



## Problems of Translating Colloquial Expressions in Naguib Mahfouz's Novel "Children of the Alley" into English: Lexical Items as a Case Study

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### Abstract

Colloquialism is a remarkable language level that reflects the social and cultural influences of certain people. This study is an attempt to figure out the problems of translating Egyptian colloquial terms in Naguib Mahfouz's novel "Children of the alley" into English. It is challenging for a translator to correctly convey the meanings of these lexical items while preserving their content and effect. The study aims to identify the appropriate translations and the best strategy to adopt in addition to clarifying whether the translator maintains the same level of formality or switches to another one to preserve the meaning. To realize the previously-mentioned aims, the study hypothesizes that translators face difficulties when translating colloquial terms since they are linked to socio-cultural ties and reflect the author's unique mindset. Also, there is no obvious translation equivalent for several common colloquial terms. That's why translators may switch to the formal level of language when dealing with colloquial expressions. Vinay and Darbelnet's model (1958/1995) will be applied to colloquial items selected from Naguib Mahfouz's novel "Children of the alley" in terms of analyzing and evaluating the two translations submitted by the two translators: Stewart's (1981) and Theroux (1999). The study finds out that the absence of equivalence in most cases plays a vital role in making the process of translation more problematic. Therefore, a translator is preferred to switch to formal TL terms over informal ones, despite the fact that he/she does not maintain the author's attitude behind using such a term.

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مشكلات ترجمة التعبيرات العامية في رواية نجيب محفوظ "أولاد حارتنا" إلى اللغة الإنجليزية:  
المفردات أنموذجاً دراسياً

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## المستخلص

تعد اللغة الدارجة أو ما تسمى بالعامية شكلاً لغوياً مميزاً والتي تعكس التأثيرات الاجتماعية والثقافية لأناس معينين. تعد هذه الدراسة محاولة جادة للوقوف عند مشكلات ترجمة المفردات العامية المصرية التي جاء ذكرها في رواية نجيب محفوظ "أولاد حارتنا" إلى اللغة الإنكليزية. في حقيقة الأمر، من الصعوبة بمكان أن يقدم المترجمون نقلاً دقيقاً لمعاني تلك المفردات بطريقة تحتفظ بالمحتوى والتأثير نفسيهما. تهدف الدراسة إلى تسليط الضوء على مسألة كون الترجمات مناسبة أم لا وأي إستراتيجية هي الأفضل اتباعاً، كما تحاول توضيح فيما إذا حافظ المترجم على نفس الشكل العامي للغة أو نقل إلى شكل لغوي آخر حفاظاً على المعنى. ولتحقيق الأهداف آنفة الذكر، افترضت الدراسة أن المترجمين يواجهون العوائق في أثناء ترجمة المفردات العامية كونها ترتبط بانعكاسات ثقافية واجتماعية كما تعكس النكهة الخاصة بالمؤلف وأسلوبه. كذلك، من المفترض أن لا نجد مكافئاً ترجيحياً لبعض المفردات العامية؛ ولهذا قد يلجأ المترجمون إلى اعتماد الأسلوب الرسمي في الترجمة الذي ينطوي على المعنى لكنه يفتقر للأثر المقصود في اللغة الأصل. تم تطبيق النموذج الترجمي الذي قدمه العالمان فيني وداربلني (1995/1958) على المفردات العامية المختارة من رواية نجيب محفوظ (أولاد حارتنا). كما تم تحليل وتقييم الترجمتين المطبوعتين لهذه الرواية التي ترجمها كل من ستيوورد (1981) و ثوروكس (1999). وقد خلصت الدراسة إلى أن غياب المكافئ في معظم الحالات يلعب دوره الأساسي في جعل عملية الترجمة أكثر تعقيداً. وبناءً على ما تقدم، يرى الباحث أن من الأفضل للمترجم أن يعتمد الأسلوب الرسمي للغة الهدف كي يحافظ على نقل المعنى العام لتلك المفردات، رغم أنه في حقيقة الأمر سيتعذر عليه الحفاظ على النكهة الخاصة بالمؤلف ورؤيته الخصيصة وراء استعماله لتلك المفردات.

**الكلمات المفتاحية:** العامية، الإجراءات، مستويات اللغة، واللغة القياسية (الرسمية)

### 1. Introduction:

Every language has its own characteristics; yet all languages share some aesthetic traits and meanings that are quite adaptable and can keep up with socio-cultural changes. The colloquial aspect is one of the language levels employed in regular informal situations which illustrate a distinctive feature of a given culture and country. So, the usage of colloquial language creates a more democratic tone in the individual's linguistic style. Commonly, when people hear the word "colloquialism," they think of a particular regional or local accent. Furthermore, words, phrases, or aphorisms can all be considered colloquial expressions. In addition, non-native speakers may misunderstand idiomatic or metaphorical colloquial terms that are employed accidentally.

### 2. Research Methodology

The term 'colloquialism' is to be described thoroughly, focusing on its various characteristics and most prominent types in English and Arabic. Moreover, the practical work of this research adopts the following procedures:

1. Analyzing SL terms in accordance with syntactic, semantic, and stylistic perspectives.
2. Analyzing TL terms based on the model adopted.
3. Explaining for the use of a certain procedure and showing how well or poorly the chosen method is suitable to transfer the intended meaning to the TL readers.
4. Identifying the procedure that is the most suitable among those presented.
5. To give an objective evaluation, the intended meaning is the criterion for assessing whether the translation is appropriate or not.
6. Providing suggested translations for the inaccurate submitted one(s).

### 3. What is Colloquialism?

The term 'colloquialism' is basically derived from the Latin term 'colloquium,' which means 'conference' or 'conversation' as borrowed into English. 'Colloquialism' is used as a rhetorical device that refers to the daily or informal language usage in literature (literarydevices.com).

McCrimmon (1972: 136) defines the term colloquialism as “a characteristic which is appropriate to the spoken language or to writing that seeks its effect; informal in diction or style of expression.” That is, the colloquial expression does not refer to the notion of incorrectness. McCrimmon (ibid.) goes with Richards & Schmidt (2010: 96) who describe colloquialism as conversational in characteristics in which various kinds of words and phrases are used when people speak together quite informally and in which the speakers do not pay special attention to pronunciation, choosing specific formal words, or forming more grammatical sentence structures. They further mention that educated local speakers usually use colloquial speech in informal conditions with their classmates, co-workers, and family members. In this respect, they also argue that colloquial speech is more proper than highly formal speech. Richards & Schmidt elaborate that colloquial speech is not inevitably a non-prestigious one and should not be regarded as substandard. Concerning the written text, McCrimmon (ibid.) mentions that the manner and the technique that may be used in a written text is the writer’s tendency to convey an immediate and intimate impression of talking to the reader. In such a situation, the writer will usually avoid all formal expressions; instead, he/she will use contracted and clipped words numerous to achieve informality as much as possible in writing (ibid.).

Popowich, et al. (1997: 5) define colloquial language as “the one that includes a remarkable deal of idioms and slang expressions which are frequently ungrammatical.” In addition, concerning the use of colloquial expression, he draws a line between usual conversations and written texts found in technical instructions, journals, and books. Phrases, in this connection, seem to be shorter, less advanced, and frequently violate the linguistic rules. Consequently, colloquial expressions usually are formulated within a chain of unstructured and short phrases rather than long and complex sentences (ibid: 1, 5). Concerning the form, Crystal (1999: 61) defines ‘colloquialism’ as a “pronunciation, word, or grammatical construction that is heard in the most informal levels of speech, which tends to be avoided in formal spoken and written language.”

Nofalli (2012: 10) states that colloquialism is usually adopted in a limited geographical zone and is regarded as the broad category of informal style which involves slang. So, slang is a sub-category or part of colloquial expressions. To put it differently, colloquial language lies between informal language and slang. For instance, people formally call some beverages ‘carbonated soft drinks.’ Whereas, informal colloquial expressions may include words such as “y’all” and “wanna” (i.e., “you all” and “want to” respectively), or even phrases like “old as the hills” (i.e., describing something “very old”), or sometimes an entire aphorism like “There’s more than one way to skin a cat” (i.e. “here is another way to get what you want”).(macmillandictionary.com;dictionary.cambridge.org;onlineslangdictionary.com).

To sum up, colloquialism is usually of geographical characteristics in addition to its association with a regional or local dialect. On a syntactic basis, colloquialism can occur as “a word or group of words, phrases, or aphorisms.” Moreover, language users may use colloquial expressions unconsciously, while non-natives may find difficulties in translating these expressions because they are classified as idiomatic or metaphorical sayings rather than literal units.

#### **4. Characteristics of Colloquialism**

McCrimmon (1972: 167) describes English colloquialism as follows:

- 1** Some short, simple, and often incomplete clauses, with a few rhetorical devices.
- 2** A copious use of contractions (e.g., “I’ll, we’ve, didn’t, can’t, ...etc.”), clipped words (e.g., “cab, exam, phone, ...etc.”), and omitting the relative pronouns (e.g., “who, which, that”) that would be kept in the formal style.
- 3** vocabularies are characterized by widespread evasion of high-level words and insertion of some less offensive slang terms.

- 4 A grammatically simple structure that depends highly on idiomatic constructions and sometimes disregards the distinctive aesthetic features of formal grammar.
- 5 The addressee attempts to create an impression in his speech by using a personal or usual tone.

Bussmann (1996: 201), however, describes colloquialism as an everyday language, illustrating that colloquial speech points to the entire set of expressions in an informal and familiar context like that happening at home or place of work. He also states that idiom resembles colloquial expression in the following characteristics (ibid.: 533):

- a) The real meaning cannot be deduced from the meaning of its individual elements, as in ‘to have a crush on someone’ may mean ‘to be in love with someone.’
- b) The replacement of particular elements leads to a systematic change of meaning, as is the case of exchanging ‘crush’ with ‘smash’ in the abovementioned example.
- c) The literal reading brings about a homophonic non-idiomatic variety, to which both mentioned characteristics (a) and (b) no longer apply metaphor.

As for Holmes (2013: 270), he explains two linguistic aspects of colloquial in English. They are as follows:

**1. Pronunciation Aspects:** consider the following among other cases:

- ❖ Dropping the sound /h/-, e.g., “Oh well,” “e said,” “I suppose you can 'ave it.”
- ❖ Dropping the sound /ŋ/ in the [-ing] form to be just [in], e.g. “We was up there cuttin.”

**2. Grammatical Features:** consider the following among other cases:

- ❖ ‘was’ with subject in plurality like ‘we,’ e.g., “we was up there cuttin.”
- ❖ ‘come’ instead of ‘came,’ e.g., “Frazer come on to us.”
- ❖ Omitting the verb ‘be,’ e.g. “How you doin?” instead of “How are you doing?”

**5. Types of Colloquial Expressions**

Colloquial expressions are classified as follows:

**5.1 Classification According to Aspect**

Partidge (1990: 262) classifies colloquialism into five types, according to its aspect. They are as follows:

**1. Single Words:**

This aspect comprises informal (single) words that are usually used in everyday conversation. To be sure whether single words belong to colloquial expressions or not might be checked in the authorized dictionary. [e.g.: The word ‘folks’ is used to denote ‘relatives’ in “Did you meet my folks?” and ‘tremendous’ is used to point to ‘excellent’ in “The movie was tremendous.”]

**2. Clipped Words:**

Clipped words are new ones that are coined via shortening their original lexical items. This may be made by omitting a syllable or more. [e.g.: 'phone' is a clipped word of the original lexical item 'telephone', 'lab' is a clipped word of the original lexical item 'laboratory', and 'bike' is a clipped word of the original lexical item 'bicycle'].

### **3. Short Picturesque Words for Technical Terms:**

The third aspect presents a "short and picturesque word which is used as a variation to call another technical term". [e.g., 'bugs' is colloquially used to refer to 'insects' or 'mechanical faults.'

### **4. Contractions:**

Contractions are shortened forms of their original words by omitting internal letter(s). Instead, the punctuation mark ( ' ) (i.e. apostrophe) is replaced by the omitted letter(s). [e.g.: 'we'll' for 'we will,' I'd for 'I would' or 'I had,' 'can't' for 'cannot,' ... etc.].

### **5. Verb-adverb Combinations:**

This aspect of combination contains a verb followed by an adverb to give a new meaning(s). [e.g., 'put' + 'out' to be 'put out' referring to new meanings like 'expel,' 'extinguish,' 'publish,' 'inconvenience,' 'embarrass,' or 'retire' (in the baseball game), and 'lay' + 'off' to be 'lay off' denoting a new meaning(s) like 'discontinue' (a job or an activity), or 'rest,'... etc.] Partidge (1990: 262).

## **5.2 Classification According to Form**

It is worth mentioning that colloquialisms can be also classified into three sub-categories according to their forms. They are either 'words,' 'phrases,' or 'aphorisms.'

When such words are realized in the speakers' certain dialects, they can be described as colloquial expressions. Likewise, such phrases and aphorisms belong to colloquialisms when they are not utilized in their literal sense. Instead, they are generally comprehended within a certain geographical region (literarydevices.com). Below are some details for the three forms of colloquial expression:

### **1. Word:** it is realized as follows:

- a) **Regional differences:** It is one of the common colloquial variants used in the United States, where individuals use single words like 'soda,' 'pop,' 'soft drink,' and 'coke' to refer to 'carbonated beverages.' That is, in some regional boundaries, isolated words are used as an umbrella term regardless of pointing to a certain brand(s). In this respect, it can be noted that there are many dissimilarities between British English and American English, throughout using such colloquial words and the like [e.g.: 'truck/lorry,' 'soccer/football,' and 'parakeet/budgie'].
- b) **Contractions:** It is a matter of fact that contracted words are highly used in colloquial expressions, rather than formal style, like 'ain't' (i.e., "am not, are not, is not, have not, or has not" as in "It's a free country, ain't it?" and "those people ain't got a clue").
- c) **Profanity:** it is to be noted that there is a group of expressions that can be regarded as 'disrespectful' in some English dialects whereas in other dialects they are absolutely not irreverent or swearword [e.g.: the word 'bloody' represents a normal adjective in American English usage, yet it seems like a swearword in British English usage.

2. **Phrases:** here, there are a set of words used together to refer to a certain (idiomatic) meaning of colloquial expression, as in:
  - “*Old as the hills* (i.e., very old)”.
  - “*Eat my dust* (i.e., to be completely defeated by another person in a competitive situation as in: “we were all eating his dust. I didn't know he could run so fast).” (www.collinsdictionary.com).
3. **Aphorisms:** Likewise, some aphorisms (i.e., proverbs, well-known sayings, or clichés) belong to aspects and forms of colloquialism, as in:
  - “*I wasn't born yesterday* (i.e., someone is unlikely to believe something).” (www.merriam-webster.com).

## 6. Types of Written Colloquial Arabic Expressions

It is a matter of fact that processing the written colloquial Arabic is not an easy task. The reasons behind this difficulty are attributed to several changes. Shaalan et al. (2007: 526) summarize these changes, taking into consideration the Egyptian colloquial expressions, as follows:

1. **Changing at the phonological level**, as in ‘تلات’ and ‘أوي’ which are amended from the standard Arabic forms ‘ثلاث’ (three) and ‘قوي’ (strong) respectively.
2. **Changing at the morphological level**, as in ‘إديني’ and ‘ببغغان’ which are amended from the standard Arabic forms ‘إعطني’ (give me) and ‘ببغاء’ (parrot) respectively. Below are some relevant classifications of morphological changes:
  - a) **Verb change**, as in ‘بلليته’ and ‘ضربتيه’ which are amended from the standard Arabic forms ‘بللته’ (wetted it) and ‘ضربته’ (you hit him) respectively.
  - b) **Noun change**, as in ‘أفندم’ and ‘مرّوح’ which are amended from the standard Arabic forms ‘سيد’ (mister) and ‘رائح/ذاهب’ (the one who is going away) respectively.
  - c) **Pronoun change**, as in ‘احنا’ and ‘هُوا’ which are amended from the standard Arabic forms ‘نحن’ (we) and ‘هُوَ’ (he) respectively.
  - d) **Demonstrative change**, as in ‘ده’ and ‘دول’ which are amended from the standard Arabic forms ‘هذا’ (this) and ‘هؤلاء’ (those) respectively.
3. **Changing at the lexical level**, as in ‘بوء’ and ‘نقّاش’ which are amended from the standard Arabic forms ‘فم’ (mouth), ‘صباغ’ (painter) and ‘أنف’ (nose) respectively.
4. **Changing at the syntactic level**, as in ‘حرماً!’ and ‘سعيدة!’ which are minor clauses amended from the standard Arabic forms ‘ليلة/أوقات سعيدة!’ (Have a good night/time!) and ‘تصلي في الحرم إن شاء الله’ (I ask Allah to allow you to pray in Mecca/Madinah) respectively.
5. **Changing into clipped expressions**, as in ‘إيه’ and ‘مالك’ that are contracted expressions from ‘ماذا بك؟’ (What is wrong with you?), ‘ماذا؟’ (What?), and ‘إلى أين؟’ (Where?) (Shaalan et al., 2007: 526).

To sum up, it is clear that Arabic colloquialisms have been derived from the standard Arabic for decades and centuries, due to various factors, like regional, social, cultural ...etc. This derivation of each colloquialism is made via changes at phonological, morphological, lexical, and syntactic levels.

**6. Data Analysis:**

**SL Text (1):**

p. 55 (بكم الخيار يا عم؟)

**Text Analysis:**

Concerning SL text, the colloquial expression involved is one-word form. Here, this kinship term, i.e., ‘عم’ (uncle), is used to express politeness while calling an old person whose name is unknown by the addressor (e3arabi.com). The formal Arabic style for this situation is ‘سيد’.

**TL Texts:**

- 1) Stewart: “How much are those cucumbers, mister?” (p.35).
- 2) Theroux: “How much are the cucumber, uncle?” (p. 45).

**Discussion:**

It is clear that translator (1) applies the ‘indirect (oblique)’ strategy by adopting the ‘equivalence’ procedure since he uses the cultural equivalence of the SL expression, i.e. ‘عم’ → ‘master’ which is used informally to address the greengrocer. As for translator (2), he adopts the ‘direct’ strategy via using the ‘literal translation’ procedure, ‘عم’ → ‘uncle.’ Unlike Arabic, this TL term is specially used to express (formal) kinship relations. On the ground of these facts, the term ‘عم’ is preferred to be rendered into ‘mister’ rather than ‘uncle.’ To put it differently, translator (1) submits an appropriate translation while translator (2) is unlucky in his rendition. The table below is illustrative

	ST (1)	TT		Sense Compromise
	عم	(1) mister	(2) uncle	
Direct translation	<i>Borrowing</i>			
	<i>Calque</i>			
	<i>Literal Translation</i>		(✓)	(-)
Oblique / Indirect Translation	<i>Transposition</i>			
	<i>Modulation</i>			
	<i>Equivalence</i>	(✓)		(+)
	<i>Adaptation</i>			

**SL Text (2):**

p.62. (وضحك ضحكة كريهة وقال: هذه فزورة يا ابن الجارية!)

**Text Analysis:**

The original standard Arabic form of the single colloquial expression ‘فزورة’ is ‘أحجية’ (puzzle). Simply, a ‘puzzle’ means “a question, problem, or contrivance designed for testing ingenuity” (merriam-webster.com). Moreover, the word ‘puzzle’, on the one hand, is related to those questions having mathematical problems or scientific facts on which the one who wants to solve them can rely. A ‘riddle’, on the other hand, “is more like a story that is confusing or difficult to solve and most of them are logic ... it is a type of statement, question, or phrase, whose purpose is to make the person think.” On this basis, the word ‘riddle’ is more suitable than ‘puzzle’ for ‘فزورة’ (dictionary.cambridge.org).

**TL Texts:**

- 1) Stewart: “*Idrees laughed hatefully. It’s a problem, son of a slaves.*” (p. 40).
- 2) Theroux: “*He cackled. “It’s a puzzle, slave boy”*” (p. 50).

**Discussion:**

Discussing the relevant renditions, translator (1) follows the ‘indirect (oblique)’ strategy. That is, he adopts the ‘modulation’ procedure in which the specific SL message ‘فزورة’ is wrongly modified into the generic semantic meaning of the TL, i.e., ‘problem.’ Whereas, translator (2) follows the ‘direct’ strategy via adopting the ‘literal translation’ procedure (i.e. puzzle). That is, his renditions are better and nearer than that of the translator (1); yet, the nearest one in this context is the word ‘riddle’ as illustrated in the text analysis. Consider the table below:

	ST (2)	TT		Sense Compromise
	فزورة	(1) It’s <u>a problem</u>	(2) It’s <u>a puzzle</u>	
Direct translation	Borrowing			
	Calque			
	Literal Translation		(✓)	(+)
Oblique / Indirect Translation	Transposition			
	Modulation	(✓)		(-)
	Equivalence			
	Adaptation			

**SL Text (3):**

p.121. (وانحشر بين دعيس وحمدان وهو يهتف يعبدون صبي القهوة :شاي من غير سكر. فإتتبه اليه الشاعر قانلاً : إحم!)

**Text Analysis:**

This interjection ‘إحم’ involves the notion of ‘التنحج’ (harrumph), i.e., “to clear the throat noisily.” It is usually uttered to improve the speaker’s sound and make it more obvious. Besides, it may be used to draw someone’s attention. As for English, the informal equivalence of this sound word may be realized via borrowing procedure (i.e. ‘ahem’) (www.almaany.com; www.merriam-webster.com).

**TL Texts:**

- 1) Stewart: “*He squeezed in between Digger and Hamdaan, calling for tea without sugar. The bard called his attention with a cough.*” (p. 80).
- 2) Theroux: “*He squeezed in between Daabis and Hamdan, and called out for Abdoun, the coffee waiter. “Tea, no sugar!” The poet harrumphed loudly to catch his attention.*” (p. 99).

**Discussion:**

In this respect, each one of the translators adopts a different strategy. That is, translator (1) adopts the ‘direct’ strategy via using the ‘literal translation’ procedure when he renders the SL expression ‘إحم’ into ‘a cough.’ Unfortunately, he is after the surface meaning of the ST. Contrarily, translator (2) adopts the ‘oblique (or indirect)’ strategy via using the ‘equivalence’ procedure by rendering the ST ‘إحم’ into

‘harrumph’ which is formally used in the TL in a similar situation. Both translators adopt the formal style in their renditions neglecting the effect of the Arabic colloquial term that can be reflected by using the interjection ‘ahem’. However, translator (2) gives a more appropriate rendition than that of translator (1). Consider the table below:

	ST (3)	TT		Sense Compromise
	إحم	(1) <i>a cough</i>	(2) <i>harrumphed</i>	
Direct translation	<i>Borrowing</i>			
	<i>Calque</i>			
	<i>Literal Translation</i>	(✓)		(-)
Oblique / Indirect Translation	<i>Transposition</i>			
	<i>Modulation</i>			
	<i>Equivalence</i>		(✓)	(+)
	<i>Adaptation</i>			

SL Text (4):

p.68. (فكشفت عن خبز وطعمية وكراث ، وراحا يأكلان)

Text Analysis:

The single word ‘طعمية’ is a traditional food in Middle East cuisine, which is made from chickpeas, fava beans, or both. It is likely originated in Egypt ([www.arabdict.com](http://www.arabdict.com)). The synonym word is ‘فلافل,’ which is commonly used in Syria, Iraq, and Gulf states. As for the equivalent item used in English, the word may be borrowed as (falafel), or some others make an adaptation for the SL expression, i.e., (green burger) ([arabic.cnn.com](http://arabic.cnn.com)).

TL Texts:

- 1) Stewart: “*revealing bread, felafel, and leeks.*” (p.44.)
- 2) Theroux: “*took out their bread, falafel, and leeks.*” (p.55).

Discussion:

Concerning the aforementioned TL texts, both translators employ the ‘indirect’ (oblique) strategy adopting the ‘equivalence’ procedure with which they describe the same situation and convey the same idea used in the TL. To put it differently, the word ‘طعمية’ is a special expression used in Egyptian colloquialism, and the same synonym word in other Arab states is ‘فلافل.’ The latter has been borrowed to the English language to be commonly used for the same traditional food. So, both translators are after the equivalence meaning of the SL word ‘طعمية.’ Accordingly, both of them are lucky in their submitted renditions and both of them maintain the informal style since the formal expression is ‘chickpeas’ ([www.eatplant-based.com](http://www.eatplant-based.com)). The table below is illustrative:

	ST (4)	TT		Sense Compromise
	فلافل	(1) <u>felafel</u>	(2) <u>falafel</u>	
Direct translation	<i>Borrowing</i>			
	<i>Calque</i>			
	<i>Literal Translation</i>			
Oblique / Indirect Translation	<i>Transposition</i>			
	<i>Modulation</i>			
	<i>Equivalence</i>	(✓)	(✓)	(+)
	<i>Adaptation</i>			

SL Text (5):

”هذا أوان الملوخية“ . p. 60

Text Analysis:

In this text, the colloquial expression is a one-word form, i.e., ‘الملوخية’ (mulukhiyah). It is a very popular and delicious Egyptian soup meal which is used in this novel by the author to reflect one of the cultural aspects of the SL ([www.anediblemosaic.com](http://www.anediblemosaic.com)).

Text

- 1) Stewart: “*This is the hour for cream of jute leaves*” (p. 38).
- 2) Theroux: “*Time for roasted chicken and greens*” (p. 49).

Discussion:

It is noted that both translators adopt the ‘indirect translation’ strategy. On the one hand, translator (1) uses the ‘adaptation’ procedure via reproducing the TL expression; especially there is no equivalence for such a meal in English. The word ‘الملوخية’ (mulukhiyah) here refers to a meal rather than a green plant. Translator (2), on the other hand, goes after the ‘modulation’ procedure by giving a more generic TL expression of the SL one, i.e., ‘greens,’ which refers to a blanket term of the family of vegetables. Consequently, both translators adopt formal styles in their renditions.

It is worth mentioning that, the translator has to differentiate between the name of the meal [i.e. ‘الملوخية’ (mulukhiyah)] and the name of the plant itself [i.e. ‘الملوخية’ (mallow /jute mallow)] that is used in such a meal. The ‘borrowing’ procedure is mostly used in transferring the names of meals, and the ‘literal translation’ procedure is often used in transferring the name(s) of plants themselves. To be on the safe side, it is preferred to give a couplet procedure via giving two translations of such a cultural-bond expression, i.e., the first rendition is a borrowing procedure and the second one is a footnoted descriptive translation for such an expression, as in the suggested translation stated below. The following table illustrates the analysis of submitted translations:

	ST (5)	TT		Sense Compromise
	الملوخية	(1) <u>cream of jute leaves</u>	(2) <u>greens</u>	
Direct translation	<i>Borrowing</i>			
	<i>Calque</i>			
	<i>Literal Translation</i>			
Oblique / Indirect Translation	<i>Transposition</i>			
	<i>Modulation</i>		(✓)	(-)
	<i>Equivalence</i>			
	<i>Adaptation</i>	(✓)		(-)

Suggested translation: 'This is the time of *mulukhiyah*<sup>(1)</sup>.'

### 7. Conclusion:

The current study concludes that most colloquial terms are socio-culturally bound. To translate such words, a translator must have extensive knowledge; otherwise, he/she will lose the intended meaning and function. Moreover, in some cases, translators can't identify a TL equivalent. The researcher, in turn, proposes a 'couplet' translation procedure to bridge SL and TL gab. Finally, in both translations, translators apply formal TL terms to be as close as possible to the functional meaning of a colloquial expression, but they lose the author's spirit.

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<sup>(1)</sup> *Mulukhiyah* is an Egyptian meal made as a soup of green leaves of mallow.

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