challenge, with translators acting as cultural mediators between linguistic and cultural contexts. Thus, translators must possess a nuanced understanding of both cultures and exert considerable effort to convey cultural nuances faithfully (Esposito & Jaquette, 2020, p. 11). Exploring how the Queue's translator culturally represents references within English language and culture is crucial. In essence, there is a pressing need to examine the prevailing norms guiding the translation of contemporary Arabic novels and how these norms influence the handling of cultural references embedded within the original text. The selection of *The Queue* for this study is influenced by its rich Arabic cultural references (ACRs), which shed light on translation norms and strategies. However, few studies have examined the novel's literary features, providing no details about its translation (Kang et al., 2020; Campbell, 2021; Taskeen, 2021; Bakker, 2021). Campbell (2021) conducted a primary examination of the novel *The Queue* as a literary work, highlighting criticisms regarding its alignment with readers' preferences.

Arabic novels often receive limited attention in terms of reviews and scrutiny, influenced by perceptions about what sells and fits stereotypes. Shamma (2018) sheds light on how translators navigate these challenges, often leaning towards domestication to make texts more palatable for target audiences. Büchler and Khalifa (2021) underscore the complexity of Arabic literature for Western readers, emphasizing the importance of deeper studies into the translation process to better understand how cultural and linguistic gaps are negotiated. Such research helps enrich

the literary landscape by fostering a more nuanced understanding of Arabic literature in English-speaking markets.

Therefore, this study focuses on the translation norms governing cultural references in the translation of the Arabic novel, *The Queue*, into English. It aims to identify these norms within the Arabic polysystems, activated by various social actors, with the translator playing a pivotal role. The literature review identifies a significant gap in understanding the impact of target culture norms on translators' decisions regarding the translatability of Arabic Cultural References (ACRs) into English (Al-Adwan & Abuorabialedwan, 2019; Shmasnh, 2022; Alqahtani, 2019). Despite numerous studies on translation, especially those involving Arabic culture, insufficient attention is given to translators' behavior and norms.

Sociocultural constraints and norms of the receiving language according to Toury (2012) influence translator behavior through regular patterns, reflecting translation norms. Given the limited studies on translation norms in *The Queue* novel and the lack of understanding of translating Arabic cultural references (Campbell, 2021; Taskeen, 2021; Bakker, 2021), investigating the norms governing the translation of ACRs into English is crucial. Such a study could uncover translation norms applicable to Arabic novels in general, with a focus on cultural references. This study aims to uncover the translation norms in *The Queue* by exploring the translation shifts. Vinay and Darbelnet (1995) suggest that analyzing shifts reveals various translation methods. The analysis focuses primarily on cultural references with significant religious, mythological, social, and cultural connotations.

Studies on translating Arabic cultural references to English (Aldawood, 2017; Ismael, 2019; Mechairia, 2021) often emphasize strategies and the categorization of cultural items, while neglecting broader considerations such as social context, translation norms, and the translator's role. By primarily focusing on overarching translation methods like foreignization and domestication, and tracing translation procedures at the word level, these studies fail to fully consider the influence of the target culture and language. This oversight leads to a lack of understanding of how translators' regular behavior, guided by operational norms, affects translation outcomes of Arabic novels to English. This gap underscores the need for research exploring the influence of translation norms and the Arabic literary text system on Arabic literature particularly ACRs.

Cultural references in novels often portray the sociocultural and political turmoil in Arabic societies, especially during events like the Arab Spring. Understanding these references requires a cultural analysis of the novel to clarify the intended meaning of these expressive nuances for the target readers (Riddle, 2020). In translation studies, researchers investigating the cultural translation of Arabic novels frequently lean on methods that offer broad classifications of cultural content. However, these approaches often overlook the intricate details and specific categories crucial for fully comprehending the nuances inherent in Arabic cultural references (Muhammed, 2020).

Research on systematic reviews of Arabic novels translated into English and detailed analyses of Cultural References (CRs) is lacking (Büchler & Khalifa, 2021; Muhammed, 2020). Current studies often lack depth, merely providing broad classifications without thorough descriptions. This gap underscores the necessity for comprehensive analyses of CRs in Arabic novels. To evaluate translation practices for

Arabic CRs effectively, factors such as translator preferences, publishing policies, and receiving language norms must be considered (Alqahtani, 2019). Investigating translation norms governing Arabic CRs in English novels is crucial (Campbell, 2020). This study specifically focuses on strategies for translating cultural references from Arabic to English within novels, using *The Queue* to highlight translational complexities and challenges. Understanding the intricate relationship between cultural norms and translation practices can significantly enhance researchers' comprehension of translation dynamics and ultimately contribute to improved cross-cultural communication.

1.4 Research objectives

The current study has the following objectives:

- i) To describe the function of initial and preliminary norms that regulate the translation of *The Queue*.
- ii) To identify the types of cultural references used in the representation of the source culture and the target culture in translating *The Queue*.
- iii) To examine the translation shifts utilized in translating ARCs in *The Queue* based on operational norms.

1.5 Research Questions

Three questions are provided in the current section to achieve the objectives of the study:

- i) What is the function of the initial and preliminary norms that regulate the translation of *The Queue*?

- ii) What are the types of cultural references that are utilized in The Queue novel?
- iii) How are ACRs in the Queue novel translated based on translation shifts and operational norms?

1.6 Scope and limitation of the study

This study focuses on the textual analysis of cultural references in the Queue novel. Its primary objective is to scrutinize translation norms regarding ACRs (Arabic Cultural References) in The Queue. Specifically, it explores initial, preliminary, and operational cultural norms, as well as translation shifts governing the translation of Basma Abdelaziz's 2013 novel الطابور Al-Taboor, translated by Elisabeth Jaquette in 2016. Drawing on Toury's (2012) theory of translation norms and Newmark's (1988) classification of cultural items, the study identifies the norms and translation shifts used by the Queue's translator. The current study adopts a product-oriented approach. Drawing from Toury's theory on translation norms, it underscores that the target text mirrors the cultural norms of the receiving language, thereby guiding the translator's decisions throughout the translation process. Consequently, this study starts by mapping and analyzing from the vantage point of the target language rather than the source language. However, it is important to underscore that prioritizing the target text does not mean neglecting the source text; instead, it recognizes the paramount importance of cultural norms prevalent in the target language and culture. Norms, being cognitive concepts, require practical methods for application. Since Toury (1995/2012) does not provide precise translation procedures for monitoring translation shifts and translation norms are abstract, this study uses translation shifts to refer to the practical methods employed by the translator. It draws from Vinay and Darbelnet's

(1995) translation procedures to describe these shifts, though not strictly adhering to all suggested procedures. This approach aids in understanding the translator's methods for handling cultural references in *The Queue* novel.

The abundance of cultural references in *The Queue* novel necessitates the translator to employ various procedures to effectively convey their meaning. This necessity drives the investigation of translation shifts within the framework of norms in the corpus of the current study. Adopting a product-oriented approach, the study aligns with Toury's perspective, emphasizing that translational norms are primarily applicable at the receiving end. According to Toury (2012), "Strictly, translational norms can only be applied at the receiving end, and establishing them is not merely justified by a target-oriented approach but should be seen as its very epitome" (pp. 53-54). This underscores the importance of considering the norms guiding the translation process from the perspective of the target language and culture.

1.7 Significance of the study

The significance of the current study lies in its focus on the translation norms guiding the cultural and literary production of Arabic literary texts, particularly novels, which have been overlooked in previous research. Specifically, the translation of cultural norms, which plays a significant role in shaping translation processes within Arabic literature, has received insufficient attention (Al Mutairi, 2019; Campbell, 2021). This gap in the literature underscores the necessity for a more profound understanding of how cultural norms of the target language influence the translation and representation of Arabic cultural references in Arabic literary texts. Such an understanding is crucial for shedding light on the complexities and challenges encountered by translators in cultural context (Toury, 2012). By delving into this

aspect, the study aims to elucidate the intricate dynamics of cultural translation and contribute to the advancement of knowledge in the field of translation studies, particularly concerning Arabic literature. Hence, it is crucial for the field of translation studies and the exploration of translation norms in Arabic novels to conduct a descriptive investigation into the translation of Arabic cultural references. This research focuses on the cultural norms that directly impact translators' choices when translating Arabic novels into other languages, with a specific focus on Basma Abdelaziz's *The Queue*.

This study fills a research gap by exploring translation norms in Arabic novels, specifically focusing on *The Queue*. It aims to reveal cultural norms influencing translation through analysis of translation shifts. By doing so, it sheds light on the transformation of cultural elements in Arabic literature translated into English. Using translation norms theory of Toury (2012), it offers insights into norms guiding the translation of cultural references in *The Queue*. By examining both source and target texts, it identifies obligatory and non-obligatory translation norms related to cultural references, enriching our understanding of translation dynamics. This study makes a significant contribution to the literature on translating Arabic literature and translation studies. It employs a qualitative descriptive research approach, grounded in Toury's theory (2012) of translation norms, to thoroughly analyze initial, preliminary, and operational norms. Unlike previous studies (Al Mutairi, 2019; Almutairi and Zitouni, 2020; Awawdah, 2022) that primarily focus on initial norms, the current study adopts Toury's framework by incorporating initial, preliminary, and operational translation norms. This research extends its scope by integrating Newmark's classification of cultural items (1988), providing a nuanced understanding of cultural reference categories. By adopting a descriptive, target-oriented approach as the theoretical

framework for translating cultural references, this study offers valuable insights that greatly enhance our understanding of translation practices.

1.8 Corpus of the study

The corpus chosen for this study originates from Basma Abdelaziz's contemporary Arabic novel, *The Queue* (الطابور), first published in 2013 and translated into English by Elisabeth Jaquette in 2016. This novel provides a rich source to investigate translation shifts and prevalent cultural norms in contemporary Arabic literature. Selecting the novel genre for analysis offers a fertile narrative landscape for exploring translation dynamics. Against the backdrop of the post-Arab Spring era, characterized by profound social, cultural, and political changes since 2011, *The Queue* encapsulates the spirit of this period. Its narrative intricately weaves numerous cultural references, presenting significant challenges to translators. By choosing this novel, the study aims to delve into the complex decision-making processes of translators when encountering such references.

The Queue novel is chosen as the representative corpus for this study due to two main reasons. Firstly, the novel is rich with cultural references deeply rooted in the social and cultural fabric of the source culture. Translating these references presents challenges that demand careful adaptation to preserve their essence while ensuring accessibility. Secondly, the availability of a recently translated English version of the novel facilitates a comparative analysis of the translation process. Therefore, *The Queue* was chosen due to its rich Arabic cultural references and its context within the socio-political changes of the Arab Spring. This underscores the significance of analyzing the translation norms, especially regarding cultural references, used by the translator.

1.9 Definition of Key Terms

In order to improve understanding of the content of the current study and to help readers fully grasp the intended meanings, definitions of key terms are provided alongside the study.

- i. **Cultural References:** cultural references are defined as lexical items in a source text that, at a specific point in time, refer to objects or concepts absent in a particular target culture or significantly differ in their textual function, denotation, or connotation from equivalent terms available in the target culture (Olk, 2013).
- ii. **Initial Norms:** It involves translators' decisions at the beginning of the translation process. They must choose between adhering to SL norms for adequacy or aligning with target culture norms for acceptability (Toury, 2012).
- iii. **Operational Norms:** involve the translator's decisions during translation which include matricial and textual linguistic norms. Matricial norms control how the content of the TT is organized, such as through additions, footnotes, or omissions. Textual linguistic norms, meanwhile, dictate whether to retain the original expressions of the SL or substitute them with expressions from the target culture (Toury, 2012).
- iv. **Preliminary Norms:** It is concerned with translation direction and policy. These norms determine the rationale for selecting texts, languages, cultures, and time periods for translation, as well as the directness of translation introduction (Toury, 2012).

- iv) **Translation Norms:** It refers to “the translation of general values or ideas shared by a community — as to what is right and wrong, adequate, and inadequate — into performance instructions appropriate for and applicable to situations, specifying what is prescribed and forbidden as well as what is tolerated and permitted in a certain behavioral dimensionl (Toury, 2012, p. 63).
- v) **Translation Shift:** It is defined by Catford (1965, p.73) as “departures from formal correspondence in the process of going from the SL to the TL”.

1.10 Organization of the Thesis

This thesis consists of six chapters. Chapter one offers an overview, presenting the study's background, problem statement, objectives, significance, and key term definitions. Chapter two explores related literature, focusing on literary translation, various text types, translation norms, and polysystem theories. It also discusses the translation of Arabic literature and Arabic cultural references (ACRs), including classifications and strategies for managing ACRs. Additionally, the chapter reviews relevant studies and introduces the theoretical framework guiding the research. Chapter three offers a detailed overview of the research methodology, covering the research design, methods, corpus, data collection procedures, and analysis methods employed throughout the study. Chapter Four presents the findings on initial and preliminary translation norms, the classification of Arabic cultural references in The Queue based on Newmark's categories, and the translation shifts and procedures guided by the operational norms used by the translator. Chapter Five summarizes the

findings, discussing the classification of cultural references and operational norms, along with initial norms. It also provides conclusions and recommendations based on the study's results, offering valuable insights and suggestions for future research and translation practices.

1.11 Summary

The preceding chapter provided an overview of the study's background, focusing on the translation norms of cultural references in *The Queue* (الطابور Al-Taboor) by Basma Abdelaziz (2013), translated by Elisabeth Jaquette (2016). This study aims to investigate the translation norms of cultural references by analyzing the translation shifts used in *The Queue* novel from Arabic to English. The qualitative study centers on identifying common translation shifts occurring in translations between Arabic and English. This qualitative analysis is complemented by quantitative analysis, offering details about the frequency of occurrences of cultural references and translation techniques to support the qualitative approach. Translation shifts are inherent in any translation process, especially when dealing with languages of different origins, such as Arabic and English. They play a crucial role in ensuring effective communication between source and target languages.

This study investigates the translation of *The Queue* novel from Arabic to English. It applies Toury's translation norms theory (2012) to explore how translation norms influence Arabic text selection and affect translation shifts, particularly regarding cultural references. Following Newmark's (1988) classification of cultural references, it analyzes challenges in translating these references and aims to understand how translators' decisions impact the acceptability of the target text. By addressing these complexities, the study aims to improve cross-cultural

communication and foster cultural understanding. It scrutinizes translation shifts from Arabic to English, emphasizing their connection to translation norms and translators' choices, with a specific focus on the gap in research on *The Queue* novel. The goal is to offer new insights into the importance of translation shifts in adhering to translation norms from Arabic to English, thereby enriching translation studies in the Arab world.

CHAPTER 2

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

2.1 Introduction

The objective of this chapter is to offer a review of the literature pertinent to the present study. It delves into various areas, such as text and its types, literary translation, Arabic literature, Arabic novels, cultural references, translation norms, methods, shifts, and procedures. Moreover, this chapter introduces the incorporation of translation theories into the research, notably Toury's translation norms (2012) and Newmark's theory (1988).

2.2 Text and text types

Translators, particularly specializing in literary texts, are required to possess a nuanced comprehension of different text types. This proficiency is essential in facilitating the transition between two languages and cultures (Altarabin, 2020). It is imperative because texts, whether of literary or non-literary nature, exhibit diverse linguistic and contextual characteristics and are crafted with distinct communicative intents. Tursunovich (2022) emphasizes the importance of pre-translation text analysis. This involves analyzing the structure, audience, content, genre, and purpose of the text before translation. Understanding these aspects guides translators in capturing the essence of the original without starting the translation process.

Schäffner (2020) highlights that translator decisions are shaped by factors like text type, cultural references, and the translator's role. Political and literary texts, for example, often contain culture-specific terms and metaphors, requiring specific translation strategies. Understanding the intended purposes of texts is crucial, as they

serve diverse functions in translation. Preserving the social and cultural attributes of the ST is essential. Additionally, encountering new genres and texts necessitates appropriate translation approaches. Moreover, the norms of the TL may also influence these decisions. Beil (2017) explains genre and text analysis, which identifies unique features like generic conventions, structures, and socio-cultural factors. In translation, it focuses on understanding differences in genre structures across languages and cultures, along with strategies for managing them (genre fidelity, genre violation). This analysis according to Beil also explores how genres influence translators' decision-making processes, vital for translator training to improve source text interpretation and target text production. Internalizing genre knowledge is crucial for enhancing the effectiveness of professional translators.

When translating, it is vital to grasp the fundamental features and intentions of texts (Hatim & Munday, 2019). Texts come in diverse types, prompting translators to deploy various strategies to accurately convey information. Text types categorize texts based on their communicative intentions aimed at achieving a rhetorical goal. A text can range from a single word to a complex multi-page composition. Preserving coherence is crucial in translation to effectively convey meaning (Dickins et al., 2016). Dickins highlights the use of various elements in texts to present coherent information, emphasizing the need for translators to understand different text types and their attributes throughout the translation process.

Scholars differentiate between two main types of texts: literary and non-literary (Colina, 2003; Newmark, 1988). Literary texts, according to Colina and Newmark, are characterized by stylistic intricacies and creativity, including genres like fiction, drama, and poetry. In contrast, non-literary texts, such as dictionaries and encyclopedias, focus on technical and scientific terminology, often requiring

specialized knowledge for comprehension. Additionally, Hatim (2014) categorizes texts into three primary types: exposition, argumentation, and instruction. Exposition presents thoughts and objects objectively, found in descriptive, narrative, and conceptual texts. Argumentation involves exploring differing perspectives through counterargument and through-argument. Instruction prioritizes conveying information without personal opinion, aiming for clarity and precision in communication.

In a similar vein, Reiss (2004, p.109) presents a structured taxonomy of three text types, outlined in Table 2.1, based on the concept of equivalence in translation. These classifications include informative texts, focusing on the communication of facts; expressive texts, which explore textual forms and creative elements; and operative texts, which aim to solicit feedback from the recipient. This systematic categorization offers intellectual enrichment, especially when contextualizing the broader discourse framework.

Table 2.1 Reiss's text typology (2004, p.109)

Type of the text:	Informative text	Expressive text	Appellative text
Function	To denote objects and facts	To express the attitudes of the sender	To appeal the receiver of the text
Dimension	Logical dimension	Aesthetic dimension	Dialogic dimension
The focus	Content	Form	Appellative
Features of TT	Convey the referential meaning	Achieve the aesthetic features	Achieve the goal of appealing
Method of translation	A method that reproduces plain prose texts	A method that identifies and conform to the ST traditions	A method that achieves the equivalent impact

Munday (2016) underscores the significance of Reiss's delineation of text types, highlighting its focus on broader linguistic dimensions crucial for achieving equivalence across textual genres. This approach according to Munday emphasizes understanding the communicative function of translation, illuminating the intricate

process of conveying the purpose and intent of texts within diverse linguistic and cultural contexts. Reiss's framework elucidates the fundamental role of translation in mediating meaning across linguistic boundaries, facilitating nuanced intercultural communication. Through previous discussions, it is clear that scholars and translation experts emphasize the crucial significance of understanding the unique characteristics and goals of different text types when selecting translation methods. This becomes particularly vital when dealing with literary genres like novels, poems, and plays, where preserving the original cultural and social contexts is of utmost importance. Translators face a substantial decision-making challenge: they must meticulously weigh whether to stay faithful to the style and essence of the source text or adapt it to harmonize with the cultural norms and linguistic nuances of the target language.

2.3 Translation

Translation serves as a vital bridge for cultural communication, rendering texts accessible and comprehensible across linguistic boundaries. Research in this field has transitioned from dictating translation methods to documenting real-world practices. This shift has facilitated a more profound comprehension of the intricacies inherent in the translation process (Munday, 2016). As translation studies have evolved, they have transcended mere linguistic scrutiny, embracing an interdisciplinary approach that delves into social and cultural contexts. This expanded scope has not only enriched theoretical frameworks but has also led to the development of practical applications, thus offering a more holistic understanding of the complexities involved in translation (Shuttleworth, 2019). Translation studies have shifted from solely linguistic analysis to recognizing cultural and contextual factors (Nord, 2005). This cultural turn emphasizes culture's role in translation (Katan and Taibi, 2021), highlighting the need

for translators to consider social, cultural, political, and ideological dimensions (Lefevere, 2016). Translation is now seen as intertwined with its cultural and social context.

Translation studies encompass diverse perspectives on the translation process. Hatim and Mason (2005) emphasize its interactive and socially embedded nature, while Wilss (1996) and Koller (1995) focus on achieving equivalence in the target language. Larson (1984) explores the role of ideologies, and Nida (2001) discusses challenges due to cultural differences. House (1997) and Newmark (1981, 1988) differentiate between translation approaches, balancing fidelity with the target audience's needs. Norms, highlighted by Toury (2012), shape both source and target texts, but Schaffner (2010) warns that linguistic norms may not always ensure successful communication. This synthesis illustrates translation's complexity, involving linguistic, cultural, and social dimensions, with diverse approaches and challenges for translators. Translation transcends mere linguistic transfer; it acts as a crucial link between cultures, aiming for equivalent meaning across language barriers. Venuti (2017) contends that translators have an ethical duty to preserve cultural fidelity through methods like foreignization, safeguarding the cultural identity within the source text. This involves retaining stylistic nuances, cultural references, and colloquial expressions that reflect the translation's cultural context.

Translators face the dilemma of preserving the cultural integrity of the source text or adapting it to align with the norms of the target culture. Landers (2001) underscores the myriad decisions literary translators must make, including word choice, fidelity to the source text, and maintaining consistent tone. However, this decision-making process is intricate, influenced by conventions, personal goals, publishing constraints, and the preferences of the target audience.

2.3.1 Literary Translation

Literary translation serves as a bridge for cultural communication, often encapsulating culture-specific expressions. In this role, the translator acts as the initial reader, responsible for conveying cultural meanings to the target audience (Hussain, 2017). Fluency in a foreign language is essential, but translators must also possess deep knowledge of its historical evolution, cultural milieu, international interactions, psychological aspects, and diverse histories of peoples and religions. While language is universal and reflects ethnic cultures, conveying cultural nuances accurately demands a profound understanding of these interconnected domains (Tursunovich, 2022).

Literary texts offer glimpses into real-life scenarios, employing emotional and cultural expressions to engage and inform readers. Translating such texts requires a deep understanding of the intended meaning across languages and cultures (Jones, 2019). Through translation, literary works unveil linguistic variations and cultural peculiarities, reflecting the diverse interactions among societies and nations. Consequently, translators face the formidable task of navigating cultural disparities embedded in expressions deeply rooted in the source language's culture (Fernández, 2012). Hervey and Higgins (2016) echo this notion, highlighting how cultural differences present translation challenges, prompting translators to utilize strategies to mitigate potential loss of meaning.

Literary translators undertake the meticulous task of considering style, culture, grammar, and context (Newmark, 1988). They ensure the accurate conveyance of stylistic features, cultural references, and expressions (Newmark, 1998). Literary texts