



The Translation of *Dune*

An Encounter of Languages

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Science Fiction and Fiction Words

“Science fiction, with its freedom to create unearthly worlds as well as to explore and distort time and space, may give new vitality to the dream of human experience.”

(Clareson, 1971, p. 25)

“A good science-fiction story is a story with a human problem, and a human solution, which would not have happened at all without its science content”

(Sturgeon quoted by Blish, 1971, p. 167)

“The aliens - utopians, monsters or simply differing strangers - are a mirror to man just as the differing country is a mirror for his world. But the mirror is not only a reflecting one, it is also a transforming one, virgin womb and alchemical dynamo: the mirror is a crucible.”

(Suvin, 1972, p. 374)

Science Fiction and Fiction Words

Cognitive estrangement (after dramatist's concept Bertolt Brecht) :

“the effect brought on by the reader's realization that the setting of a text (film, etc.) differs from that of the reader's reality, especially where the difference is based on scientific extrapolation, as opposed to supernatural or fantastic phenomena.”

(Prucher, 2007, p. 23)

“Cognitive estrangement is the sense that something in the fictive world is dissonant with the reader's experience world.”

(Mendlesohn quoted in Prucher, 2007, p. 23)

Fiction (or fictive) words :

“Words created by SF writers to convey a feeling of estrangement are not at all neologisms but ‘fictive words’ (...) [:] words that supposedly anticipate forms of language from the future or from ‘parallel’ universes”

(Angenot, 1979)

Science Fiction and Fiction Words

Vidscreen : “communications device capable of transmitting and receiving the voice and image of the users [see videophone definition]”

(Prucher, 2007, p. 261)

“vidscreen” context :

*“The technician in charge of the night shift at the map room coughed nervously as the massive, sloppy head of Glen Runciter swam up to fill the **vidscreen**.”*

(Dick quoted in Prucher, 2007, p. 262)

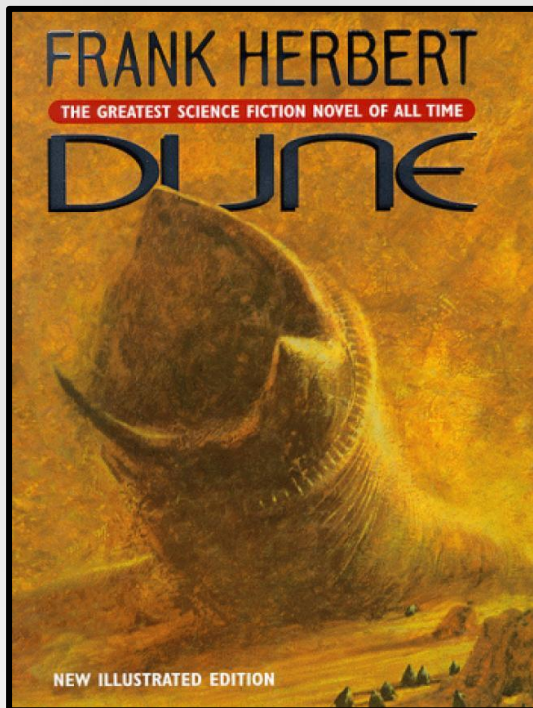
Fiction words :

1. Fiction words > one term which doesn't exist in the readers' dictionary
2. Fiction expressions > two or more terms, invented or not, which create a new concept or a new object together.
 - a. ex. “geriatric spice” (Herbert, 1990, p. 5)
3. Fiction senses > not invented terms which convey a new and different meaning(s) than dictionaries' ones.
 1. Ex. “Voice” (Herbert, 1990, p. 10) : ability to control other people's mind with the sound of the voice.

Dune loanwords

*“Dune is to science fiction what *The Lord of the Rings* is to fantasy: the ultimate created world”*
(Pierce, 1987:123)

“Dune (...) is a historical mural painting of humanity (...) whose language, especially foreign languages (...) is a crucial and very original feature of the work”
(Plante Jourdain, 2001-2002:81)



“Here is the novel that will be forever considered a triumph of the imagination. Set on the desert planet Arrakis, Dune is the story of the boy Paul Atreides, who would become the mysterious man known as Muad’Dib. He would avenge the traitorous plot against his noble family – and would bring to fruition humankind’s most ancient and unattainable dream.”

Back cover of *Dune*, 1990, Ace Books

Dune loanwords

Loanwords	Definition in <i>Dune</i>	Original language
Bashar	Sardaukar officer	Arabic
kanly	Vendetta	Turkish
Verite	Drug	French
Kindjal	Short sword	Persian
Kwisatz Haderach	Name of an extraordinary man	Hebrew
Missionaria Protectiva	Bene Gesserit ritual to exploit primitive worlds	Latin
schlag	Animal	German
sadus	Holy judge	Sanskrit
Nezhoni scarf	Scarf worn by new mother	Navajo

Arabic loanwords in the original text of *Dune*

Loanwords :

“As for loanword, defining it is complicated and several categorisations are possible according to different criterion (...) :

a) **loanwords conveying a signifié which, in a first time, is not attested** in the target language and which would enhance it with a notion or a signifié one could not designate otherwise (...)

b) **Loanwords conveying a signifié which in the target language could be said with a pre-existing term.** In this case, it is rather a stylistic choice determined by complicated factors among which the impact of cultural and linguistic trends seem to be important.

c) **Loanwords which on the semantic level are slightly different from one language to another**, for example ‘*jogging*’ which corresponds in French to ‘race’ and to ‘tracksuit’ while in Italian, the same term only means ‘race’.”

(Caputo, Enrico and Masucci, 1987, p. 268-269)

Arabic loanwords in the original text of *Dune*

Loanwords	<i>Dune</i> definition	Arabic words	Arabic definition
Muad'Dib	Fremen name of Paul Atreides. "the adapted kangaroo mouse of Arrakis (...), admired by the Fremen for its ability to survive in the open desert"	Mu'addib	One who teaches especially the first rule of Muslim religion
shari-a	"the part of the panoplia propheticus which sets forth the superstitious ritual"	Shari'a	Religious laws
al-Lat	"mankind's original sun"	al-Lat	Pre-Islamic goddess of fecundity personifying the sun
jihad	A religious and fanatic crusade	jihad	Muslim religious war Literally "effort"
hajra	"journey of seeking"	hijrah	Departure, exodus, migration
alam al-mithal	"the mystical world of similitudes where all physical limitations are removed"	alam al-mithal	The world of analogies
ichwan bedwine	"the brotherhood of all Fremen"	Ikhwan	Fraternity
fedaykin	"Fremen death commandos"	Fedayeen	military groups willing to sacrifice themselves
taqwa	"Something of great value. That which a deity demands of a mortal and the fear provoked by the demand"	taqwa	Piety God-fearing

Arabic loanwords in the original text of *Dune*

“I see a...Fremen with the book of example,’ she intoned. ‘He reads to **al-Lat**, the sun whom he defied and subjugated.”

(Herbert, 1990, p. 475)

“Jessica thought about the prophecy – the **Shari-a** and all the panoplia propheticus, a Bene Gesserit of the Missionaria Protectiva dropped here long centuries ago – long dead, no doubt, but her purpose accomplished (...)”

(*ibid*, p. 88)

“The Reverend Mother tells me she cannot survive another **hajra**,’ Stilgar said.”

(*ibid*, p. 569)

“I order the full ceremony. Jamis was our companion and brother of the **Ichwan Bedwine**. There shall be no turning away without the respect due one who proved our fortune by his **tahaddi challenge**.”

(*ibid*, p. 499)

“I will say it once more: I’ve given the tribe’s word-bond. My people know your worth to us now. What could the Harkonnens give us? Our freedom? Hah! No, you are the **taqwa**, that which buys us more than all the spice in the Harkonnen coffers.”

(*ibid*, p. 457)

Arabic loanwords in the French translation of *Dune*

« Je vois un... Fremen avec le livre des exemples. Il le lit à **al-Lat**, le soleil qu'il défie et domine. »

(Herbert, 1985, p. 303)

« La prophétie...Le **Shari-a** et toute la panoplia propheticus. Un Bene Gesserit de la Missionaria Protectiva envoyée sur ce monde combien de siècles auparavant, morte depuis longtemps, sans aucun doute, mais ayant atteint son but (...) »

(*ibid*, p. 62)

« La Révérence Mère me dit qu'elle ne pourrait survivre à un autre **hajra**, reprit Stilgar. »

(*ibid*, p. 359)

« Quant à Jamis, dit-il, la cérémonie sera pleinement célébrée. Il était notre compagnon et frère de **l'Ichwan Bedwine**. Nous ne nous détournerons pas sans le respect dû à celui qui a mis notre chance à l'épreuve par son **tahaddi**. »

(*ibid*, p. 317)

« Je le dis à nouveau: Je vous ai donné la parole de la tribu. Mes gens connaissent maintenant votre valeur. Que pourraient donc nous offrir les Harkonnens? Notre liberté ? Ah... Non, vous êtes le **taqwa** qui peut nous apporter plus que toute l'épice des coffres des Harkonnens. »

(*ibid*, p. 292)

Arabic loanwords in the French translation of *Dune*

English	French	<i>Dune</i> definition
alam al-mithal	alam al-Mithal	“the mystical world of similitudes where all physical limitations are removed”
dar al-hikman	al-hikman	“school of religious translation of interpretation”
El-Sayal	El sayal	“the ‘rain of sand’. A fall of dust which has been carried to medium altitude (...) by a coriolis storm”
mish-mish	mish mish	“apricots”
baklaw a	baklava	“a heavy pastry made with date syrup”

Arabic loanwords in the French translation of *Dune*

Differences can be explained by:

1. Subjectivity and creativity of the translator
2. Grammar or typographic rules of French language.

1. “bakla**Wa**” > “bakla**Va**”

“a dessert originating in the Middle East made of filo pastry filled with chopped nuts and soaked in honey (Turkish origin)”

In the Oxford Dictionary :

“**baklava**”

In the Larousse Dictionary :

“**baklava**”

Dictionary of Arabic Cuisine :

“**baklawā**”

2. “**dar** al-hikman” > “al-hikman”

> Translator’s choice.

3. “alam al-**mithal**” > “alam al-**Mithal**”

> Conceptual and Religious term

4. “el-**Sayal**” > “el sayal”

> “‘El sayal, dit-il, la pluie de sable qui apporte le matin.’” (Herbert, 1985, p. 395)

“‘El-Sayal, the rain of sand that brings the morning,’ he said” (Herbert, 1990, p. 628)

Arabic loanwords in the French translation of *Dune*

« Et s'il est réellement **le** Kwisatz Haderach...Eh bien... » (Herbert, 1985, p. 9)

« Ce fut **mon** tahaddi-al-burhan, mon dernier test. » (*ibid*, p. 198)

« Voici l'ayat et **le** burhan de la Vie. » (*ibid*, p. 202)

« Oui, il pouvait encore distinguer la bannière verte et noire des Atréides flottant...quelque part au-devant de la route...les mots sanglants **du** jihad et les légions fanatiques » (*ibid*, p. 317)

« La voyante qui vous a apporté la légende, dit-elle, l'a fait par **le** karama et l'ijaz, le miracle et l'immuabilité de la prophétie. Je sais cela. » (*ibid*, p. 293)

« La Révérende Mère me dit qu'elle ne pourrait survivre à **un** autre hajra, reprit Stilgar. » (*ibid*, p. 359)

« Tout à coup, **un** Fedaykin aperçut Paul et lança le cri de bataille qui se répercuta dans la grotte (...) » (*ibid*, p. 425)

« Je suis **un** Naib, dit Stilgar, que l'on ne prend jamais vivant. » (*ibid*, p. 396)

Arabic loanwords in the French translation of *Dune*

« Nous te donnerons un nom, petit homme, dit Stilgar, quand viendra le moment de **la** mihna, au cours de l'épreuve de l'aql. » (Herbert, 1985, p. 296)

> “mihna” = “the season for testing Fremen youths who wish admittance to manhood”

« **La** Sayyadina, Notre Révérende Mère, est vieille. » (ibid, p. 302)

> “Sayyadina” = “feminine acolyte in the Fremen religious hierarchy”

Other loanwords in the French translation of *Dune*

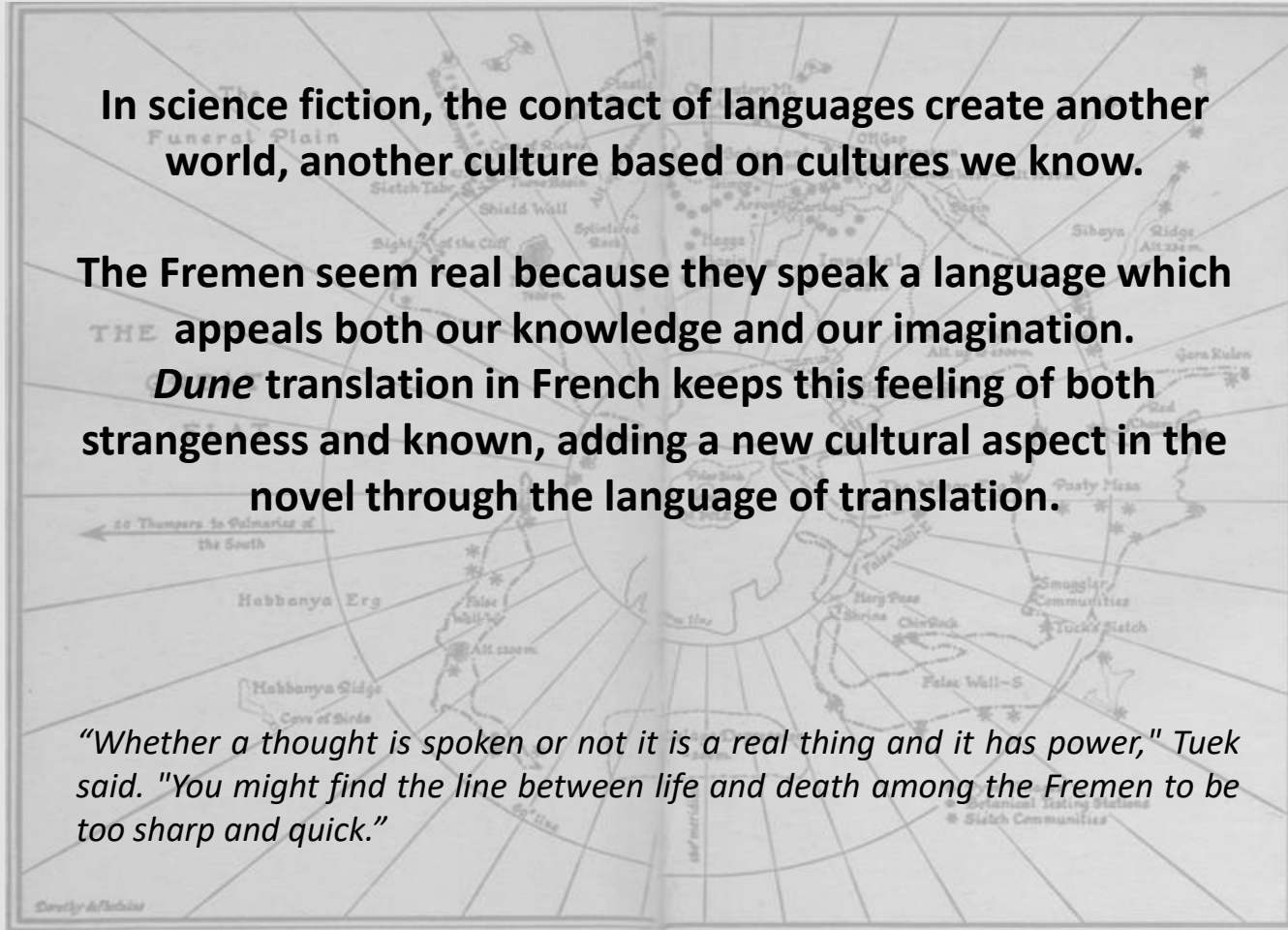
Loanwords	French	Language	<i>Dune</i> Definition
cherem	haine commune	Hebrew	“a brotherhood of hate (usually for revenge)”
kanly	rétribution	Turkish	“formal feud or vendetta under the rules of the Great Convention carried on according to the strictest limitations”

In science fiction, the contact of languages create another world, another culture based on cultures we know.

The Fremen seem real because they speak a language which appeals both our knowledge and our imagination.

Dune translation in French keeps this feeling of both strangeness and known, adding a new cultural aspect in the novel through the language of translation.

"Whether a thought is spoken or not it is a real thing and it has power," Tuek said. "You might find the line between life and death among the Fremen to be too sharp and quick."



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Thank you for your attention

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