Translation Assessment of English Kennings in Beowulf into Arabic

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A B S T R A C T

A kenning is not just a device of decorative language; it represents the intersection of language creativity and cultural significance, functioning as a metonymic compound that enhances the poem's imagery. This study investigates the translation of English kennings in Beowulf, an old English poem, into Arabic, exploring the linguistic, stylistic and cultural challenges. The study analyzes four kenning examples from Seamus Heaney's and Christopher Tolkien's modern English translations of Beowulf, comparing them with Arabic translations produced by Ph.D. students at the University of Mosul. The study uses Larson's (1984) Translation Quality Assessment (TQA) model to assess the translations based on the criteria of accuracy, clarity and naturalness. The study also explores how Arabic rhetorical devices like metonymy align with or diverge from the figurative complexity of kennings. The analysis reveals that effective Arabic translations require metonymic equivalents balancing between preserving the source text essence and adapting to Arabic literary conventions.©2026AJHPS, College of Education for women, University of Mosul.

تقييم ترجمة كناية الموصوف في بيوولف من الانكليزية الى العربية

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الخلاصة:

ليست كنايات الموصوف اسلوبا بلاغيا جماليا فحسب, بل تمثل تقاطعا بين الابداع اللغوي والدلالة الثقافية, اذ تؤدي وظيفة مركبات كنائية معقدة تثري الصورة الشعرية في النص. تهدف هذه الدراسة الى دراسة ترجمة كنايات الموصوف الواردة في ملحمة بيوولف الى اللغة العربية, مسلطة الضوء على التحديات اللغوية والاسلوبية والثقافية المصاحبة لهذه العملية. وتقوم الدراسة بتحليل اربعة امثلة على كناية الموصوف مختارة من الترجمتين الانكليزيتين الحديثتين ل شيموس هيني وكريستوفر تولكين , ومقارنتها بالترجمات العربية التي انجزها طلبة الدكتوراه في جامعة الموصل. وتعتمد الدراسة على نموذج تقييم جودة الترجمة الذي وضعته لارسون (1984) لتقييم الترجمات من حيث الدقة والوضوح والطبيعية. كما تتناول الدراسة مدى توافق الوسائل البلاغية العربية , ولاسيما الكناية مع التعقيد المجازي لكنايات الموصوف او اختلافها عنه. وتظهر نتائج التحليل ان الترجمة الفاعلة الى اللغة العربية تستلزم ايجاد مكافئات كنائية تراعي الحفاظ على جوهر النص الاصلي مع التكيف مع الخصائص الاسلوبية والثقافية للسياق العربي.

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الكلمات المفتاحية: بيوولف, الترجمة, التقييم, الكناية, كناية الموصوف.

Introduction

Translating literary texts poses linguistic and cultural difficulties, especially when handling linguistically complex and culturally distinctive features like kennings.

Kenning, a hallmark of Old English literature, is a poetic device that often replaces simple nouns with imaginative and descriptive phrases. Beowulf, an iconic and epic poem of old English poetry, is full of these kennings as distinctive stylistic features, rich in heroic narrative and mythological symbolism. Phrases like "ring-giver" for a king or "whale-road" for the sea enhance the poem's visual ampleness while capturing the ideals and perspective of the Anglo-Saxon era. This study investigates the nature and function of selected examples of kennings in Beowulf and the

relation between the latter and other figurative devices, especially metaphor and metonymy. While most previous studies view kennings as metaphors or a blended form of metaphor and metonymy, the current study tries to improve their metonymic nature. It assesses their translations into Arabic by exploring the translators' strategies to preserve their poetic impact. In translation into Arabic, while literal equivalence may cause vagueness, the translators can shift to use Arabic contextualized metonymic phrases. As a result, the translators need to balance between maintaining fidelity to the original and the target language's cultural resonance.

Kennings in English

Entomologically, the term kenning was brought to English in the nineteenth century from medieval Icelandic poetics treatises, notably the Prose Edda by Snorri Sturluson. It comes from the Old Norse word kenna, meaning "know," "recognize," "perceive," "feel," "show," "teach" , and so on. It can be found in expressions like "kenna við", which means "to name after; to express one thing in terms of another", "kenna til", which means "qualify by, make into a kenning by adding" (Wikepidia,2025).

Meissner (1921,p.12) proposes an approach to apply the term kenning for dealing with skaldic diction. He states that kennings are any two-membered nouns substitute and have universal, typical, and changeable characters.

In an elaboration on Meissner's definition, Krause (1930, p.5) defines kennings as a two-part expression that substitutes for a noun in everyday language, typically derived from a poetic or traditional literary domain. The components of the kenning can be flexibly varied according to established conventions and are not contingent on the broader context of the passage in which they appear.

Sturluson (1987, p. 64) defines kennings as poetic periphrases or descriptive terms those are crafted in such a way that when referring to

prominent figures in Norse mythology like Odin, Thor, Tyr, or any other Æsir or elves (Gods in Norse mythology), their names are accompanied by a reference to another deity or an aspect of their deeds.

While demonstrating the analogy between kennings and riddles, Lindow (1975, p.317) defines kennings as nominal compounds that are multiply expandable. He also reminds us that this poetic form must have been written for a highly intelligent audience capable of unraveling and comprehending its complexities (p.317).

Frank (1978, p.42) describes kennings as "appellations," which are synonyms that use more "elevated" expressions than those commonly used to describe a person or object. This style was one of the poetic techniques frequently employed in Skaldic poetry.

Lombardi (2023, p. 828) defines kennings in the light of their innovative and symbolic nature as they are often drawn from natural elements, mythology, or cultural imagery, using personification or analogies (e.g., trees as warriors, ships as animals) to convey specific qualities such as strength, mobility, or power. They reflect a highly creative and structured linguistic practice, where objects or concepts are described by associating them with beings or entities that embody their desired attributes .

The Structure of Kenning

According to Meissner (1921,p.2), a kenning is typically defined as a two-element substitutive periphrasis made up of a base-word (B) and a determinant (D) in a genitival syntactic relationship; this binary structure replaces the referent (R) of the kenning. This definition is based on structural and systemic considerations rather than semantic or cognitive ones

e.g.: "Bone-house" in Beowulf, Heany(1999), line:2508

Base Word (B): house → denoting a container or structure.

Determinant (D): bone → describing the substance or distinguishing feature of the structure.

bone (B) + house (D) = body (R)

Ross (2007, pp. cii–ciii) studies Meissner's definition of kennings structure, explaining that kennings can take two primary forms: compound words or genitive phrases. A compound kenning, such as *"sea steed"* (meaning ship), constitutes "a base word and a determinant", as the first component (the determinant) is a noun used without suffixes. In contrast, a genitive kenning, such as *"wave's horse"* (also meaning ship), features a determinant in the genitive case that either precedes or follows the base word, sometimes with another word in between .

Similarly, Faulkes (1997, p.9) describes the role of the genitive case in kennings, stating that one element often appears in the genitive, typically indicating possession or association. He (1997,p17)further notes that not all kennings rely on genitives. In some cases, the first element of a compound word functions as a determinant, effectively replacing a genitive. This allows for greater structural flexibility, contributing to the variety and richness of kenning formation.

When the scops (the early Germanic poets) first began using kennings, they were relatively simple, typically consisting of two words that expressed a single concept or idea. These "simple kennings" include terms like "hildenaedre" (the "battle-serpent" for arrow), "merehengest" (the "horse of the sea" for ship), and "solarborð" — "the sky". About one-third of the text in *Beowulf* consists of such kennings, which quickly became very popular. However, some kennings, like "ring-giver" for a king, became clichés due to their frequent use (Simpson, 1979, p.3).

Kennings and Other Related Rhetorical Figures:

Kennings as Metaphor

Lakoff and Johnson (1980, p. 5) define metaphor as "the process of understanding and experiencing one kind of thing in terms of another". They argue that metaphors are deeply integrated into daily life, influencing not only language but also thought and behavior. Serving as mental shortcuts, metaphors enable us to understand new ideas by connecting them to prior knowledge. By doing this, they make difficult or abstract concepts more approachable and understandable (Meow, Lay, Nurjanah & Chun,2024, p. 2).

Many scholars have debated the use of kennings in Old Norse poetry, especially in relation to metaphor. Holland (2005, p.123) states that "within the treatment of kennings, the role played by metaphor is perhaps the single most complex and controversial feature".

In his 1998 book *Gold-Hall and Earth-Dragon: Beowulf as Metaphor*, Alvin A. Lee elaborates on kennings in *Beowulf* as a component of the poem's creative structure. He notes that kennings like "gold-hall" (a king's hall) and "earth-dragon" (a treasure-hoarding monster) are essential to the poem's heroic and legendary tone and go beyond simple descriptive tactics (Lee,1998,pp. 53-114). Highlighting the interaction between oral traditions and literary invention, Lee shows how these metaphors fit within the Anglo-Saxon period's cosmological and cultural worldview.

Although kennings are often viewed as metaphor, some scholars argue that they operate irrespective of sentence context. Fidjestøl (1974, cited in Marold 2012), demonstrates that metaphors are closely tied to their sentence context, while kennings function independently of their sentence context and they are self-contained with their meaning established by internal elements (determinants) rather than the surrounding text.

For example, "the bright fence of the prow", is a kenning for the shield, in which the metaphorical element "fence" is not identified and determined by context, but rather by the determinant "prow". This independence distinguishes kennings from conventional metaphors and aligns them more closely with periphrases rather than true metaphors.

Kennings vs Metonymy

When discussing the concept of relatedness in metonymy, Lakoff and Johnson (1980:36) emphasize that metonymy is the usage of one entity to represent another because of a strong conceptual or associative relationship between the two. They further explain how metonymy works on the basis of contiguity, which is the idea that two things might stand for one another because they are closely linked or connected in some manner.

Another definition of metonymy centers on the idea of substitution or "standing for", where an attribute or concept stands for the whole (Crystal ,2004, p.291; Fromkin , Hyams, & Rodaman 2003, p.184).

Metonymy's replacement mechanism is based on background, time, or location (Barnet &Cain, 2012, p.236).

In Old Norse skaldic poetry, Karen Sullivan (2008) finds a close relationship between metonymy and kennings, particularly in their mutual reliance on substitution. Both metonymic processes and kennings operate by substituting one element for another within a specific context, particularly MEMBER FOR MEMBER metonymy, which is frequently used in kennings. Examples involve reference to the sea a "lake", "river", or "fjord"—all of which belong to the larger category "bodies of water"—and using one member of one category to represent another member of the same category (Sullivan, 2008, p.23). Scandinavians like Fidjestøl (1997) used to often make reference to this phenomenon as a metaphor. Sullivan contends, however, that it is devoid of the fundamental qualities of metaphor as described by cognitive linguistics, namely the creation of

target-domain inferences and extensive mappings. He (2008: 23) shows that it is better characterized as a kind of metonymy, namely MEMBER FOR MEMBER metonymy, which prioritizes contiguity (proximity within a category) at the expense of similarity.

Kennings in Arabic Literature

In Arabic literature, kennings were utilized as a poetic technique in the descriptive structure of Arabic prose. According to Tamīm′dārī (2002, p107), Kalila wa Demna ,initially of Indian origin and later translated into Arabic by Ibn al-Muqaffaʿ in the 8th century, is a collection of fables that blend didactic storytelling with elaborate literary techniques. The use of kennings in this work reflects the broader influence of classical Arabic literary aesthetics, where figurative language, allegory, and indirect expression have an important role in developing the depth and elegance of the text.

Wahba (1968,p.78) and Hadidi (2001, p. 81) assert that kenning in Arabic is considered a form of metonymy, specifically a modified expression.

Bauer (2010, p. 713) treats kennings in Old Norse poetry as a parallel metonymy, or more specifically, as a distinct form of synecdoche, which serves as a key stylistic feature in early Arabic poetry. Both devices function as fundamental literary elements within their respective traditions. In pre-Abbasid Arabic poetry, objects of focus—such as camels and swords—were not referred to by their common names. Instead, poets used metonymy, entirely replacing standard terms with expressions that conveyed a defining characteristic or habitual action of the object. This indirect and evocative use of language reflects a stylistic approach similar to that of kennings in Old Norse poetry .

Kennings as a Type of Metonymy

Arab linguists and rhetoricians have defined   metonymy   in a variety of ways. Ibn Manẓūr (2010,p.124) describes it as referring to something indirectly, by mentioning something that implies it, rather than stating it explicitly, such as titles or nicknames like "ابو Abu" (Father of) to symbolize person's traits.

In the work of Al-Jurjani (1992,p.45), metonymy is developed to include replacing the original term with another expression that carries a similar meaning. An example of metonymy can be seen in expressions such as " نؤوم الضحى " one who sleeps in the forenoon or a late sleeper.In classical Arabic, it often serves as a metonymy for a woman who lives a life of luxury and comfort, as she has the leisure to sleep late in the morning without the need to engage in early work or labor (p.45).

For Ibn Al-Athīr (1939, p.197) and Ibn Ḥamzah al-ʿAlawī (1914, p. 373), metonymy is any statement that carries two meanings and may be understood either figuratively or non-figuratively. Because of this duality in meaning, it is an effective tool to represent cultural and social concepts. For example , due to its profound sense of honor, metonymy is used to refer to a woman using terms such as the egg or the sheep (Al-Hashimi,2019,p.352). As in the following verse from the Holy Qur'an:

"كَأَنَّهُنَّ بَيْضٌ مَكْنُونٌ" (As-Saffat:49)

"Delicate and pure as if they were (hidden) eggs (well) preserved".((Khān & Hilālī, 1996)

In this line, "بيض" (eggs) is as a metonymy or euphemism for a woman, emphasizing delicacy, beauty, and a sense of protection or purity.

The link between kennings and metonymy lies in their common use of indirect descriptive language. Both avoid direct naming. As kennings replace common names with figurative terms, Arabic metonymy   relies on symbolic or related terms. Meisami & Starkey (1998, p. 479) state that

the relationship between kennings and   riddles in Arabic lies in their common use of paraphrastic and descriptive indirection. Just as kennings in English replace common nouns with figurative expressions, Arabic riddles avoid direct naming. Instead, it uses cryptic descriptions and indirect references, encouraging the audience to   uncover the meaning.

Types of Metonymy

In the initial stage of rhetorical composition, metonymy lacked a clear categorization, although some rhetoricians provided examples suggesting implicit classifications. Ibn Al-Athīr (1939, p.200) categorizes metonymy into two types: those deemed appropriate in usage and those considered inappropriate or obscene in speech.

Al-Sakkākī (1987,p.403-407), however, divides metonymy into three types:

1. Metonymy that aims to express the attributed (نفس بها المطلوبة الكناية" "الموصوف). As in the metonymy of oil (petroleum):

Al-Mu'awid (2022)   "تعمل مصر في انتاج الذهب السود"

(Egypt works in the production of black gold)

2. Metonymy that aims to express the attribute (نفس بها المطلوبة الكناية" "الصفة). An example of this is the saying of 'Umar ibn Abī Rabī'ah about his beloved Hind:

بعيدة مهوى القرط إمّا لنوفل... أبوها وإمّا عبدّ شمس " (Atiq,1982,p. 213)

"وهاشمّ

3. Metonymy that aims to specify the attribute in relation to the attributed As in : ("الكناية التي يُطلَب بها تخصيص الصفة بالموصوف").

فَمَا جَازَه جَوَّد وَلِأُحِلّ دُونَهُ   وَلَكِنْ يَسِيرُ الْجُود حَيْث "(Hamad,2023, p.501)

"يَسِير

(No generosity surpasses him, nor is it found apart from him - For generosity itself follows wherever he goes)

Abdul-Raof (2006:235) categorizes metonymy into the following types:

1.Metonymy of Attribute

It refers to the case in which the implied characteristic is attributed to a subject such as courage, nobility, beauty, light, and similar attributes. The subject is explicitly stated, and then a characteristic is ascribed to it—an essential characteristic, not incidental (Abdul-Raof,2006,p.237).For example,

"أَحْمَدُ بِسَاطِه ثُرَاب"(Abdul Raof,2006, p. 237)

Ahmed's carpet is dust.

Where the expression احمد بساطه تراب (his carpet is dust)serves as a metonymy for the attribute poverty.

It is worth noting here that Al-Hashimi (2019,p.346)) differentiates between two types of metonymy of an attribute :

- Close metonymy: It is a type of metonymy in which the transition to the intended meaning occurs without an intermediary between the original meaning and the transferred meaning, such as Al-Khansa's words in mourning her brother Sakhr.

" طَوِيلُ النِّجَادِ رَفِيعُ الْعِمَادِ سَاد عَشِيرَتِه أَمْرَدًا "   Bashir, T. D. (2016, p.46)

"A tall brave man, a host to those in need. While still a lad, his people he did lead" (Laher,2021).

Distant metonymy: The implied characteristic is transferred from the implied term to the described subject through an intermediary. For example, "كثير الرماد" (having a lot of ash) is a metonymy for hospitality. It implies a transition from having a lot of ash to frequently burning wood under cooking pots, which leads to an abundance of cooked meals and, ultimately, a large number of guests.

2.Metonymy of a modified entity

An attribute and description are stated without disclosing the entity being described. The metonymic word or phrase in this type needs a context to be recognized, as in the following passage from the Quran (54:13):

" وَحَمَلْنَاهُ عَلَى ذَاتِ أَلْوَاحٍ وَدُسُرٍ "

And We carried him upon a sailing ship.

In this verse, Allah states:

And Noah, that is, was borne on one of our ships which was constructed from planks and nails). A ship is metonymically represented by "الواح ودسر" (the planks and nails) (Al Hayyani,2014, p.313). This metonymy works as a part-whole relationship. The planks and nails are used to stand for the entire structure of the ship (p. 313).Based on this example, the kenning of ship functions as a form of metonymy and employs indirectness   and associated imagery.

3.Metonymy of affinity.

In this type of metonymy, both the modifier and modified terms remain present, but the key word that connects them is omitted (Abdul Raof,2006, p. 237).

According to Al-Hashimi (2019,p.347) this type of metonymy shows an inherent connection between the subject and its attribute, whether through affirmation or negation. In this case, both the subject and the attribute are explicitly mentioned, but the attribute is not directly linked to the subject. Instead, it is attributed to something closely associated with the subject, even though that thing itself cannot actually possess the attribute

In conclusion, kennings in Arabic literature are closely connected to the rhetorical device of metonymy, which replaces literal terms with figurative or associative references. They serve as a form of indirect expression, particularly through the metonymy of modified expressions.

Methodology

This study investigates the translation of kennings in Beowulf from English into Arabic. Four examples of kennings are drawn from the Anglo-Saxon epic poem, as translated into modern English by   Heany (2000) and . Tolkien (2015). The study examines the Arabic translations of these kennings, provided by PhD students-translators at the University of Mosul, College of Arts, Department of Translation. The study employs Larson's (1984)   (TQA) model to assess the accuracy, clarity and naturalness of the translated kennings. In terms of accuracy, the translations are assessed according to their faithfulness to the source language. Unjustified changes such as addition, omission or any loss of intended meaning are identified. For clarity, intelligibility, ambiguity, and the balance between figurative preservation and explicitation are checked. Regarding naturalness, fluency, and stylistic appropriateness, besides maintaining the kenning's foreign essence and adapting it to Arabic norms are examined.

Analysis and Discussion

The next section will assess the translation of selected English kenning from Beowulf into Arabic. This method sheds light on the grammatical difficulties associated with the translation of kennings as well as the methods translators use to maintain or modify the source text's poetic and cultural resonance.

Table 1. Kenning 1

ST	TTs
"Then the grey-haired ***treasure-giver*** was glad; far-famed in battle, the prince of Bright-Danes*,* and keeper of his people counted on Beowulf,on the warrior's steadfastness and his word". (Heaney,2000,p. 41,line:706)	1. في حين كان **الملك المقدام** ذو الشعر الرمادي سعيدًا؛ كان أمير برايت دانس، الذي كان ذائع الصيت في المعارك وحارسا لشعبه يعتمد على بيوولف وعلى ثباته وكلمته كمحارب. 2. وبعد ذلك اصبح **صاحب العطاء** ذو الشعر الرمادي سعيدا وكان ذائع الصيط في المعركه وهو امير

الدنماركيين اللامعين والذي يقوم بحمايه الشعب ويعتمد

على بيولف وهو المحارب الذي يلتزم بالكلام الذي

يقوله.

3. وبعد ذلك اصبح **مانح الكنز لجنوده** ذو الشعر

الرمادي سعيدا وكان ذائع الصيط في المعركه وهو امير

الدنماركيين اللامعين والذي يقوم بحمايه الشعب ويعتمد

على بيولف وهو المحارب الذي يلتزم بالكلام الذي

يقوله.

4. ثم كان **مغدق العطاء** ذو الشعر الرمادي

سعيدًا، فقد كان أمير برايت دانس، الذي كان

.مشهورًا على يعتمد شعبه، وحارس المعارك،في

بيوولف، وعلى صمود المحارب وكلمته.

5. ابتهج **صاحب الكنز** الرمادي الشعر والامير المتهور

في المعارك وحامي شعبه وكان يعتمد على بيوولف

وثبات المحار وكلمته.

6. عندما ابتهج **واهب الذهب** ذو الشعر الرمادي

الشهير في المعارك امير الدنماركين المتألقين حامي

الشعب ووثق في بيوولف وفي ثبات المحار وكلمته.

Referring to the king as a "treasure-giver", the poet stresses the king's responsibility as a protector and provider in addition to his role as a ruler; this strengthens the relationship of reciprocity between the king and his subjects (Abram , 2011, p. 14).

The kenning *treasure-giver* is a metonymic compound phrase for a king or monarch. It exhibits the king's role as a generous leader who bestows wealth upon his soldiers and followers, often in the form of money, gold, armor, or land.

The following criteria are adopted to assess the English kenning translation into Arabic.

Accuracy

Translation (1) "الملك المقدام" (the valiant king) conveys bravery and loses the intended meaning of giving gifts.Treasure-giver is omitted. Consequently, the translation is inaccurate due to the unjustified addition and omission.

Translation (2) "صاحب العطاء"is faithful in conveying the intended meaning of generosity, which is an attribute of kings and monarchs ,without any alteration in meaning.

Translation (3) "مانح الكنز" (the giver of the treasure) is direct and faithful to the original meaning ,however the phrase "لجنوده"(to his soldier) which is not explicitly appeared in the original text provides unneeded and extra pieces of information.

Translation (4) "مغدق العطاء" refers to the one who showers generosity as a significant quality of kings and it is very close to the original meaning.

Translation (5) "صاحب الكنز" (the possessor of the treasure) changes the emphasis from giving or distribution to possessing and becomes more about possession than generosity. This drastically changes the meaning.

Translation (6) "واهب الذهب" (the giver of the gold) is more restrictive and lacks accuracy, since it changes the meaning of treasure to gold.It adds unjustified specificity.

Clarity

Translations (1, 2, and 4) are simple and understandable. They convey the original meaning without vagueness or unnecessary complexity. On the contrary, translations (3,5, and 6) show complexity as in (3) "مانح الكنز لجنوده"(the giver of the treasure to his soldiers) and (6)"واهب الذهب"(the giver of gold) . They are overly specific since the original meaning provides the idea that the treasure is distributed by the king, but not exclusively to his warriors, or it is particularly gold. Translation (5) is the least obvious option since it implies a ruler rewarding loyalty rather than someone who distributes wealth.

Naturalness

Translations (1,2, and 4) provide Arabic metonymic expressions equivalent to the English kenning. They sound natural and acceptable. For example, "مغدق العطاء" in translation (4) captures the original poetic function and it is employed naturally according to the target norms. On the other hand, (3,5, and 6) are less common in Arabic, less idiomatic, less realistic and unnatural, despite their correct grammar in the target language, such as "مانح الكنز" and "صاحب الكنز".

The best translation for "treasure-giver" according to Larson's (1984) is translation (4) "مغدِق العطاء" as it preserves the meaning, simple to understand, and sounds natural in Arabic.

Table 2. Kenning 2

ST	TTs
"In the end each clan on the outlying coasts beyond ***the whale-road*** had to yield to him and begin to pay tribute. That was one good king". (Heaney,2000, p. 3,line:10)	1. في نهاية الامر اصبح لزاما على كل العشائر القاطنة على طول السواحل البعيدة خلف ***طريق الحيتان*** أن تستسلم له وتبدأ في دفع الجزية. كان هذا ملكًا صالحًا. 2. وفي نهاية المطاف، كان على كل عشيرة تعيش على السواحل النائية، حيث ***مسار الحيتان***، أن تخضع له وتبدأ في دفع الجزية. كان هذا ملكًا صالحًا. 3. وفي نهايه المطاف فان كل قبيله على السواحل المتراميه الاطراف بعيدا عن ***وكر الحيتان*** لابد ان تقدم له الولاء والطاعه لانه كان ملكا جيدا. 4. في نهاية الامر سيتعين على كل قبيلة على السواحل البعيدة خلف ***طريق الحوت*** ان ترضخ له وتشرع بدفع الجزية. لقد كان ملكا طيبا. 5. في النهاية: اجبرت كل عشيرة على السواحل النائية القاطنة خلف ***بحر الحيتان*** الخضوع له والبدء في دفع الجزية لهذا الملك العظيم. 6. بعد كل شيء، كان على كل عشيرة على السواحل النائية وراء ***الطريق البحري الحيتان*** أن تستسلم له وتبدأ في دفع الجزية. كان ذلك ملكًا صالحًا.

The kenning "whale-road" captures how pre-modern societies saw the sea as a dynamic, living channel rather than just water, fusing poetic vision with practical geography. It is a metonymic phrase that reflects both the Germanic poetic imagination and the actual shipping routes used by Viking traders. This remarkable compound phrase, that embodies the conception of nature as an active force, turns the ocean into a gigantic highway that whales navigate. It alludes to the intricate networks of commerce that spanned northern Europe in the past, as slaves and merchandise traveled along these waterways.

Accuracy

Translations (1 and 2) "طريق الحيتان" (the road of the whales) and " مسار الحيتان" (the path of the whales) are literal and direct translations. They show faithfulness in conveying the intended meaning of the kenning whale-road as a metonymy for sea used by whales to travel through.

Translation (3) " وكر الحيتان" (the nest of the whales) implies a static dwelling place. It completely loses the core meaning of the kenning of the sea as whales traveling path. Accordingly, omitting the word "road" and adding " nest" creates inaccuracy.

Translation (4) "طريق الحوت" (the road of the whale) singularizes whales' imagery and adds unjustified specificity against the collective imagery which implies the sea as a   place dominated by whales . As a result, it is inaccurate. Similarly, translations (5 and 6) " بحر الحيتان" (the sea of the whales) and الطريق البحري للحيتان (the sea road of the whales) are literal descriptions of the sea.They reduce the poetic effect of the kenning and convert the poetic riddle into an explicit statement by unnecessary addition of the word بحر or بحري.

Clarity

 Two out of six translations contradict the source text kenning and make it unclear; translation (3) "وكر الحيتان" suggests whales are not moving

, and translation (4) "طريق الحوت" sounds like tracking the movement of a single animal because of using singular form . On the other hand, four out of six translations met the criterion of clarity. For example, ''طريق الحيتان'' and ''مسار الحيتان'' identically frames the sea as a traveled path for whales as the original kenning does. Similarly, the other two translations "بحر الحيتان" and "الطريق البحري للحيتان"are the most explicit   names the sea.

Naturalness

As whales represent the vastness and perils of the sea, the "Whale-Road" kenning has its roots in Old English and Norse nautical culture. This precise conceptual combination (whales + road = sea) is not found in Arabic despite its rich maritime poetry. Whales are not used as metonyms for the sea in Arabic literature. They are not cosmic symbols, but just creatures, unlike   Norse culture. The sea is   commonly referred to by names that express its size, depth, movement, sound, and expanse, such as:

- "اليم"   an ancient term signifying sea's vastness, and alluding mythological depth (Abu Hayyan Al-Andalusi,1971,p.226)).

- "الرَّجّاس" signifying a sea with a powerful, intense,   sound (AJSRP Blog, 2024).

- "اللج"   used as a metonymy for the deep and turbulent sea (Al-Maany Dictionary)

Accordingly, all six translations are unnatural. Since whales do not conceptually symbolize the sea in Arabic poetry, translating "Whale-Road" into Arabic, as appeared in the six translations, seems incongruous and artificial. A suggested translation might be found in metonymic expressions of the modified , as follows:

في النِّهَايَةِ، كَانَ عَلَى كُلِّ عَشِيرَةٍ عَلَى السَّوَاحِلِ النَّائِيَةِ وراء *اليم العظيم* ان تستسلم له وتبدأ في دفع الجزية. كان ملكا صالحا..

Table 3. Kenning 3

ST	TTs
"The flame flashed forth, light there blazed within, even as of heaven radiantly shines *the candle of the sky"*. (Tolkein ,2015, p.84, line :1316)	1. احدثت الشعلة وهج اضاء المكان تماما **كضياء القمر** في السماء. 2. ومضت شعله اللهب وقد لمع الضياء فيها كما لو انها **مصباح في السماء** الذي يشرق ساطعا في كبد السماء. 3. اضاءت الشعلة بوهجها وانارت الفضاء كما تضيء **الشمس شمعة السماء.** 4. انارت الشعلة فجأة وانبعث الضوء من داخلها كما يشع **المصباح من السماء** 5.توهج اللهب وسطع الضوء في الداخل كما تشرق **شمعة السماء.** 6.ومضت اللهب، وتوهج النور في الداخل، كما تشرق **ابنة الصباح** بوهجها الباهر.

According to Brodeur (1959,p.250), the expression "candle of the sky" is an Old English-style kenning, which is a metonymic compound that replaces a literal noun (the sun) with a humorous picture. Comparing the sun to a flaming candle highlights its bright, life-giving light and evokes the Germanic worldview in which heavenly entities were considered mythological. This kenning enriches language and strengthens symbolism by framing the sun as a masterfully designed, almost celestial light source

Accuracy

An assessment of the six Arabic translations reveals that five out of six fail to achieve accuracy and faithfulness to the original English kenning of the sun (candle of the sky). First, translation (1)"ضياء القمر" (moonlight)

is completely inaccurate due to the replacement of the metonymic image of the sun as a candle with the moon and providing wrong information in the target text. Moreover, translations (2 and 4) "مصباح في السماء" (lamp in the sky) and "مصباح من السماء" (lamp from the sky) show a semantic shift by substituting the candle with a lamp. "مصباح" (lamp) presents an artificial light source that is fundamentally different from "شمعة" (candle). Additionally, translation (3) "الشمس شمعة السماء" directly names the sun as the referent of the metonymic expression. It provides an unnecessary addition . Though translation (6) succeeds in providing the poetic metonymy in Arabic as "ابنة الصباح" (the daughter of the morning)**,** a term discussed by Mustafai (2018,p.191) in his analysis of Arabic rhetoric expressions, the Arabic rendition fails in preserving the semantic congruence in the target text regarding the significant attributes of the sun. In contrast, translation (5) "شمعة السماء" (the candle of the sky) accurately maintains the English kenning implication as it retains the metonymic substitution of "candle" for "sun" and the shared characteristics of human craftsmanship, warmth, and self-generated light, which are symbols of the sun in Germanic cultures.

Clarity

A check for clarity shows that two out of six translations lack sufficient clarity and fail to successfully communicate meaning in the target text. Translation (1) "ضياء القمر" (moonlight), while grammatically sounds correct, it misrepresents the sun as the source of light and provides misleading information. Additionally, the sun (associated with "candle") is a symbol of flaming, dynamic energy in Germanic poetry. However, the moon represents cold, quiet introspection, which is the opposite of the intended kenning. Furthermore, translation (3) "كما تضيء الشمس شمعة السماء" (as the sun lights the candle of the sky) seems ambiguous—how does the sun light another candle if it is "the candle of the sky"?

In contrast, four translations are understandable and clear and they provide explicit information help Arabic readers infer the sun from the context, for instance translation (5) "شمعة السماء" (the candle of the sky).

Naturalness

To test naturalness, the Arabic phrase"شمعة السماء" (candle of the sky) in translations (3 and 5) is uncommon and not idiomatic. Compared to other conventional Arabic terms for heavenly light sources, this one seems slightly foreign or overly literal, even if it is comprehensible. On the contrary, the other four translations look natural and represent significant cultural transposition rather than faithful translation. For example, the phrase "مصباح في السماء" (a lamp in the sky) while it may sound more natural in Arabic, since the phrase "candle of the sky" has no equivalent in Arabic, translators must strike a balance between domestication (using Arabic luminary imagery) and foreignization (preserving the metonymic imagery). As Al-Alusi (2014, p.71) notes in his commentary on Surah Al-Mulk (67:5):

"وَلَقَدْ زَيَّنَّا السَّمَاءَ الدُّنْيَا بِمَصَابِيحَ..."

("And we have adorned the lowest heaven with Lamps...") (Yusuf Ali, n.d

This   proves that "مصابيح" (lamps) is a poetic natural and eloquent manner to refer to heavenly entities (stars). The Quran emphasizes the stars' ornamental and lighting function in the night sky by using the term "مصابيح" to describe them.This aligns with Mohammed & Al-Qazaz's (2024) study which highlights the need for analyzing intertextual elements like religious references while taking into account the cultural background of the intended audience(p.85).

Furthermore, the Arabic words for such images are usually "سراج" (lamp), "قنديل" (lantern), "نور" (light), or "بدر" (full moon).

Similarly, Abu Al-Adous(1999,p.120) treats "ام الضياء"(the mother of light) as a metonymy of the sun. Al-Adkawi (2001, p. 176) also emphasizes the usage of "سراج السماء" (lamp of the sky) as an expression that makes sense and is culturally relevant. Accordingly, the most appropriate translation might be:

".

توهجت الشعلة وتألق النور في الداخل، كما يشع *سراج السماء* بإشراقه الباهر.

Table 4. Kenning 4

ST	TTs
"The hero observed that swamp-thing from hell, the tarn-hag in all her terrible strength, then heaved his war-sword and swung his arm: the decorated blade came down ringing and singing on her head. But he soon found his ***battle-torch*** extinguished: the shining blade refused to bite". (Heaney ,2000, p.68, line: 1524)	1.لاحظ البطل ذلك الشيء الذي يشبه المستنقع من النار تارن هارج بكل قواها العظيمه ومن ثم قام باشار سيف الحرب ولوح بذراعه وهو يحمل نصل سيفه المزخرف والذي نزل وهو يهوي وضرب راسها ولكنه سرعان ما وجد *شعله الحرب* الخاصه به قد انطفت ورفض نصل سيفه البراق ان يضرب بقوه. 2. رأى البطل مخلوق المستنقع الوحشي عجوزًا مخيفة ذات قوة هائلة. لوح بسيفه ذي النصل المزخرف وهوى على راسها بكل قوته مصدرا رنيناوصفيرا , لكن *شعلة الانتصار* لديه انطفات حيث لم يؤثر السيف في المخلوق. 3.لاحظ البطل ذلك الكائن كأنه من مستنقع في الجحيم، الساحرة التي كانت تسبح في كل قوتها الرهيبة، ثم رفع سيفه الحربي ولوح بذراعه: فسقط النصل المزخرف على رأسها وهو يتنغم ويغني. لكنه سرعان ما وجد *شعلة معركته* قد انطفأت، رفض سيفه اللامع أن الضرب. 4. رأى البطل ذلك الكائن المستنقعي القادم من الجحيم ساحرة البركة بكل قوتها

الرهيبة ثم رفع سيفه ولوح بذراعه مزل

النصل المزخرف يرن ويغني على رأسها لكنه

سرعان ما ادرك ان *شعلته الحربية* قد انطفأت

اذ رفض النصل اللامع ان يقطع.

5.لاحظ البطل ذلك الجسم في المستنقع

من الجحيم الساحرة التارنبكل قواها الهائلة

واستل سيفه ولوح بيده وسقط النصل المزين

ورنّ وغنى على الرأس ولكنه وجد *الشعلة*

منطفئة والنصل البراق ابى لن يستحوذ عليه.

6.لاحظ البطل ذلك الكائن المستنقعي من

الجحيم، ساحرة البحيرة بكل قوتها المرعبة، ثم

رفع سيفه الحربي ولوّح بذراعه: سقط الشفرة

المزخرفة رنانة وغنت على رأسها. لكنه

سرعان ما وجد *شعلته القتالية في المعركة*

مطفأة: الشفرة اللامعة رفضت أن تقطع.

The kenning **"battle-torch"** is used in this text to describe the hero's sword. In this context, "battle-torch" implies that the sword is a source of fire and light in battle, a beacon of destruction, similar to how a torch lights the dark. However, when the Beowulf poet states that the "battle-torch extinguished "to indicate that the sword was unable to kill the monster, the picture takes a sad turn, as though its might had been suppressed. This exposes the adversary's superhuman might and the hero's unexpected weakness (Niles,2007, p.372).

Accuracy

A check for accuracy reveals that four out of six translations accurately preserve the original kenning structure while effectively recognizing the weaponry trait of the sword in the battle. For instance, translation (3) "شعلته الحربية" uses (his war flame) and translation (6) opts for "شعلته القتالية في المعركة") his martial flame in the battle). Although the latter adds the word "قتالية") martial), it keeps the sword-as-fire motif

strong while being wordy. This addition is well-justified and maintains the intended meaning. In contrast, the two other translations are literal and fail to capture the deeper metonymic essence of the kenning. For example, translation (2) uses "شعلة الانتصار" (the flame of victory) misinterprets the kenning because it loses the sword's original significance as a concrete item and substitutes the abstract idea (victory). Additionally, translation (5) omits the key element "battle" and uses "torch" as a generic word, which considerably weakens the original meaning. This omission makes the sword's symbolism as a weapon of battle and heroism culturally inaccurate.

Clarity

The assessment of clarity criterion shows that 5 out of six Arabic translations of the English kenning "battle-torch" do not, in fact, directly relate the sword to the flame or war images. As a result, there is a gap between the metonymy and the sword, as intended referent. Therefore, it could not be very clear to readers who are not familiar with the poetic device. For instance, translation (1) uses " شعلة الحرب الخاصة به " (the flame of the war), which sounds like a personal flame and does not suggest that it is a weapon. Additionally, translation (2) opts for شعلة الانتصار" (the flame of victory), which distorts the original intended meaning and changes the emphasis from weapons to triumph. Consequently, readers might imagine a figurative torch of glory rather than a sword. In contrast, only translation (6), "شعلته القتالية في المعركة" (his combat torch in the battle), is clear and unambiguous. It also successfully links the torch to the battle weapons.

Naturalness

A check for naturalness reveals that three out of six translations violate the readability and stylistic fluency of the original kenning in the target text. For example, translations (1&3) " شعلة الحرب الخاصة به " (his own flame of war) and "شعلة معركته" (the flame of his battle) sound abstract and slightly awkward as they may refer to symbolic or emotional relationships not physical things. While the remaining three translations demonstrate a significant degree of naturalness sounding idiomatic and poetic.They follow the linguistic and TL stylistic norms that are

independent of SL influences. They also sound elevated and appropriate for the epic style. For instance, translation(4) "شعلته الحربية" (his war flame) seems authentic.

Additionally, translation (2)"شعلة الانتصار" (the flame of victory) despite its semantic deviation that distorts accuracy, , it is natural and idiomatic , frequently used figuratively in Arabic literature.

Based on what has been assessed above and to properly capture the stylistic and metonymic complexity of the kenning "battle-torch," one might use Arabic poetical terms that have a comparable meaning of brilliance, martialstrength, and decisive action.

Ibn Hāniʾ al-Andalusī (1886) uses the phrases "شهاب حرب") meteor of war) as in the line:

"للّهِ أيُّ شِهابِ حربٍ واقِدٌ
صَحِبَ ابنَ ذي يزَنٍ وأدركَ تُبّعا"

(https://www.aldiwan.net/poem69064.html)

(By God, what a blazing meteor of war he is,

Who accompanied the son of Dhu Yazan and reached Tubba)

Here, the sword is shown as a flaming meteor, evoking the same sensation of martial devastation and brilliant brightness as the kenning "battle-torch." It also illustrates Beowulf's heroic and epic tone. A suggested translation might be as follows:

لاحظ البطلُ ذلك الكائنَ المستنقعيَّ القادمَ من الجحيم،

ساحرة البحيرة في ذروةِ قوّتها الرهيبة،

فرفع سيفَه الحربيَّ وألهبَ ذراعَه

فهام النصلُ المزيَّنُ يهوي مُرنِّماً

ومُغنِّياً على رأسها. لكنه سرعانَ ما اكتشف

أنّ *شهاب حربه* قد خبا: فقد أبى

نصل سيفه ان ينغرز.

TQA Scores for Selected Beowulf Kennings (Arabic Translations)
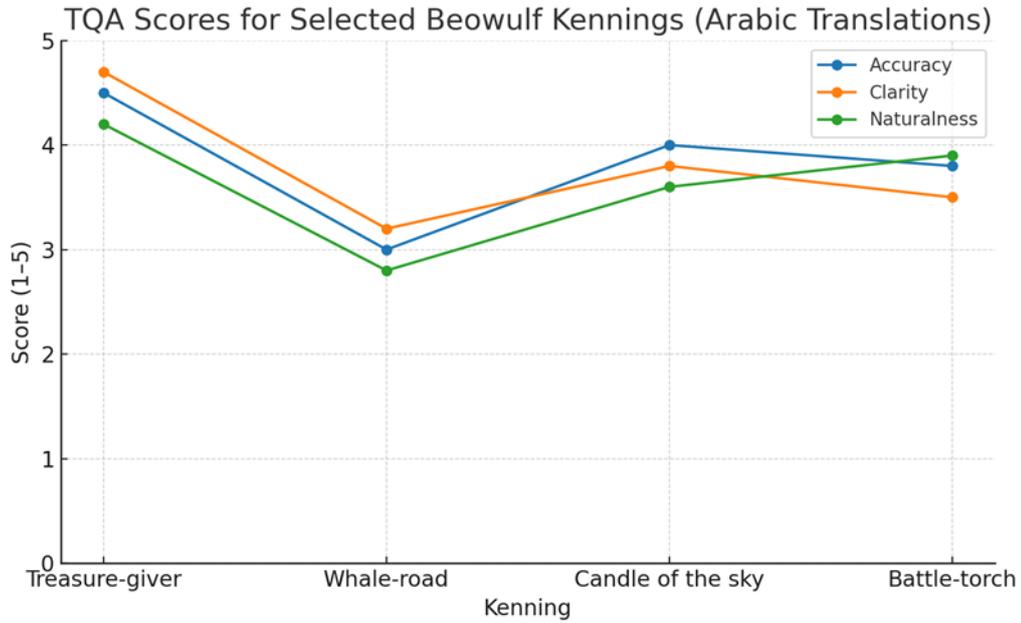
Conclusion

The current study has examined the translation of four key kennings in Beowulf into Arabic , using Larson's(1984) Translation Quality Assessment (TQA) model. The analysis is based on three criteria accuracy, clarity and naturalness. The results show both difficulties and possible solutions for translating these figurative expressions into Arabic adequately. They also demonstrate that kennings are essentially metonymic constructions, in which one concept is substituted with another by the relation of association rather than direct metaphor. Due to linguistic and cultural differences, some translations struggle to preserve the original meaning; for instance " whale-road" presented difficulties ,because Arabic lacks the same symbolic significance of maritime imagery in Old English literature, while others present successful and effective translations ,for example "مغدق العطاء" for "treasure-giver". Moreover, the findings present that in Arabic translation, kennings are metonymic modified expressions.

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