



UNIVERSITI PUTRA MALAYSIA

**SOCIOCULTURAL IMPLICIT MEANING IN ENGLISH TRANSLATIONS
OF THE MU'ALLAQAT**

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By

KAMAL CHFAT SHATTI AL-ZIDI

Thesis Submitted to the School of Graduate Studies, Universiti Putra
Malaysia, in Fulfilment of the Requirements for the Degree of Master of Arts

September 2016

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DEDICATION

To my late father to whom I am much indebted
And my dear mother who devoted her life to me



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Abstract of thesis presented to the Senate of Universiti Putra Malaysia in fulfillment of the requirement for the degree of Master of Arts

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September 2016

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Translation of literary texts, especially poetry, is one of the most difficult texts, which translators usually face since it requires mastery of the language system and the culture of the source language (SL) and target language (TL). Lacking the deep knowledge of the language, its system, and the culture might lead to wrong translation. Therefore, this study investigates the loss of sociocultural implicit meanings in the English translations of ancient Arabic poems *Mu'allaqat*. This study aims to fulfil the following specific objectives, (1) To identify the ST meanings of the *Mu'allaqat* based on eight topics, (2) To examine the types of loss of the socio-cultural implicit meanings in English translations of the *Mu'allaqat* and the reasons for the loss, and (3) To determine whether the translators of the *Mu'allaqat* have succeeded or not (unsuccessful) in transferring the socio-cultural implicit meanings from the ST to the TT. The study employs the quality assessment model (QA model) and the data collection is based on the criterion sampling. The data comprise two poems of the ST of the *Mu'allaqat*, namely, Labid's poem and Tarafa's poem and also four English translations of these poems. The *Mu'allaqat* were chosen because they are considered Masterpieces of the ancient Arabic poems and they are loaded with cultural signs. Data analyses of the study are based on two underlying theories: Newmark's approach of translation that consists of his semantic and communicative translation and Baker's taxonomy (1992) to translation equivalences, at word level, above word level, grammatical level, textual level and pragmatic level. The analysis involves first, explaining the implicit meanings of ST examples by consulting the Arabic references that interpret the *Mu'allaqat* in terms of linguistic, semantic and rhetorical perspective. Second, comparing the ST implicit meaning with the translated versions of the *Mu'allaqat* based on the identify theories to determine to what extent the meaning of the ST and the meaning of translated TT are similar or different. The translations of the *Mu'allaqat* will be assessed by conducting translation quality assessment (TQA) to assess the level of success or failure in the examined translations. The findings of the study showed that there are two types of loss made by translators in translating the *Mu'allaqat* such as:

inevitable loss and avertable loss. The findings also revealed that the loss of socio-cultural implicit meaning occurred because of the inadequate use of the various types of equivalence and several strategies by the translators and absence of employing pragmatic and communicative equivalence.



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sebagai keperluan untuk Ijazah Master Sastera

**MAKNA SOSIOBUDAYA YANG IMPLISIT DALAM TERJEMAHAN PUISI
MU'ALLAQAT KE BAHASA INGGERIS**

Oleh

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Terjemahan bahan teks sastera, terutama puisi, adalah salah satu yang paling sukar dihadapi oleh para penterjemah kerana ia memerlukan penguasaan sistem bahasa dan budaya tentang bahasa sumber (SL) dan bahasa sasaran (TL). Kekurangan pengetahuan yang mendalam tentang bahasa, sistem bahasanya, dan budaya berkemungkinan akan membawa kepada terjemahan yang salah. Justeru, kajian ini akan menyiasat penghilangan makna sosiobudaya yang implisit dalam karya terjemahan puisi klasik Arab 'Mu'allaqat' ke dalam bahasa Inggeris. Kajian ini bertujuan untuk memenuhi objektif khusus yang disenaraikan, iaitu (1) mengenal pasti makna ST daripada puisi Mu'allaqat berdasarkan lapan topik, (2) memeriksa jenis-jenis penghilangan makna sosiobudaya yang implisit dalam terjemahan puisi Mu'allaqat ke dalam bahasa Inggeris serta sebab-sebab berlakunya penghilangan, dan (3) menentukan sama ada ketiga-tiga penterjemah puisi Mu'allaqat telah berjaya atau tidak berjaya dalam memindahkan makna sosiobudaya yang implisit daripada ST kepada TT. Kajian ini menggunakan model penilaian kualiti (model QA) dan pengumpulan data adalah berdasarkan persampelan kriteria ini. Data terdiri daripada dua puisi ST Mu'allaqat, iaitu puisi Labid dan puisi Tarafa dan juga empat hasil terjemahan puisi ST Mu'allaqat dalam bahasa Inggeris. Puisi Mu'allaqat dipilih kerana puisi ini dianggap *Masterpieces* puisi klasik Arab dan puisi ini sarat dengan lambang-lambang budaya. Data kajian ini dianalisis berlandaskan dua teori yang mendasari, iaitu pendekatan terjemahan Newmark yang terdiri daripada terjemahan semantik dan komunikatif dan taksonomi Baker (1992) untuk melihat persamaan dalam penterjemahan pada peringkat perkataan, peringkat melebihi tahap perkataan, tahap tatabahasa, tahap teks dan tahap pragmatik. Analisis ini melibatkan dua peringkat, pertama, menjelaskan makna implisit dalam ST dengan merujuk bahan rujukan dalam bahasa Arab yang menafsirkan puisi Mu'allaqat dari perspektif linguistik, semantik dan retorik. Kedua, membandingkan makna implisit ST dengan versi terjemahan Al-Mu'allaqat berdasarkan teori-teori yang telah dikenal pasti bagi menentukan

sejauh mana pengertian ST dan makna yang diterjemahkan dalam TT itu adalah sama ataupun berbeza. Terjemahan Mu'allaqat ini akan dinilai oleh pengkaji dengan menjalankan penilaian kualiti terjemahan (TQA) untuk mengakses tahap kejayaan atau kegagalan dalam bahan terjemahan yang dikaji. Dapatan kajian menunjukkan bahawa terdapat dua jenis penghilangan yang dibuat oleh penterjemah dalam menterjemahkan *Mu'allaqat*, iaitu penghilangan yang tidak dapat dielakkan dan penghilangan yang dapat dihindari. Hasil kajian juga menunjukkan bahawa penghilangan makna sosiobudaya yang implisit berlaku kerana ketiadaan penggunaan pelbagai jenis kesetaraan dan beberapa strategi yang tidak mencukupi oleh para penterjemah serta ketiadaan penggunaan kesetaraan pragmatik dan komunikatif.



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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

ST	Source text
TT	Target text
SL	Source language
TL	Target language
SC	Source culture
TC	Target culture
SCIM	Socio-cultural implicit meaning



ARABIC transliteration INTO ENGLISH LETTERS

Arabic letters	English letters	Arabic letters	English letters
ا	ā	ط	t
ب	b	ظ	z
ت	t	ع	'
ث	th	ع	gh
ج	j	ف	f
ح	h	ق	q
خ	kh	ك	k
د	d	ل	l
ذ	dh	م	m
ر	r	ن	n
ز	z	هـ	h
س	s	و	w
ش	sh	ي	y
ص	ṣ	و	u
ض	ḍ	و	a
		و	i

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Arabic_alphabet

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of the Study

In this section, the main concepts of the study will be discussed thoroughly. Firstly, a detailed explanation of translation will be given, followed by brief descriptions of the implicit meaning, socio-culture, culture, translation loss, and *Mu'allaqat* will be discussed. Then, the information about the poets Tarafa and Labid, their *Mu'allaqat* as well as an overview of the English translations of the *Mu'allaqat* by Arberry, Sells, O'Grady, and Jones will be provided.

Many researchers have defined translation; however, the most suitable definition for this study, since it is related with the subject of the study, is that translation is not just a replacement of words, expressions or text from one language into another, but rather a communication of the message and culture of a source language (SL) text and transformation the linguistic and extra-linguistic meaning by means of closest equivalence of a target language (TL) text (Pym, 2010; Munday 2008; Hatim & Mason, 1997; House, 1994; Bell, 1991; Newmark, 1988; Nida & Taber, 1982; Catford, 1965).

Since time immemorial, translation gradually started to appear when peoples of different languages, cultures and/or civilizations began to communicate and interact with each other (Nida & Taber, 1982). It served as a mean of communication and negotiation (Munday, 2008). Even though translation has been randomly practiced without any theories, guidelines or strategies; it has been acted as a medium of communication among ancient civilizations. It helped in conveying the cultural heritage of civilizations from one generation to another (Munday, 2008).

Consequently, the twentieth century was marked by the emergence of linguists who have been trying to raise translation to the level of science and also to make it an independent discipline with solid theoretical frameworks, approaches, and methodologies. Further, taking the new concepts into account helped in improving translation. For instance, the concepts of language function, equivalence, text type and so on are employed and studied under the field of translation. Significantly, in the last sixty decades, an increase in the translation activities in several disciplines took into consideration the cultural aspect and the linguistic difficulties (Munday, 2008).

Practically, according to the definition of translation, a translator should be fully aware of the SL knowledge with respect to the linguistic and cultural meanings as well as the TL linguistic and culture. In other words, a translator must clearly

understand the SL and TL aspects, namely, lexical, semantic, and pragmatic meanings which are also called explicit and implicit ones.

Quite important, what is meant by the explicit meaning is the speaker's words either literal or conventional meanings, while the implicit meaning is very much related to speaker's intention rather than his/her literal words, i.e. the non-conventional, implicature or pragmatic meaning. This meaning can be understood through paying much attention to the extra-linguistic aspects of language. Non-linguistic aspects such as context, participants, the relation between the speaker and the interlocutor's culture, and so on, cannot be understood literally without taking the socio-cultural and situational contexts into account (Baker, 2011; Malmkjaer, 2005; Nida, 2001).

Furthermore, culture is the crucial element of language. In fact, language and culture are almost interrelated entities. It is a truth accepted since language reflects the several aspects of culture (Larson, 1984). Considering culture as a natural way of life of a particular people speaking one language and living in the same place, it means thinking, feeling and having emotions which is indeed oppositely from people who speak various languages. Furthermore, in the illustration of language as a social action, language is viewed to be foremost and first a sociocultural resource organized by a range of possibilities, an open-ended collection of options in behaviour that are possible to an individual in his life as a social man (Halliday, 1973).

Accordingly, culture in this study is defined as the aspects of life, the totality of meanings, ideas, and beliefs that are shared by individuals within a group of people. Culture is learned; it includes language, values, norms, social institutions, customs, arts, religion and achievements of a particular nation, people, or another social group (Jackson, 2014; Umeogu & Ifeoma, 2012; Faiq, 2004; Aziz and Muftah, 2000; Newmark, 1988; Rohner, 1984; Haviland, 1975; Malinowski, 1962).

It is commonly agreed by linguists and anthropologist that an essential part of the culture is language (Jackson, 2014). Hence, translation is transferring a text from one language and culture into another language and culture. This leads one to state that translation is a possible means of communication and power usage which is, therefore, a principal means of understanding ideas, thought and art. The early thought of old nations was saved by translation. For instance, the ancient poems of Arabia and the world of *Mu'allaqat* carry the unique literary/cultural heritage of the 6th century which shows the authors' culture and thought. For example, not only the opening part where the poet stops at the *atalal* states the loss of the beloved but also the flowering green field of an idealized past and the spring rains do also recall the past (Sells, 1989). This gives a deeper message and a sign of cultural understanding.

As stated by Arberry (1957), transferring the pre-Islamic poetry into the current English style of the twentieth century, the *Mu'allaqat* poems can reveal the elements of verbal poetic traditions that embody cultural matters and points of the Arabic poetic culture of the 6th century organized in the series of subjective topics such as person, place, weather, and so on.

The term 'the *Mu'allaqat*' refers to the collection of seven long Arabic poems which also have other names such as suspended odes, hanging poems, *alsamut* (necklace) and *almushorat* (famous). In other words, the *Mu'allaqat* is a group of seven long Arabic poems that are considered as the best work of the pre-Islamic era and as Masterpieces of the Arab poetry. They have been written in gold on pieces of Coptic linen folded up and were hung up on the wall of the Kaaba (al-Hati, 2007; al-Zuzany, 2000).

Historically speaking, the influence of Arab poetry on the Arabs' life is similar that of Mass media now. So, every poet was considered as a channel or the voice and speaker of his tribe. The responsibility of the poet was in keeping the history and the ancestry of the tribe that he belonged to, glorifying the tribe and mocking at its enemies in his poems. Additionally, the poet was regarded as a second man in the tribe after a head Sheikh (al-Hati, 2007; al-Zuzany, 2000).

1.1.1 Socio-cultural implicit meaning

As highlighted in the background of the study (section 1.1) socio-cultural aspect is important in translation which involves different linguistic systems and cultures. On the other side, the implicit meanings' knowledge of the SL and the TL is necessary and translating the implicit meanings is the most important and difficult task for translators; because the implicit meaning hides under the socio-cultural signs. For example, the socio-cultural sign of person his name is *Samhar* (سمهر) who made the longest and sharpest spears in the Arab, mentioned in the line 50 of Labid's poem *al-samharia* (السمهرية) which means sharp and long spear.

In the case of this study the loss of any socio-cultural implicit meanings of the *Mu'allaqat* has significant impact on the literary work itself i.e. the loss would related in the change in meanings convey in the ST.

1.1.2 The poets and the *Mu'allaqat*

Under this subsection, the researcher will provide some information about the life of the targeted poets, Tarafa and Labid as well as their *Mu'allaqat*.

1.1.2.1 Tarafa

Tarafa binu al-Abid was a 6th century Arabian pre-Islamic poet from the Bakr tribe who occupied an honoured place in the field of traditional Arab poetry. Tarafa was looked at as one of the most literary figures of the ancient pre-Islamic period. He was the youngest poet of his generation and began composing verses from an early age (Arberry, 1957). His *Diwan*, a collection of poems, consists of 657 lines that were composed during his wanderings in the desert during 'the Days of Ignorance' in the 6th century (al-Hati, 2007). His poems reflect his noble character and his simple and innocent life. The most common topics and images in his corpus are his tough Bedouin life, travels with his camels, his reminiscences, and his virtues such as bravery, courage, liberality, hospitality, and the hatred of cruelty and oppression. Tarafa's *Mu'allaqa* displayed various virtues. These manners gave him a high level among the distinguished people of his time and the favours of a rich relative, and thereby restored his independence (Nicholson, 1979). His ode reflects authentic features of early poetic traditions such as the *nasib*, *wasif*, *fakhr*. O'Grady notes that:

Tarafa displayed his poetic talent, especially for satire of friend and foe alike, at a very early age. As he grew older his talent for invective brought on him the anger of those he satirized and led to his undoing and death at the age of twenty, which is why he is referred to as 'the one the gods loved' (O'Grady, 1997, p.13).

1.1.2.2 Labid

Labid was one of the most distinguished pre-Islamic poets of *Mu'allaqat* of the sixth century AD. Although he wrote of desert life from a personal experience, he took a great pleasure speaking with a kind of speculation and description of pre-Islamic nomadic life and sets different values on the various sections of his ode. He belonged to the tribe of Ban 'Amir and his name is Abu 'Aqil Labid al-'Amiri (Arberry, 1957).

As a poet and a tribal elder, Bauer (1998) mentions that Labid survives with the last generation of the pre-Islamic Arab poets. Moreover, Bauer explains that Labid was one of the most important poets from the time of the pre-Islamic and initial Islamic period. Labid was born as a member of one of the leading clans of the tribe 'Amir bin Sa'sa'a in pre-Islamic times; he was repeatedly engaged in political and diplomatic affairs.

Labid had made his reputation as a poet early in his life and achieved the status of a wise man in his own right as well as that of a poet in complete command of his art (al-Zuzany, 2000). As a Muslim, he made his reputation as a religious man, and recognized a higher power as the dispenser of virtue (Berdoum, 2007). Some critics stated that following his conversion he stopped

composing verses as said by him that Allah had given him the Qur'an instead; These critics emphasise that his religious poetry echoes the Qur'an and that it was in these verses that he took most pride and was therefore called, the Man with the Crooked Staff, (al-Zuzany, 2000; O'Grady, 1997).

1.1.2.3 Tarafa's *Mu'allaqa*

Tarafa began his *Mu'allaqa* with an elegiac *nasib*, stopping at the *atlal*, recalling past experience and dipping deeply into an intoxicating reverie of recollection and reminiscences of his beloved. The latter features are symbolised by the description of the remains of tattoo marks on the back of a woman's hand. Tarafa introduced his poem with a long striking description of his she-camel, stressing virtues originally derived from domestic situations, nomadic life, and scenes that give force and effect to the depictions (Berdorn, 2007).

In this respect, like all of the *Mu'allaqat* of pre-Islamic poetry, Tarafa's *Mu'allaqa* is set forth in rhymed verses and begins by describing deserted dwelling places. It is composed with a unified end-rhyme that continues throughout the poem. Moreover, the *Mu'allaqa* is rich in images describing his *naqa* or she-camel. His famous description of the *naqa* dominates the theme of his poem. His vivid images give an insight into the Bedouin culture of the 6th century, for example in the remarkable depiction of the *naqa*'s thighs that symbolizes the double doors of a tall palace. As Allen Roger explains; Tarafa's companion is the *naqa* (she-camel), the best means of traveling in such non-hospitable climes but also a protector and lifeline... the complete dependence on animal traits guides to elaborate depiction of the camel, the most famous themes used in his *Mu'allaqa* (Allen, 1998).

1.1.2.4 Labid's *Mu'allaqa*

The early poems in his collection reflect upon the past and focus on the vivid memories of his earlier Bedouin life. As the memories unfold from the poetic vision, they become infuse with the deep sense of humanity that pervades all existence. Thus, Labid's work acquires a further dimension of universality. As a Bedouin, Labid acquired knowledge learnt from his experience of the world, helping the needy and sharing what he had with the poor, which advocated the social morals in Bedouin worldly life. He had a reputation for composing verse which uses a language rich in original poetic imagery and which leaves the reader with a deep sense of warmth, intimacy and ecstatic satisfaction.

Furthermore, Labid played an important role as a politician and diplomatic. He was a prominent member of the delegation that went to Medina to arrange the terms on which his tribe and others that were closely related would adhere to the new political confederation based on an acceptance to be Muslim, believe in Muhammed as a Messenger of Allah as well (O'Grady, 1997). Abudeeb

(1975) was able to suggest a conclusion of the poet's views and vision of life and death. He stated that in the eyes of the poet the world is a universe of paradoxes and contradictions, and every object in it moves between death and life.

1.1.3 English translations of the *Mu'allaqat*

This section gives a brief overview of the English translations of the pre-Islamic poems. The pre-Islamic poems are widely translated into European languages, including English. For instance, the poems of Tarafa and Labid were first translated by Johnson (1893), followed by Lyall (1894), Blunt W. S. (1903), Arberry (1957), Sells (1989), Jones (1996), and O'Grady (1997). We select only three English translations of each poem. These are as follows:

Tarafa and Labid (Arberry's, Sells', and Jones' translations).

These English translations were carried out during the second half of the twentieth century. In addition, they have provided a valuable contribution to the understanding of the ancient Arabian poetry in the West, which is totally foreign to the western reader (Berdom, 2007).

1.1.3.1 Arberry's translation

Arberry's translations of *Mu'allaqat* appeared in 1957, which had the aim of educating a class of English readers about both the techniques of pre-Islamic poetry and the foreign culture of the Arabs. They were written in a poetic style that reflects a detailed historical knowledge of the background of the pre-Islamic authors and their poetic skills that, in turn, reveal particular features and issues of the source text (ST) cultural setting.

Arberry's translations are a very different form of translation compared with those of Sells, and Jones. Arberry chose to translate *Mu'allaqat* in a different way and to use a different form of translation. That is to say, he opted for a more verbal poetic rendition with a strong rhythmical pattern. In his book (*The Seven Odes*). Arberry says that he has tried to follow the rhythmic pattern, but without consistent rhyming (Arberry, 1957).

Importantly, Arberry's blank verse strategy attempts to present strong rhythms with delicate syllables that give a strong artistic tone. Arberry thus makes use of English blank verse as a technique for use in translating rhymed poetry, and hence this strategy can be used perfectly well in translation without the need for stanzas or rhyme. Arberry's translation therefore, was written without a rhyming scheme.

Like others, Holmes suggests that Arberry's translation is the most significant contribution to modern literary English translations aimed at the modern general reader (Holes, 1995).

1.1.3.2 Sells' translation

Sells' translation appeared during the late 1980s. Sells' aim was producing a free-form rendition of early Arabic odes in a natural idiomatic and contemporary American verse (Sells, 1989). The most conspicuous characteristic of Sells' poetic translation is the special type of the TL organized cadences, especially those of common speech. As explained by him, he has not imitated the complex metre and rhyme of the original, but has used intonation, as modulated through the line breaks, to recreate the original rhythmic texture formed by the play of syntax across the metre (Sells, 1989). Sells' translation attempted to take a different form of verse writing. The verses are arranged in the quatrain form and divided into clear sections so as to imitate the original. Sells' translation thus gave as near as possible a clear depiction of ST material despite the differences of the two linguistic systems and culture of early Bedouin society. Like Arberry, Sells' translation also reflects the major literary thematic features of the ST by using imagery, similes and so on.

Nevertheless, Sells' modern translations of *Mu'allaqat* act as a transformation of ideas and subjects across the expanses of time, place and tradition. Sells' aim is to render *Mu'allaqat* into a natural, idiomatic and contemporary English style, recreating the original textual topics revealing a more profound thought of their composers' sharpness.

1.1.3.3 Jones' translation

Jones' translation was published in 1996 for students whose aim was to learn the ancient foreign culture of pre-Islamic poetry; Jones' translations were meant to introduce the poems (Jones, 1996). That is to say, every poem was given an introduction and was presented verse by verse accompanied by a translation of a strictly functional kind with enough information for students to create a basic impression of the Bedouin of the 6th century (Berdorn, 2007). In addition, the translation also aimed at giving information of the structure of the poems, their themes and topics (Berdorn, 2007).

Additionally, Jones' translations explain what the ST aims to convey taking into account the ST literary matters, topics and themes and depending entirely on direct explanations of ST units; that is, the translations of their literal meanings can serve as a help to the reader who is unable to struggle through the ST on his own (Jones, 1996). Consequently, Jones' primary aim is to render the meaning of the ST units in a different culture and for different readers.

Moreover, the style adapted by Jones is simple and transparent. It reflects the ST poetic topics and images of pre-Islamic, facilitating an understanding of the ST literary meanings, artistic features, and textual matters (Berdom, 2007).

1.2 Statement of the Problem

This research is concerned with the translation of poetic texts from the ancient Arabic poetry in the 6th century. The language of the pre-Islamic poets is highly cultural and idiomatic (Arberry, 1957). Mainly, pre-Islamic poems are characterized by idiomaticity, non-literality and culture-dependency. Such characteristics of the poems may pose difficulties for translation due to the lack of the linguistic, cultural and/or pragmatic knowledge and, therefore, the outcome translation will likely be inadequate and poor (Berdom, 2007).

Arabic and English belong to different linguistics families where the former is of Semitic origin while the latter is of Indo-European one. Moreover, they are from two different cultures (Kaye, 1994). Hence, the gap in translating cultural signs between Arabic and English is open to a lot of challenges in a cross-cultural translation. Thus, there will be dramatic errors committed in translation. These errors could lead to the loss of the cultural intended meaning due to the linguistic and cultural differences between English and Arabic (As-Safi, 2011; Berdom, 2007).

Generally speaking, the translation of poetry is the most difficult subject because of the complex form and content this genre has. Moreover, when the ST is extremely different from the target text (TT) in terms of rhyme scheme, metre, rhetorical expressions and a complex style, the translator will face so complex problems in rendering texts from a language into other (Bedroom, 2007).

Additionally, the difficulties of the poetic translation come from different factors related to the linguistic system as well as cultural differences (non-linguistic aspects). With this regard, al-Ghussain states that:

Translation difficulties are often the reflection of cultural differences materialized by the differences between two linguistic systems. Culture specific lexicons reflect and express the interests and needs of societies. So, the availability of certain lexical items or linguistic expressions in one culture and their absence in another present a serious difficulty in the general process of translation (al-Ghussain, 2003, p.1).

The most challenging problems of the cultural differences come from the lack of understanding the syntactic, semantic and the ST culture that are considered as a kind of background knowledge (Deeb, 2005). As stated by Baker (2011), it is obvious that one of the most difficult jobs in language area is achieving a high quality translation. More clearly, the proficiency of translation needs a sense activity, which involves that the translator should find the nearest equivalence to the ST elements as well as s/he should use the proper translation strategies in order to transfer messages from the SL to the TL.

Furthermore, one of the challenging aspects of translation is the rendering of the ST cultural aspects accurately in the TT. Moreover, the lack of the cultural knowledge of the ST makes the translation inaccurate and even so poor. This practical point requires the translator to be bicultural, in addition to being bilingual (Venti, 1995; Baker, 2011; Dabbaghian & Solimany, 2013). Further, s/he has to be fully aware of the importance of transferring the source language intended meaning in the target language (Lefevere, 1975).

Normally, a translator will mistranslate the message of the ST if s/he misunderstands the intended meaning. Therefore, the translator should consider translating all types of meanings, namely, lexical, semantic and pragmatic meanings.

On the other level, few studies have examined the translations of the *Mu'allaqat*. However, none of them has investigated the loss of cultural implicit meaning in the ancient Arabic poetry especially the *Mu'allaqat*. A translator has to consider translating all kinds of meaning, namely linguistic, semantic and pragmatic. The previous studies have only focused on one aspect of cultural elements (Stetkevych, J., 1993; Zahrrah 2012).

However, to date, no published studies have extensively studied highly cultural and idiomatic meaning. This study is hoped to fill in the gap in this area of cross-cultural translation between Arabic and English. This study investigates the 'loss of the socio-cultural implicit meaning'.

1.3 Objectives of the study

This study aims to:

1. To identify the ST meanings of the *Mu'allaqat* based on eight topics.
2. To examine the types of loss of the socio-cultural implicit meanings in English translations of the *Mu'allaqat* and the reasons for the loss.

3. To determine whether the translators of the *Mu'allaqat* have succeeded or not (unsuccessful) in transferring the socio-cultural implicit meanings from the ST to the TT.

1.4 Research Questions

This study attempts to provide answers to the following questions:

- 1- What are the meanings conveyed by socio-cultural signs in the *Mu'allaqat*?
- 2- What types of loss are in the English translations of the *Mu'allaqat*?
- 3- What are the reasons for the loss of the socio-cultural implicit meaning in the English translations of the *Mu'allaqat*?
- 4- To what extent have the translators succeeded or failed in conveying the meaning of the socio-cultural aspects in the *Mu'allaqat*?

1.5 Significance of the Study

It is worth noting that few studies have examined the *Mu'allaqat* but not all of them considered the translation of the socio-cultural meanings. Thus, the significance of this study is based on the fact that it is an attempt to bridge the gap resulting from the mistranslation and misinterpretation of the pre-Islamic poetry. Moreover, this study contributes in examining, in addition to what the previous studies touched upon, loss in the translations of the socio-cultural meaning in the *Mu'allaqat*. Furthermore, it is also hoped to avoid wrongly using the translation strategies those were used by translators.

1.6 Scope of the study

The scope of this study is limited to the investigation of the cultural aspects in three English translations of the *Mu'allaqat*, viz, Arberry, Sells, and Jones. In addition, cultural aspects of the *Mu'allaqat* are studied under eight topics, i.e. weather, plant, place, person, sword, animal, camel and tribe. Significantly, the reasons for this scope are stated in pages (53, 54).

1.7 Definition of Terms

The following definitions of terms are written particularly for this study.

Cultural meaning: it means the meaning that contains a cultural sign represented by word, expression or sentence (Faiq, 2004; Jackson, 2014).

Implicit meaning: it means the meaning, which lies and hides behind the cultural signs represented by words, expressions and so on. In other words, when the poet speaks about weather, place, animal and so on, he gives specific expressions that has two meanings: the first one can be understood from the surface structure of expressions, and the second meaning is hidden behind expressions but can be understood from deep structure of them (Mundy, 2008).

Sociocultural: - are the all-cultural norms, which portray the specific society. For instance, the poet tells the poetic line and takes into account the relation between weather and society (Jackson, 2014; Faiq, 2004).

Loss of the translation: - the cultural implicit meaning that exists in the ST which is not transferred at all or sufficiently by translator into TT (As-Safi, 2011).

The *Mu'allaqat*: a group of seven long Arabic poems considered the best work of the pre-Islamic era (al-Hati, 2007; al-Zuzany, 2000).

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