



## A Newly Proposed Model for Assessing the Quality of English Translated Literary Texts into Arabic

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## Abstract

This study aimed to propose a model for assessing the quality of English-to-Arabic literary translations, addressing significant limitations in existing translation quality assessment (TQA) models (e.g. House, 1997, 2015; Nord, 2001; Reiss, 2000). In response to limitations reported in the literature, the proposed model attempts to fill this gap in that it is more comprehensive as it covers 4 micro and 4 macro criteria, and an overall criterion "meaning accuracy", which can be assessed by a 5-point scale to produce objective translation assessment. It was subjected to validity and practicality verification by a panel of 12 experts in translation studies, and was applied to some selected translated excerpts from *The Bluest Eye* (1970) and *Beloved* (1987). The study results revealed that there was a consensus of 88.8% among the validators, which is considered high as reported in the literature related to the Delphi method. Further, the application of the model to the selected excerpts revealed that the model can advance TQA by providing subtility criteria that ensure both linguistic fidelity and literary integrity to assess translation quality. The inclusion of quantitative assessment to the model by involving inter-rater reliability and reader response might also yield objective translation assessment.

**Keywords:** Translation Quality Assessment, Micro-macro criteria, English-Arabic, Literary translation, Accuracy of meaning.

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## نموذج مُقترح لتقييم جودة ترجمة النصوص الأدبية من الإنجليزية إلى العربية

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### الملخص

هدفت هذه الدراسة إلى تقديم نموذج لتقييم جودة الترجمات الأدبية من الإنجليزية إلى العربية، من خلال تناول جوانب القصور الرئيسة في نماذج تقييم جودة الترجمة الحالية، على سبيل المثال، نماذج هاوزه (1997، 2015) رايس (2000) ونورد (2001). واستجابة لتلك الجوانب التي برزت في الدراسات السابقة، نسعى من خلال النموذج المقترح إلى سد هذه الفجوة؛ لأنه يتكون من 4 معايير جزئية و4 معايير كلية، ومعياري عام لتقييم دقة المعنى، يمكن قياسه من خلال مقياس خماسي يعزز من التقييم الموضوعي للترجمة. وقد خضع النموذج المقترح للتحقق من نسبة الصدق من قبل لجنة تحكيم مكونة من 12 خبيراً في دراسات الترجمة، وكذلك من قابليته للتطبيق من خلال تطبيقه على بعض المقاطع المترجمة المختارة من روايتي "العين الأكثر زرقة" (1970) و"محبوبة" (1987). وقد أظهرت النتائج بأن نسبة الإجماع بين أعضاء لجنة الخبراء بلغت 88.8%، وتُعد نتيجة عالية كما أكدت الدراسات السابقة المتصلة بطريقة دلّفي لحساب نسبة الاتفاق. كما أظهر تطبيق النموذج على النصوص المختارة بأنه يمكن أن يطور تقييم جودة الترجمة من خلال توفير معايير دقيقة تضمن كلاً من الأمانة اللغوية والسلامة. بالإضافة إلى أن المكون الكمي في النموذج المقترح من خلال تحليل مدى الثبات في آراء المقيمين والتحقق من تأثير الترجمة من خلال استجابة القراء قد يؤدي إلى نتائج أكثر موضوعية لجودة الترجمة الأدبية.

**الكلمات المفتاحية:** تقييم جودة الترجمة، الترجمة الأدبية، من الإنجليزية إلى العربية، على المستوى الجزئي والكلّي،

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## Introduction

Translation Quality Assessment (TQA) is a controversial issue that presents a significant challenge to translators and evaluators as the answer to the question what is a good translation has not been defined yet (Matenova, 2023). Furthermore, the many of the existing models employed for evaluating translation are often regarded as theoretical rather than practical, complicating the assessment process (Devika, 2024). TQA is a method within translation studies aimed at ensuring the quality of a translation by evaluating factors such as naturalness, accuracy, and adequacy in relation to the original text (Farahzad, 2011). It involves a complex interplay of linguistic, cultural, and contextual factors that make objective assessment challenging. Unlike fields with clear metrics, translation quality often relies on subjective judgment, which varies from one evaluator to another (Wang & Gu, 2024). Furthermore, the subtleties of language such as idiomatic expressions, cultural references, and tone are difficult to be measured with precision. Ultimately, the goal of TQA is to ensure that the translated text faithfully and effectively conveys the meaning, style, and intent of the original, while being accessible and appropriate for the target audience (Sofyan & Tarigan, 2019). This ongoing quest for accuracy and excellence underscores the importance of continual innovation and collaboration in the field. Thus, there is a strong need for a clear, practical, and testable framework to effectively measure and articulate translation quality (Yamini & Abdi, 2009).

The translation of literary texts from English into Arabic is a multifaceted endeavor that transcends mere linguistic conversion, serving as a vital conduit for cultural exchange (Sofyan & Tarigan, 2019). This intricate process enables a rich tapestry of narratives, ideas, and emotions to flow between diverse linguistic communities, fostering mutual understanding and appreciation. As globalization accelerates the interconnectivity of cultures, the demand for high-quality literary translations has intensified, underscoring the necessity for rigorous assessment models that safeguard the integrity and authenticity of these works. Despite the growing importance of this field, the assessment of literary translations often remains underexplored, leading to significant gaps in understanding what constitutes a successful translation. The root of this challenge can be traced to the complexity of literary language itself. Literature is not simply a collection of words; it is a vessel for conveying cultural aspects, emotional depth, and thematic richness. The translation from English into Arabic involves navigating intricate layers of meaning, including cultural references, idiomatic expressions, and stylistic choices that must be meticulously preserved. This task becomes particularly daunting when considering the unique linguistic features and cultural contexts of Arabic, which require translators to engage deeply with both the source text (ST) and the target audience (Asadova, 2024; Dickins et al., 2017). Consequently, there is an urgent need for a robust and comprehensive assessment model



that can adequately address these challenges (Follica et al., 2020). It is precisely this need that this paper seeks to address by proposing an innovative assessment model tailored specifically for evaluating English translations of literary texts into Arabic language.

## 2. Objectives of the Study

The main objective of the study is to propose a TQA model that would address shortcomings reported in exiting models. This is achieved by applying the model and verifying the validity of its components, through the analysis of actual literary texts extracted from Al-Sultani (1997) and Alayouti (1989) translations of Morrison's *The Bluest Eye* (1970) and *Beloved* (1987) respectively. It is also be achieved by utilizing experts' validation of the model, using the Delphi method.

## 3. Literature Review

Literary translation is the art of transposing a work of imagination from one language-culture into another, with the primary objective of recreating its aesthetic and experiential effect (Landers, 2001). It is a form of hermeneutic interpretation where the translator deciphers not only the semantic content but also the stylistic, tonal, rhythmic, and cultural subtext of the ST to reconstruct a functionally and artistically equivalent target text (TT). The ultimate goal of literary translation is to elicit a comparable aesthetic response in the target reader (TR), allowing them to experience the literary work as a living piece of art in their own language (Scott, 2018). However, achieving and evaluating this artistic equivalence presents unique challenges that demand a careful balance between linguistic precision and cultural expressiveness. While numerous translation quality assessment models have been developed to address these challenges, each exhibits limitations that hinder its effectiveness in assessing the distinctive nature of literary works (Colina, 2008). This section critically examines four influential models: the functional-pragmatic approach by Nord (1997), the empirical model by Al-Qinai (2000), the macrotextual framework by Williams (2009), and the register-based system by House (2015), before introducing a more comprehensive alternative specifically designed for English-to-Arabic literary translation.

Nord's functional-pragmatic model (1997) represents one of the earliest systematic attempts at translation assessment through its detailed 17-point checklist. While this model provides a structured approach by examining elements like subject matter, presuppositions, and target audience considerations, its primary focus on functional adequacy comes at the expense of literary artistry. The model's emphasis on whether a translation "works" for its intended purpose often overlooks the aesthetic dimensions crucial to literary texts, such as metaphorical language, narrative voice, and stylistic consistency. Furthermore, despite revisions in 2005, Nord's framework fails to adapt to significant developments in translation technology and evolving socio-cultural dynamics that influence contemporary translation practices. Its classroom-oriented



design, while valuable for pedagogical purposes, proves limited when applied to real-world literary translation assessment where cultural nuance and emotional resonance take precedence over functional checklists.

Al-Qinai's empirical model (2000) offers a more technical approach through its analysis of textual typology, thematic coherence, and pragmatic equivalence. This model excels in examining the structural and linguistic properties of translations, providing measurable criteria for assessing formal accuracy. However, its heavy reliance on objective parameters leaves little room for evaluating the subjective qualities that define literary excellence. The emotional weight of phrases, cultural significance of references, and aesthetic impact of stylistic choices—all vital components of literary works—often elude Al-Qinai's analytical framework. Additionally, the model's intensive methodology makes it impractical for large-scale projects, restricting its utility to small text samples. This limitation significantly reduces its applicability in assessing full-length literary works where consistency across extended narratives is paramount.

Williams' macrotextual model (2009) shifts focus to larger textual structures, particularly argumentation patterns in non-fiction texts. While this approach proves valuable for analyzing logical flow in informational texts, it demonstrates critical shortcomings when applied to literary translation. As Al-Wahy (2010) observes, the model deliberately excludes key concerns like fidelity, adequacy, and acceptability—precisely the elements most debated in literary translation studies. Literary texts rely heavily on narrative techniques, symbolic language, and emotional depth that transcend mere argumentative structure. Williams' framework, by prioritizing macro-level organization over stylistic and cultural nuance, fails to capture what makes literary translations artistically compelling. The absence of tools to assess metaphorical richness, tonal consistency, or cultural adaptation renders this model inadequate for comprehensive literary translation assessment.

House's TQA model (2015) presents a more sophisticated approach through its analysis of register and genre, incorporating field, tenor, and mode as key variables. The addition of a cultural filter represents an important advancement in addressing socio-linguistic differences between source and target cultures. House's model excels in evaluating functional texts where communicative purpose dominates, but like other models, struggles with literary works' artistic dimensions. While it effectively categorizes texts and assesses their functional characteristics, House's framework provides insufficient mechanisms for evaluating poetic language, metaphorical density, or the emotional cadence of narrative prose. The model's inability to account for critical factors in literary reception represents another significant limitation. Literary translations must resonate emotionally with TRs while maintaining fidelity to the ST's artistic vision, a balance House's model is not fully equipped to assess.

The development of the proposed model responds to four key limitations identified in current TQA models: excessive analytical complexity, lack of intersubjective verifiability, constraints on translatability, and unclear distinctions between translation methods. It is also conceived in light of critiques of functionalist approaches. As Hafida (2020) concludes, while functionalist approaches usefully broaden the conception of translation beyond the "impossible ideal of absolute fidelity" and provide valuable specifications on a translation's purpose, they carry a significant weakness: the risk of "dethroning" the source text, which can negatively affect the translational process. This model directly addresses this critique, as it harnesses the functionalist strength of justifying different translations for different addressees but mitigates the risk of ST alienation by using the macro and micro elements as a foundational benchmark. By streamlining assessment around these core narrative elements, the proposed model offers a more practical yet thorough approach that balances functional purpose with textual fidelity. Its emphasis on this cultural-linguistic interplay makes it particularly suitable for English-Arabic literary translation, where maintaining cultural authenticity alongside linguistic accuracy presents a persistent challenge.

Although Nord (1991) and House (1997), advocate for a multi-parameter approach to translation assessment, evaluating elements like accuracy, TL quality, and register, a central problem lies in the methodological challenge of synthesizing these discrete assessments into a single, holistic quality rating for the translation (William, 2009). It is precisely this synthesis problem, among other limitations, that this paper addresses by proposing a TQA model for literary works. In short, while existing models contribute valuable perspectives, their collective inadequacies necessitate a more distinctive framework. The model presented here integrates the strengths of previous approaches while innovating through its dual focus on the macro and micro levels of English-Arabic translated texts. By emphasizing stylistic continuity, cultural fidelity, and emotional impact alongside traditional linguistic criteria, this comprehensive model provides a method for generating a more coherent overall assessment, thereby advancing the field.

#### 4. Methodology

##### 4.1 Research Design

This study adopted a mixed-methods approach, in which qualitative and quantitative data were collected. This method utilized two types of analysis: content analysis of a corpus of selected translations using the proposed model; and statistical analysis of the feedback on the model components provided by a panel of experts, employing the Delphi method. According to Sablately (2022), the Delphi method is a way of establishing a kind of agreement among experts about certain issues relevant to the scope of any study.



## 4.2 Collection of the study corpus

The corpus of this study consisted of 19 excerpts selected from two translations of two English works by Morrison that are *The Bluest Eye* (1970) and *Beloved* (1987) by two different translators that are Al-Sultani (1997) and Alayouti (1989) respectively. The selection of these particular novels was because of their prominence in literature, offering rich thematic and linguistic content that is crucial for a detailed analysis of translation quality. The cultural significance and emotional weight of these themes make them ideal candidates for such evaluation.

## 4.3 The Assessment Checklist

The model components were converted into a checklist for assessment. The checklist included sample excerpts taken from the translations under study. Against each excerpt, the micro and macro criteria were placed to help assess the quality of the Arabic translations. Then, it was distributed to a panel of 12 experts in translation studies, who showed interest in the topic and were willing to participate in the study. The number of experts lies within the range recommended in the Delphi method literature (Hasson, 2025; Vogel, et al. 2019). They were requested to ascertain the appropriateness of the criteria on a yes/no scale. Their feedback was coded and processed by the Delphi method in order to gain a consensus (Hasson, 2025) on the validity of the proposed model.

### 4.3.1 Results of the Delphi Method

While the Delphi method entails a multi-round process to validate the instrument content, this study opted for a structured, single-round validation as the building of the checklist is at its initial stage. The results revealed a high level of agreement among the panel, which was 88.8%. This is considered high as it exceeded the minimum acceptable threshold of 75% (Keeney et al., 2011; Lynn 1986; Von Der Gracht 2012). Based on the analysis of experts' feedback, the lexical and semantic components were merged and the pragmatic component was introduced. Consequently, the model was re-organized to be divided into two major parts, covering 9 criteria for assessing the quality of translated texts as well as an overall factor for assessing accuracy of meaning. This approach has established a foundation for future studies that would utilize a full multi-round method to arrive at a consensus.

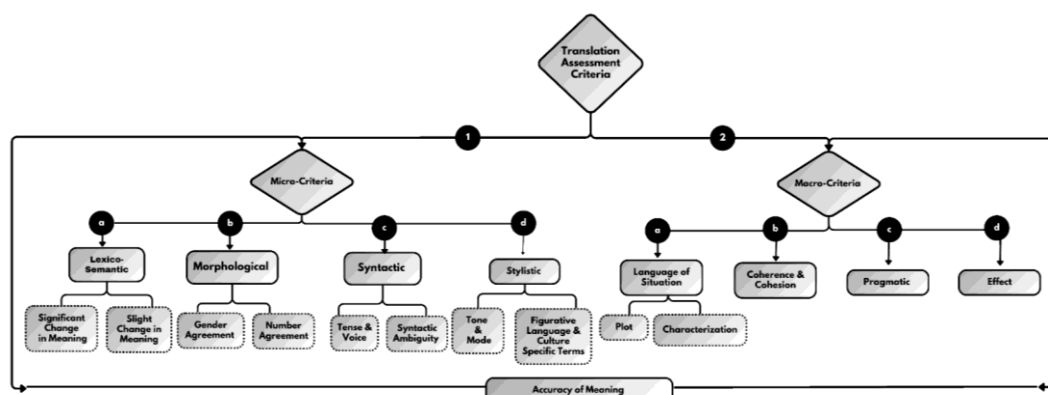


Figure 1: Translation Quality Assessment Model

## 5. Description of the model

Since translation is an intricate balancing act between two languages and cultures, demanding a methodology that accounts for both granular detail and overarching impact. The model shown in Figure 1 is organized around two major levels of criteria: micro and macro. This includes lexico-semantic factors, where the precise meaning of words, especially culturally laden terms, is paramount; morphological factors, such as grammatical agreements that can alter meaning; syntactic factors, concerning sentence structure and ambiguity; and stylistic factors, which preserve the author's unique voice and figurative language. On the macro level, the analysis shifts to the text as a unified communicative event. This involves the language of situation, or the context shaping the text's deeper meaning; coherence and cohesion, which ensure logical flow and thematic unity; the pragmatic aspect of meaning; and the cumulative effect on the reader. The central thesis of this model is that while micro-level accuracy is foundational, it is the macro-level's success in replicating the original's context and impact that truly determines a translation's power to engage and move its new audience.

### A. Micro-Level criteria

At the micro-level, the analysis zooms in on the foundational linguistic units of the text. This involves the following:

**a. Lexico-Semantic Factors:** This element assesses the accuracy of word choice and the preservation of meaning, with a special focus on culturally specific terms. Within the model, it is designed to identify both slight changes of meaning (such as subtle shifts in connotation or register) and significant changes of meaning (such as the mistranslation of key concepts). These factors are directly associated with assessing the integrity of the narrative's plot and the authenticity of its setting.



**b. Morphological Factors:** This element examines grammatical agreements, specifically gender and number, which are essential for maintaining textual cohesion and clarity in the target language.

**c. Syntactic Factors:** This element analyzes the sentence-level architecture of the translation, focusing on tense, voice, and syntactic structures that may create ambiguity. It assesses how alterations in sentence structure—such as a shift from active to passive voice, an incorrect verb tense, or a poorly resolved ambiguous phrase—can distort the original text's narrative flow, temporal sequence, and the clear depiction of actions. Applying this factor involves a micro-level analysis to ensure the syntactic choices in the TT faithfully preserve the logical and narrative features of the ST's plot and setting.

**d. Stylistic Factors:** This element focuses on the recreation of the author's unique voice, with particular attention to figurative language (e.g., metaphors, similes) and the translation of culture-specific terms (e.g., idioms, culturally-bound concepts). It assesses how these stylistic choices are adapted to resonate with the target culture while preserving the original's aesthetic and emotional impact on the narrative's tone and atmosphere.

## **B. Macro-level criteria**

This level of analysis examines the TT as a holistic entity. The criteria below are designed to synthesize the micro-level findings into a comprehensive assessment of the translation's overall narrative and thematic success. This two-tiered approach—moving from micro-level analysis to macro-level synthesis—makes the model systematic for researchers and practical for translators, providing a clear checklist for revision. This level of analysis examines the TT as a holistic entity, focusing on:

### **a. Language of Situation & Characterization**

This criterion adapts and formalizes concepts from narrative theory (e.g., Toolan, 2013) and functionalist approaches (e.g., Nord, 1997) that prioritize the transfer of a text's overarching communicative function. It comprises the foundational elements of a narrative—such as plot, setting, and conflict—that generate its deeper meaning. Integral to this framework is characterization, which is articulated through several distinct modes:

- Speech: Dialogue revealing background and psychology.
- Thoughts: Internal cognitions showing motivations and conflicts.
- Effect: Others' reactions serving as a barometer of their influence.
- Actions: Consistent conduct demonstrating core values.
- Appearance: Physical presentation suggesting traits or status.



## b. Coherence & Cohesion

This criterion is grounded in the foundational work of translation scholars like Baker (2018) and Halliday & Hasan (1976), who emphasize that a translation must form a coherent textual world for its new audience. It involves ensuring the translated text flows logically (cohesion) at a sentence level and retains the original's broader thematic unity and internal logic (coherence). This means checking that the micro-level choices collectively build a macro-structure that is consistent and meaningful, ensuring the plot remains intelligible and the themes resonate clearly.

**c. Pragmatic:** in the hierarchy of translation priorities, the successful communication of contextual and intended meaning is paramount. To this end, the present model establishes pragmatics as a primary macro-criterion, operating on the principle that a translation's success is ultimately judged by its pragmatic effect on the TR. Grounded in the theories of scholars such as Baker (2018) and Hatim and Mason (1997), this criterion investigates the dynamic interplay of language, user, and context. It specifically assesses the translator's capacity to navigate cross-cultural implicatures, preserve stylistic registers, interpret figurative language, and maintain the narrative voice and emotional resonance of the ST. A pragmatic failure, therefore, represents not just a local error but a systemic breakdown in the transfer of the text's overall communicative purpose, directly impacting its coherence, acceptability, and aesthetic impact in the target culture.

**d. Effect:** The cumulative effect of these factors on the translation process is profound. A translation that accurately captures the semantic distinctiveness, preserves the author's voice, and maintains coherence and cohesion will resonate more deeply with its audience. Conversely, a translation that overlooks these elements risks alienating readers and diluting the original work's emotional and intellectual depth.

All these criteria help in assessing the accuracy of meaning, which is not achieved through isolated lexical or syntactic fidelity alone, but through the cumulative and synergistic effect of every translational decision. It is the final product of a delicate balance—where precise gender agreement, coherent syntax, and resolved ambiguity converge with the faithful preservation of character, plot, tone, and cultural subtleties. To ensure objective assessment of translation, the overall accuracy of meaning can be measure on a 5-point scale by multi-evaluators and accordingly the inter-rater reliability can be achieved.

Therefore, a translation is deemed successful by this model when the totality of its parts achieves an accurate transmission of meaning that resonates with the same pragmatic force and literary integrity as the original, ensuring the work's impact is not just maintained, but authentically relived in the Arabic language.



## 6. Application of the Model and Discussion

This analysis adopts a bifurcated framework to assess translational equivalence, distinguishing between micro-linguistic and macro-linguistic criteria. At the micro level, the focus is on the constituent units of the text.

### A. Micro-level Criteria

The micro-level assessment deconstructs the translation to assess its core components. This can be examined in the following:

#### 1. Lexico-semantic: significant and slight changes in meaning

Lexico-semantic factors play a pivotal role in translation, particularly in literary texts where meaning is often layered with cultural, emotional, and contextual distinctions. This section examines both significant and slight changes in meaning that occur during translation, highlighting how these alterations can impact the reader's understanding and emotional engagement with the text. Through a comparative analysis of ST and TT, we explore the challenges of preserving semantic integrity and the importance of cultural sensitivity in translation.

##### a. Significant change in meaning

The analytical focus of this model is deliberately trained on distinguishing between and identifying slight and significant changes in meaning, a key dichotomy established in translation theory by House (2015). A significant change in meaning—the model's primary concern—occurs when key concepts, central themes, or fundamental cultural contexts are misrepresented or omitted. This prioritization is justified by the model's parallel foundation in Pragmatic and Functionalist theories (e.g., Nord, 1997), which posit that a translation's success is ultimately judged by its functional effect. A significant change represents a critical pragmatic failure, as it severs the text from its core communicative purpose.

Such changes are not merely local errors but systemic breakdowns that can lead to a profound disconnect between the author's intended meaning and the reader's interpretation. For instance, a failure to capture the subtleties of a character's emotions or the cultural significance of a specific event does not just alter a single detail; it fundamentally reshapes the narrative's impact and compromises its thematic integrity.

Therefore, within the framework of our proposed model, identifying these changes, following House's (2015) taxonomy, is paramount. It necessitates a deep understanding of both the source and target cultures, assessed through the model's macro-level criteria—specifically the Language of situation and pragmatic effect. Ensuring that significant changes are minimized is crucial for achieving a translation that is not only accurate but also resonant and faithful to the original text's artistic and communicative goals. This principle can be studied in the following excerpt:

Excerpt (1) *The Bluest Eye* (1970)

ST

Frieda brought her four graham crackers on a saucer and some milk in a blue-and-white Shirley Temple cup. She was a long time with the milk, and gazed fondly at the silhouette of Shirley Temple's **dimpled face**. Frieda and she had a loving conversation about how cu-ute Shirley Temple was. [p. 19]

TT

فنجلب لها أربع قطع من البسكويت في صحن صغير. مع حليب في قديم ((شيرلي تمبل)) الأزرق والأبيض، قضت وقتاً طويلاً في شرب الحليب وهي تحديق مبهورة في سطح الكوب المنعكسة عليه نقاطاً مضللة وتحديث هي وفريدا حديثاً ودوداً عن شيرلي وعن فتنتها [p. 16].

This excerpt demonstrates how a seemingly minor detail, such as the description of Shirley Temple's dimpled face, carries significant cultural and emotional weight. The original text evokes nostalgia and innocence, which are integral to the character's experience. However, the translation fails to capture the charm of Shirley Temple's "dimpled face," resulting in a loss of emotional resonance.

## b. Slight Change in Meaning

Slight changes in meaning often arise from subtleties in word choice, idiomatic expressions, or cultural references that may not translate directly. These minor adjustments can gently shift the tone or emotional resonance of the text without fundamentally altering its overall message. For example, when a translation substitutes a synonym, it may preserve the original context while subtly influencing the reader's interpretation. Such modifications demand that the translator apply careful judgment to ensure that the core essence of the text is maintained. This can be viewed in the following excerpt:

Excerpt (2) *Beloved* (1987)

ST

It was the memory of her and the honor that was her due that made him **walk straight-necked** into the yard of 124, although he heard its voices from the road. [p. 320]

TT

كانت ذكراها والجلال الذي تستحقه هما ما جعله يمشى مرفوع الرقبة وهو يدلف إلى فناء البيت رقم 124، على الرغم من أنه كان يسمع أصواته على الطريق [p. 291].

This excerpt describes Paul D.'s emotional state as he recalls Baby Suggs, whom he regarded as "the mountain to his sky" (Morrison, 1987, p. 320). The phrase "walked straight-necked" symbolizes pride, resilience, and self-confidence, reflecting his triumph over adversity. However, the translation fails to fully capture this nuance, resulting in a slight but meaningful change in the text's emotional impact. As Al-Masri (2009, p. 8) emphasizes, "cultural understanding during the process of translation is extremely essential, especially in the translation of literary texts, which require an effort on the part of the translator to retain the cultural information (reflected mostly in the figurative language) of the source text in the target text."



In short, the examples above illustrate the critical importance of semantic accuracy in translation. Whether the changes are significant or slight, they can profoundly affect the reader's understanding and emotional connection to the text. Translators must prioritize cultural sensitivity and contextual awareness to preserve the richness and depth of the original narrative.

## 2. Morphological Factors

The second subcomponent of the micro-level analysis is represented by morphological factors, which include gender and number agreement, are critical in translation, particularly in languages like Arabic, where grammatical rules are highly inflected. This section examines how mismatches in gender and number agreement between ST and TT can distort meaning and disrupt the grammatical integrity of the translated text. Through detailed analysis, we highlight the importance of adhering to morphological rules to ensure accuracy and coherence in translation.

### 2.1 Gender Agreement

The failure to account for contextual ambiguity in translation often leads to significant errors that compromise the quality of the TT. Context plays a decisive role in determining proper gender agreement particularly in languages like Arabic, where nouns are morphologically classified as masculine or feminine, requiring corresponding verb and pronoun alignment—a feature less stringent in English. A major issue arises when translators impose the source language's gender structure onto the Arabic TT, disregarding the target language's grammatical rules. This oversight results in subject-verb disagreement, where verbs fail to match their subjects in gender, disrupting syntactic coherence. Additionally, pronominal references may become ambiguous when context is ignored, further distorting meaning. Such errors stem from either a literal translation approach or insufficient familiarity with Arabic's morphological system. To ensure accuracy, translators must prioritize contextual analysis and strict adherence to target language gender conventions, as neglecting these aspects produces unnatural phrasing and undermines both linguistic fidelity and reader comprehension.

#### Excerpt (3) *The Bluest Eye* (1970)

ST

Suddenly Pecola bolted straight up, her eyes wide with terror. A whinnying sound came from her mouth. "What's the matter with you?" Frieda stood up too. Then we **both looked** where Pecola was staring. (p. 27)

TT

فجأة انسحبت بيكولا وعيناها مفتوحتان على  
سعتيها من الرعب، ثم صدر منها صوت أنين:  
(ما بك؟) وقفت فريدا أيضا. ثم نظر كلانا  
إلى الموضع الذي كانت تحديق فيه بيكولا. (p. 23)

This excerpt highlights another instance of gender agreement mismatch. The phrase “we both looked” is incorrectly translated as “نظر كلانا,” using a masculine referent instead of the appropriate feminine form “نظرت كلتانا.” Though this error does not distort the meaning, it indicates inaccuracy in rendering the meaning.

According to Ya'qoub (2009), Arabic grammar requires strict adherence to gender agreement, especially in verbs and pronouns. The correct translation should reflect the feminine referent to maintain grammatical accuracy and contextual relevance.

## 2.2 Number Agreement

Arabic employs a unique morphological system that includes singular, dual, and plural forms. The dual form is used specifically for pairs, while the plural refers to three or more entities. Verbs, nouns, and adjectives must agree in number with their subjects, as this agreement “affects the relating process and actions done to/by specific participants” (Hassan, 2014, p. 66).

### Excerpt (4) *Beloved* (1987)

#### ST

It made sense for a lot of reasons because in all of Baby's life, as well as Sethe's own, men and women **were moved** around like checkers. [p. 44]

#### TT

بدا هذا معقولا لأسباب كثيرة لأن الرجال والنساء في كل حياة بيبي، كما في حياة سيث نفسها، كان يحركون مثل أحجار لعبة الداما [p. 58].

The translation violates number agreement rules. The verb “كان” (was) is incorrectly used in its singular form, despite referring to the plural subject “الرجال والنساء” (men and women). The correct form should be “كانوا” to align with the plural subject.

Thus, there should be an agreement between the verb and its subject in terms of number, person, and gender. This oversight disrupts the grammatical structure and diminishes the text's clarity.

Morphological factors, particularly gender and number agreement, are essential for maintaining grammatical accuracy and coherence in translation. Errors in these areas can distort meaning and disrupt the reader's engagement with the text. Translators must prioritize adherence to morphological rules, ensuring that verbs, nouns, and adjectives align with their subjects in gender and number. By doing so, they can preserve the integrity and richness of the ST in the target language.

## 3. Syntactic Factors

Syntactic factors play a crucial role in translation, as they govern the arrangement of words and phrases to convey meaning clearly and coherently. Errors in syntax, such as ambiguity, tense misuse, or improper word order, can distort the intended message and disrupt the flow of the text. This section examines syntactic ambiguity and tense-related errors in translation, highlighting their impact on the TT's readability and acceptability.



### 3.1 Syntactic Ambiguity

Syntactic ambiguity occurs when sentence structure creates multiple possible interpretations, often due to literal translation that disregards target language norms. In literary translation, such ambiguity disrupts cohesion and readability, as seen in the Arabic translation of the novels studied.

#### Excerpt (5) *Beloved* (1987)

ST

Something privately shameful that **had seeped into a slit in her mind right behind the slap on her face and the circled cross**. [p. 120]

TT

شيئا مخزيا بصورة شخصية تسرب الى داخل شق في عقلها تماما خلف الصفحة على وجهها والصليب الذي تحيط به دائرة [p. 121].

The TT suffers from syntactic ambiguity due to a literal translation strategy, resulting in a lack of cohesion and coherence. The sentence structure is poorly organized, making it difficult for the TR to understand the intended meaning. The ambiguity arises from the illogical sequence of ideas, which deviates from the natural flow of Arabic syntax.

As Alduais (2012, p. 503) notes, "sentence structure in Arabic is entirely different from that in English." The translator should have restructured the sentence to align with Arabic syntactic norms, ensuring clarity and readability. Schaffner (1999, p. 2) emphasizes that the target-language text should "be identical to the SL-text in content, style, and effect, and to respect the rules and norms of the TL." Bassnett (1980) further supports this, stating that translators must "choose and order words appropriately to produce the correct tone" (cited in Jureczek, 2017, p. 140).

### 3.2 Tense

Tense errors in translation often result from a lack of understanding of the target language's grammatical rules. In Arabic, certain adverbs, such as "أبداً", are used exclusively with future tense verbs to indicate permanence or continuity. Misuse of such adverbs can lead to grammatical breaches and confusion.

#### Excerpt (6) *Beloved* (1987)

ST

You **ever** touch it?" [p. 64]  
"**Ever** go hungry?" [p. 281]  
Alone, undisguised, [...], he **never** stayed uncaught. [p. 511]  
[...] the tint that would make him pick up his **ever**-ready  
shotgun. [p. 427]

TT

هل لمستها أبدا؟ [p. 75]  
هل جعت أبدا؟ [p. 258]  
لم يبق أبدا بغير القبض عليه، لأنه كان وحيدا، [p. 446]  
تلك الرنة التي كانت لتجعله يلتقط بندقيته الجاهزة  
أبدا [p. 379].



In these excerpts, the translator misuses the adverb "أبدأ", which is reserved for future tense contexts in Arabic. This error violates Arabic grammatical rules, as "أبدأ" cannot be used in interrogative or past tense sentences. A more appropriate translation would replace "أبدأ" with alternatives such as "يوماً", "دائماً", or "قط", depending on the context.

#### 4. Stylistic Factors

Stylistic factors are pivotal in translation, embedding the nuances of language that enhance a text's aesthetic and emotional resonance (Ghazala, 2015). The rich tapestry of idiomatic expressions and culturally specific terms can profoundly influence how themes are conveyed and perceived across languages. This section delves into the challenges translators encounter when navigating idiomaticity and cultural specificity in Morrison's works. Through a close analysis of specific excerpts, it underscores the importance of maintaining stylistic integrity to preserve the original text's artistic quality and emotional depth.

##### 4.1 Idiomatic Expressions

Idiomatic expressions serve as linguistic threads, weaving together meanings that are often opaque when disassembled. Defined by Baker (1992, p. 63) as "frozen patterns of language," idioms resist straightforward interpretation and demand a nuanced understanding from translators. Husni and Newman (2016) further emphasize their cultural specificity, while Richards and Schmidt (2002) describe idioms as expressions functioning as cohesive units whose meanings elude direct translation (cited in Ali & Al-Rushaidi, 2016, p. 190). Thus, the translator must possess a keen sensitivity to these expressions to convey the intended aesthetic effect.

Morrison's STs are replete with idiomatic expressions that underscore major themes. However, the TT frequently falls short in capturing these subtleties, often due to an over-reliance on formal equivalence that obscures deeper meanings. Bassnett (2002, p. 82) likens a translator lacking appropriate strategies to "the driver of a Rolls who has no idea what makes the car move," highlighting the necessity for a nuanced approach to literary translation.

In the following excerpt, the treatment of idiomatic expressions illustrates this challenge.

#### Excerpt (7) *Beloved* (1987)

ST	TT
One of them with a number for a name said it would change his mind. [p. 398]	قال أحدهم يحمل رقما بدلا من أسم إنه قد يغير عقله. [p. 353]

In this case, the idiomatic expression "changing his mind" is rendered literally, leading to a comical and nonsensical translation. The intended shift in opinion implied by the author is lost, as the translator fails



to recognize the idiomatic context. This highlights the necessity for a target-bound equivalence to maintain the integrity of the original expression.

#### 4.2 Cultural-Specific Terms

Cultural-specific terms introduce another layer of complexity, often requiring translators to deftly navigate cultural distinctions.

##### Excerpt (8) *The Bluest Eye* (1970)

ST

A rustling noise in the bushes startled me, and turning toward it, I saw fascinated eyes in a **dough-white** face. (P. 30)

TT

أجفاني صوت خشخشة في وجه أبيض كالعجين. (P. 26)

In this excerpt, Morrison intricately portrays the beauty of a white woman, emphasizing her captivating eyes and fair complexion. However, the TT neglects this aesthetic quality, resulting in a distortion that fails to convey the original imagery. The phrase 'dough-white face' becomes 'وجه أبيض كالعجين', which lacks cultural resonance and may confuse readers. In Arabic, whiteness is often likened to the moon's radiance, offering a more evocative image.

As Bellos (2011, p. 68) notes, "the quality of a text is determined by the interplay of its stylistic dimensions", emphasizing the need for translators to maintain the aesthetic and cultural depth of the source material.

#### 4.3 Figurative Language

Figurative language is pivotal in literary expression, characterized by intentional departures from conventional word order or meaning to evoke vivid imagery and draw analogies (Holman, 1980). This linguistic device transforms ordinary statements into evocative narratives through similes, metaphors, personification, and hyperbole. While the ST employs these stylistic elements to enrich its themes, the TT often fails to preserve their aesthetic qualities, resulting in diminished impact.

##### 4.3.1 Simile

Simile, a literary device that explicitly compares two unlike entities using 'like' or 'as', serves as a decorative element in poetry and rhetoric (Freeborn, 1996). Effective translation of similes may involve strategies such as literal translation, substitution with a TL simile, reduction to sense, or omission (Alshammari, 2016). However, the translator of the TT under study appears unfamiliar with these strategies, as demonstrated in the following excerpt:

Excerpt (9) *The Bluest Eye* (1970)

ST

Deliberate, she thought, it must be deliberate, because the last color she remembered was the pink chips in the headstone of her baby girl. After that she became **as color conscious as a hen**. [p. 76]

TT

قالت لنفسها، هذا شيء متعمد، لابد أن يكون هذا متعمداً، لأن آخر لون تذكره كان الرقائق القرنفلية على شاهد قبر طفلتها الصغيرة. وبعد ذلك أصبحت واعية باللون مثل دجاجة. [p. 84]

The simile "as color conscious as a hen" may evoke confusion in the TR, as this comparison, while resonant in the source culture, may not translate effectively across cultural boundaries.

The examination of idiomatic expressions and cultural-specific terms reveals the intricate relationship between style and translation. A thoughtful approach that respects the original text's aesthetic qualities is essential for producing translations that resonate with their intended audience, preserving the emotional and thematic richness of the source material. By skillfully navigating these challenges, translators can ensure that their work achieves both accuracy and artistic integrity, allowing it to stand alongside the original text in terms of meaning and impact.

## 4.3.2 Metaphor

Metaphor stands as a powerful linguistic device that transcends its conventional role, functioning "outside its normal usage as determined by the code to obtain a rhetorical function" (Mansoor, 2017, p. 155). It creates an implicit identity between dissimilar entities, allowing for complex layers of meaning to emerge (Baldick, 2001, p. 153). The interpretation of metaphors is deeply rooted in cultural context, which poses particular challenges during translation. Unfortunately, the TT often falls short of uncovering the full impact of metaphors as they operate within the ST. From a technical perspective, metaphors populate the ST, intricately weaving the major themes of slavery, maternal love, and the supernatural. They are the very lifeblood of the narrative, guiding the reader toward deeper emotional and interpretive experiences. Through colors, trees, and numbers, Morrison illustrates the stark conflict between oppressor and oppressed, master and slave. However, the TT often loses this rich aesthetic quality due to stylistic and lexical missteps in translation.

Excerpt (10) *Beloved* (1987)

ST

The songs he knew from Georgia were **flat-headed nails for pounding and pounding and pounding**. [p. 79]

TT

كانت الأغنيات التي تعلمها من جورجيا مسامير ذات رءوس مفلطحة لطرقها وطرقها وطرقها. [p. 87]



In this instance, the repetitive imagery in the ST carries profound metaphorical weight, representing the resilience and suffering of Paul D during his harrowing experiences in a Georgia prison camp. The power of the songs is not merely in their melody but in their ability to sustain hope amidst dehumanization. They serve as a lifeline, allowing Paul D and his fellow prisoners to affirm their humanity amid systemic brutality.

However, the TT reduces this richness to a mundane visual of 'flat-headed nails,' stripping away the emotional and thematic layers inherent in the original expression. This literal rendering fails to capture the metaphor's essence, which is not about actual pounding but rather about the power of music to inspire endurance. The translation does not convey the same degree of understanding or aesthetic resonance that Morrison crafted.

Ultimately, the TT reader may find it challenging to grasp the intended meaning without acknowledging the text's aesthetic nature. The metaphorical richness of the ST is lost, rendering the translation less impactful. In essence, the TT reader is left with an expression clad in a worn-out garment, devoid of the vibrancy that the original text so artfully embodies.

## B. Macro-level criteria

These criteria assess the translation's holistic effectiveness, centered on four key aspects:

### 1. Language of Situation

The language of situation is essential in literature, as it shapes the context and environment in which characters operate. This concept encompasses the specific circumstances, settings, and interactions that reveal the intricacies of character relationships and the broader societal dynamics at play. Within the proposed model, the language of situation serves as a primary lens for analyzing the plot. It posits that the author's careful word choice and vivid descriptions in depicting situations are not merely decorative but are fundamental drivers of narrative progression.

#### 1.1 Plot

The interplay between language and plot is crucial in understanding the emotional and thematic depth of the writer's literary work. In *The Bluest Eye* (1970) and *Beloved* (1987), Morrison intricately weaves her narrative through vivid descriptions and poignant dialogue that encapsulate the complexities of identity, community, and love, particularly within the context of the African American experience.

This analysis explores how specific excerpts from the texts reveal the significance of language in shaping the plot and character dynamics. By examining both the original passages and their translations, we can see how choices in vocabulary and phrasing impact the portrayal of key themes, such as maternal love and the psychological effects of isolation.



This exploration highlights the necessity of preserving not just the content, but also the cultural distinctions embedded in the language to ensure that the profound messages of Morrison's work remain intact as seen in the following excerpt:

#### Excerpt (11)

ST

"Love is or it ain't. **Thin love ain't** love at all." [pp. 314-315]

TT

((الـحب كائن أو غير كائن. الحب المخفف ليس حبا على الاطلاق.)) [p. 286]

This excerpt crystallizes the novel's core theme of maternal love, where Sethe's declaration distinguishes between absolute, life-sustaining love and its diluted counterfeit. The original's rhetorical force lies in its stark binary "is or ain't" and the visceral metaphor of "thin" love—a term evoking emotional malnutrition. These linguistic choices structurally support the novel's exploration of how slavery corrodes even the most fundamental human bonds.

The translation, however, introduces semantic fractures that impede thematic progression:

1. Ontological Distraction: Rendering 'is' as 'كائن' (entity/being) imposes existential connotations absent in the original, diverting attention from the emotional urgency to abstract philosophy.
2. Metaphorical Collapse: 'مخفف' (diluted) reduces 'thin' to a chemical metaphor (like watered-down solutions), erasing the original's bodily imagery of emaciated affection.
3. Rhythmic Disruption: The Arabic version's syllabic imbalance ('كائن أو غير كائن' vs. the ST's terse cadence) softens the declarative force critical to Sethe's character voice. In this manner, the translator fails to produce the intended meaning effectively.

#### 1.2 Characterization

Characterization is a fundamental element in literature that shapes readers' understanding of characters and their relationships. It involves the techniques an author uses to create and develop characters, revealing their personalities, motivations, and emotional landscapes. Through various means—such as dialogue, actions, and descriptions—authors provide insight into the complexities of human behavior and relationships.

In Morrison's works, characterization plays a crucial role in exploring themes of identity, community, and the legacy of trauma. Morrison's characters are often multidimensional, reflecting the intricacies of their social and historical contexts. The emotional depth and richness of her characters not only drive the plot but also invite readers to engage with profound themes that resonate on multiple levels.



Understanding characterization is essential for appreciating the narrative's impact, as it allows readers to connect with the characters' experiences and struggles. This connection fosters a deeper engagement with the text and enhances the overall reading experience, making characterization a vital aspect of literary analysis. This can be examined in the following excerpt:

**Excerpt (12) *Beloved* (1987)**

ST

TT

**Denver** served them both. Washing, cooking, forcing, cajoling her mother to eat a little now and then. [p. 474]

كانت سيث تقوم على خدمتهما. تغسل، تطبخ، ترغم أمها وتتملقها لتأكل قليلا بين الحين والآخر، [p. 418]

In this excerpt, "Denver served them both. Washing, cooking, forcing, cajoling her mother to eat a little now and then," the translation inaccurately attributes these actions to Sethe. This critical error misidentifies the character responsible for these nurturing tasks, as it is Denver who is serving both Sethe and Beloved.

This mistake can lead to confusion for readers, affecting their understanding of the characters' dynamics and the emotional weight of their interactions. Denver's role as a caregiver is pivotal for showcasing her development and the complexities of her relationship with her mother and Beloved. By misattributing her actions, the translation diminishes the significance of Denver's nurturing behavior, which is essential for grasping her character's complexity.

## 2. Coherence & Cohesion

### 2.1 Coherence

Coherence ensures text unity through logical connections and meaningful flow (Zheng, 2009). It relies on sense continuity, enabling reader engagement (Hatim & Mason, 1997) and activated knowledge (Giurffre, 2017), and analyzes text structure and idea progression via cohesive devices (Fawcett, 1997). It reflects conceptual relations beneath surface structure (Baker, 2018) and requires logical organization (Munday, 2009). Unlike cohesion (explicit links), coherence deals with implied connections (Almanna, 2016).

Reinhart (1970) defines coherence through:

1. Connectedness: Semantic/grammatical ties between sentences.
2. Consistency: Absence of contradictory propositions.
3. Relevance: Text-context alignment (Wang, 2014).

The proposed model compares ST/TT coherence to assess how disruptions affect meaning interpretation using Reinhart (1970) concepts.

### a) Connectedness

Connectedness examines how sentences interlink grammatically and semantically in both ST and TT. This analysis focuses on textual discrepancies that disrupt coherence, particularly through lexical and syntactic mismatches.

In the TT, several semantically related English words were mistranslated, distorting textual harmony. Dictionary verification confirms these choices deviate from the original meaning, introducing unintended interpretations. Such lexical errors compromise both textual coherence and the reader's literary experience, as demonstrated in the following excerpt:

#### Excerpt (13) *Beloved* (1987)

ST	TT
Schoolteacher was teaching us things we couldn't learn. We all laughed about <b>that I didn't care nothing about the measuring string.</b> [pp. 365-366]	كان المدرس يعلمنا أشياء ليس بوسعنا أن نتعلمها. لم أكن أهتم قلامة ظفر بخيط قياس. كنا جميعا نضحك منه [p. 327]

The lexical construction of the second sentence in the TT of excerpt is crooked and as a result the sentence becomes ambiguous to the TT reader who can hardly make sense of this sentence. In his attempt to restructure the sentence, the TT author failed to realize the suitable lexical and syntactic means to make the sentence stand coherently.

If we assume that coherence is a mental phenomenon, then we could come to the conclusion that this mental phenomenon does not exist in this very excerpt. Said otherwise, the TT reader could capture nothing from this sentence as it does not relate to anything in his/her "external world, subject matter, personal experience, etc." (Almanna, 2016, p. 126).

In short, the connectedness of sentences should be maintained to avoid wrong lexical choices because cohesion can be damaged at some levels of the text, but coherence shall be maintained.

### b) Consistency

The concept of consistency as a second feature of coherence refers to the knowledge that can be activated in a text. If a text displays clear and related concepts and relationships then it shows consistency and thus, it is coherent. This would help the TT reader find a clear pragmatic interpretation of the TT. Based on this very feature, one can assume that coherence is all about consistency as it is responsible for the logical consistency of utterances, construction of meaning that affects the understanding of a text (Kostopoulou, 2007). The mismatch in this feature can be illustrated in the following excerpt:



Excerpt (14) *Beloved* (1987)

ST

He walks to the front door and opens it. It is stone quiet. In the place where once a shaft of sad red light had bathed him, locking him where he stood, is nothing. **A bleak and minus nothing.** More like absence, [pp. 514-515]

TT

يسير إلى الباب الأمامي ويفتحة. البيت هادئ تماماً. وفي المكان الذي غمرته فيه ذات مرة حزمة من ضوء أحمر حزين، يحبسها حيث يقف، لا شيء. لا شيء كئيبة ناقصة. أكثر شها بالغياب، [pp. 449-450]

In this excerpt, just as a number of others in the TT, the TT reader could have found himself/herself in front of texts that show no consistency that have impeded his/her interpretation of the text. These bold-faced expressions appear to be inconsistent to the TT as nothing can be inferred from them compared to those in the ST. The failure at this level, in fact, had lessened the beauty of the TT as it makes it less desirably readable.

c) **Relevance**

Relevance as the third feature of coherence is achieved when the TT reader can easily relate the TT to other sentences within the context and outside the context; how much the information produced is true and relevant to the world of the TT reader. In other words, relevance concerns how much this information carries meaningful and understandable content. This is, in fact, a pure cognitive process on the part of the text receiver (Hussain & Khuddro, 2014). Examples of mismatches in this feature can be illustrated in the following excerpt:

Excerpt (15) *Beloved* (1987)

ST

As small girl Sethe, she was unimpressed. As grown-up woman Sethe she was angry, but not certain at what. A mighty wish for Baby Suggs broke over her like surf. In the quiet **following its splash**, [p. 122]

TT

وكطفلة صغيرة لم تتأثر سيث. وكامرأة ناضجة كانت غاضبة، وإن لم تكن متأكدة مم. غمرتها رغبة هائلة في بيبي سجز كأنها موجة تتكسر على الشاطئ. ووسط الهدوء الذي تلا رشاشها، [p. 123]

Munday (2008, p. 80) asserts that "the TT must be translated in such a way that it is coherent for the TT receivers, given their circumstances and knowledge". Taken this point of view into consideration, one can assume that the TT of excerpt (15) is not relevant as the word 'رشاشها' gives no knowledge to the TT reader who might fail to relate it to his/her world of context even to the subject matter of the text. The TT author selected a word that is out of context. In other words, this word does not relate to the context, and it might take the TT reader far away to the idea of weapons.



## 2.2 Cohesion

Cohesion refers to the grammatical and lexical devices that create textual unity, forming "the conceptual or semantic network that glues the parts of a text into the whole" (Fawcett, 1997, p. 91). It operates through both syntactic structures, which organize surface-level text (Giurffre, 2017), and lexical elements that visibly connect words and phrases (Baker, 2018). Halliday and Hasan's (1976) seminal model identifies five key cohesive devices: reference (including pronouns and demonstratives), substitution/ellipsis, conjunctions, collocation, and lexical cohesion (through repetition, synonyms, or related terms). This analysis specifically examines translation mismatches in three critical areas—repetition, collocation, and reference—where the TT often fails to maintain the ST's cohesive integrity. By focusing on these elements, we can identify how disruptions in cohesion affect the overall textual flow and meaning in translated works.

### 2.2.1 Lexical differences

The lexical errors are caused by propositional content change, and decontextualizing the ST words as in the case of the translation of certain lexical items represented in the wrong choice of words such as collocations that result in a misinterpretation of the implied meaning intended by the ST author.

Some lexical mismatches are seen in the medium, because some conversational and lexical items were translated into less recognizable textual meanings. The ST presented a strong textual cohesion, mostly constructed through a wide use of repetitions which are used as means of connectivity, as a tool for emphasizing the ideas, and as means for drawing the reader's attention to what the ST author wanted to convey. This, however, has not been accomplished in the TT because of the TT author's misinterpretation and misrepresentation of these textual cohesion means.

In the ST, there is also a markedly frequent use of lexical repetition and grammatical parallelism as rhetorical means of foregrounding certain items. This helps to make the representation of the traumatic history of the ST rhetorically more effective and emotionally involved, as well as strongly cohesive. To the contrary, the TT has been deprived from all of these lexical features as discussed in the following:

### 2.2.2 Reiteration

Reiteration, defined as the use of redundant words to reinforce meaning (Shunnaq & Farghal, 1999), serves as a key cohesive device that binds texts together (Almanna, 2016). In Arabic, it manifests in two forms: lexical (synonyms, antonyms, hyponyms) and morphological (root/pattern repetition) (Dickens et al., 2017). Beyond structural cohesion, repetition fulfills rhetorical, emotional, and textual functions—enhancing persuasion, evoking emotions, and unifying discourse (Al-Khafaji, 2005; Jawad, 2009; Mohammed, 2016).

In the ST, repetition underscores themes like slavery and trauma through deliberate lexical reiteration. However, the TT often mishandles these repetitions, distorting meaning and weakening cohesion. Halliday



and Hasan (1976) categorize lexical cohesion into reiteration (synonyms, antonyms) and collocation (semantic word associations). The ST strategically employs synonyms to interlink themes, yet the TT frequently neglects this device, disrupting textual harmony. The following excerpt demonstrates how such failures compromise thematic integrity.

#### Excerpt (16) *Beloved*(1987)

ST

[...] while Amy looked in on **her juicy back**. [p. 159]

TT

[p.155]

This passage is related contextually and textually to other passages that describe the painful memoirs of Sethe as well as her sore past. Thus, the adjective 'juicy' could be understood with reference to previous passages that describe the tortured back of Sethe where the biting causes blood and pus. The wrong rendering of the word 'juicy' as 'عصاره' literally means juice does not go in line with the ST context and the previously mentioned references, where the reference is to the shape of a tree on the back of Sethe whose Amy called "chokecherry tree" (Morrison, 1987, p. 31). In this sense, it could indicate the tree and its branches that had been curved and caused purulence. Translating it in this inadequate way could confuse the TT reader, and blur his understanding of the TT. Moreover, it made the excerpt less expressive, less effective, and less communicative.

**2.2.3 Antonyms** are used in the ST as a cohesive device to link the major themes of the text together. Failing to employ them properly in the TT is a failure at the cohesion level. Consider how the TT author dealt with this device in the following excerpt:

#### Excerpt (17) *Beloved*(1987)

ST

Still no one else knew it, because it began inside. A flutter of a kind, in the chest, then the shoulder blades. It felt like rippling-- **gentle** at first and then **wild**. As though the further south they led him the more his blood, frozen like an ice pond for twenty years, began thawing, breaking into pieces that, once melted, had no choice but to swirl and eddy. [p. 206]

TT

رغم ذلك لم يعرف أحد آخر، لأنه بدأ من الداخل. نوع من الارتعاش في الصدر ثم في لحي الكتفين له إحساس التموج. رقيقاً في أول الأمر ثم حامى. كما لو كان الأمر أنهم كلما قادوه إلى مكان أبعد في الجنوب شرع دمه، المتجمد مثل بحيرة ثلجية عشرين عاماً، يذوب أكثر، يتكسر قطعاً ما أن تذوب حتى لا يعود لها اختيار إلا أن تدور وتلف كالدوامة. [pp. 195-96]



Antonyms are one of the cohesive devices that hold the parts of the above excerpt together. However, this device failed to function accurately in the TT as the two opposite adjectives 'gentle' and 'wild' were mistranslated by the TT author. The substantive adjective 'gentle' is translated into 'رقيق' whereas the adjective 'wild' is mistranslated into the word 'حامي' literally means 'hot' which makes the mental image deadening. Consequently, the TT author changed a gradable adjective in the ST into a non-gradable one in the TT. The text in this sense loses its cohesion property.

### 3. Pragmatic

While accuracy at the semantic and syntactic levels is a fundamental requirement of translation, it is often insufficient for capturing the full meaning of a text. The proposed model, therefore, covers the pragmatic aspect as a central macro-criterion for assessment. Pragmatics, which is concerned with the study of how language is used in context to convey intended meaning, moves beyond the literal word-for-word transfer to scrutinize how implicature, cultural presuppositions, authorial style, and communicative purpose are rendered in the TT. By prioritizing pragmatic equivalence, this model assesses whether the translation successfully activates the same contextual knowledge and inferential processes in the TT reader as the ST does for its original audience. Ultimately, a translation may be semantically 'correct' but pragmatically flawed, resulting in a loss of coherence, stylistic effect, or deeper narrative meaning.

#### Excerpt (18) *Beloved* (1987)

ST

TT

And afterward, beached and gobbling air, in the midst of **repulsion and personal shame**, [p. 501] وبعد ذلك، حين يصل إلى الشط ويجرع الهواء وسط نافورة وعاره الشخصي. [p. 439]

In this excerpt, a breakdown in pragmatic interpretation at the lexical level directly compromises textual coherence. The translator failed to correctly infer the intended meaning of key words. 'Gobbling' implies a grotesque, animalistic lack of grace, which is pragmatically weakened by the more neutral 'يجرع' (to gulp). The critical error is the mistranslation of 'repulsion' as 'نافورة' (fountain), which is a complete misinterpretation of the source lexeme. This error introduces a bizarre and illogical element (amidst a fountain) that is entirely inconsistent with the scene of being 'beached' and feeling 'shame.' For the TT reader, this inconsistency blocks the construction of a coherent mental model of the event, replacing the intended atmosphere of physical and emotional disgust with one of confusion.

### 4. Effect

The effectiveness of a translation hinges not only on the accuracy of the words but also on the preservation of emotional and thematic depth. In literary translation, the nuances embedded within the ST



must be carefully navigated to ensure that the TT resonates with the intended impact on the reader. This section examines a specific excerpt from Toni Morrison's work, highlighting how lexical choices can significantly influence the emotive quality of a text.

#### Excerpt (19) *Beloved* (1987)

ST

TT

Smile even, like a child caught dead with his hand in the jelly jar, and when you reached for the rope to tie him, well, even then you couldn't tell. [p. 285]

بل يتسمون، مثل طفل ضبط ويده في جرة الجيلي، وعندما تمتد يدك إلى الحبل لتربط، حسناً، حتى عندئذ لم تكن لتعرف. [p. 261]

In this excerpt, the ST employs rich imagery and emotional weight through the phrase 'caught dead with his hand in the jelly jar.' The adjective 'dead' serves to heighten the child's innocence and mischief, evoking a sense of playful transgression that resonates deeply with the reader. However, the TT omits this critical adjective, rendering the phrase as "caught with his hand in the jelly jar." This omission diminishes the expressive power of the sentence, transforming it into a more mundane statement devoid of the original's emotive resonance.

The lack of the adjective "dead" in the TT strips the text of its vividness and complexity, making it an ordinary observation rather than a moment rich with emotional implications. Such lexical omissions can significantly weaken the connection between the text and the reader, resulting in a translation that fails to evoke the intended feelings and imagery. This assessment illustrates the importance of careful lexical choices in preserving the artistic integrity and emotional depth of the original work.

#### Accuracy of Meaning

The proposed model for assessing the quality of English translated literary texts into Arabic represents a significant advancement in TQA, as it incorporates a comprehensive, two-tiered analysis of the key factors that influence both linguistic fidelity and literary integrity. To provide an overall assessment of the translation, the model adds a concluding component that links both levels of analysis, which is accuracy of meaning. As stated earlier, this component can be measured on a 5-point scale so as to yield objective assessment and discourage subjectivity in the assessment, which is required to produce objective evaluations (Bowker, 2000). Moreover, this component calls for the technique of inter-rater reliability, which can support the results of



qualitative analysis of Arabic translated texts. Due to time constraints, this quantitative analysis of the translations under investigation was not conducted.

The application of this model to Morrison's *Beloved* (1987), *محبوبة* (1989), *The Bluest Eye* (1970), and its Arabic counterpart, *العين الأكثر زرقة* (2010) demonstrates how translation choices at these micro and macro levels profoundly affect thematic progression and reader engagement. The analysis underscores that even slight alterations can lead to significant shifts in emotional impact and thematic clarity, reinforcing the role of the translator as a cultural mediator.

Therefore, a translation is deemed successful by this model when the totality of its parts achieves an accurate transmission of meaning that resonates with the same pragmatic force and literary integrity as the original, ensuring the work's impact is not just maintained, but authentically relived in the Arabic language.

## 7. Conclusion

This study has introduced a robust, two-tiered model for assessing English-to-Arabic literary translation, effectively bridging gaps in existing TQA frameworks. By integrating micro-level criteria (lexico-semantic, morphological, syntactic, and stylistic factors) with macro-level analysis (situational language, coherence, pragmatic and effect), the model offers a novel tool that balances linguistic precision with literary artistry. By integrating these two critical elements, the model provides a comprehensive framework for evaluating literary translations. The plot, as the narrative's core, shapes the progression of events and character development, while the setting establishes the contextual backdrop that influences thematic interpretation and reader engagement. This dual focus enriches the evaluative criteria, allowing for a more nuanced understanding of how various cultural and contextual factors interplay within the text.

The use of Delphi method to gain a consensus among experts fostered the feasibility and practicality of the proposed model that practitioners and researchers can utilize to ensure that literary translations not only convey the English text but authentically recreate its impact in the Arabic language.

Its application to the works of Morrison demonstrates that translational inaccuracies at the micro-level directly undermine macro-level elements like thematic clarity and emotional resonance. The analysis confirms that the ultimate measure of a translation's success is meaning accuracy—the synergistic result where all criteria converge to faithfully reconstruct the original's semantic and aesthetic content.

It not only provides academics and practitioners with more effective assessment tools but also enhances cross-cultural literary exchange by promoting translations that truly capture both the letter and spirit of their STs. As translation studies continue evolving in our increasingly interconnected world, such holistic approaches may prove essential for preserving literary art across linguistic boundaries. One further



dimension for verifying the feasibility of the proposed model can be by utilizing its qualitative and quantitative assessment factors through employing inter-rater reliability and a survey of reader response to arrive at qualitative and quantitative results. It is hoped that this model can be of help for translation teachers/trainers to enhance translation competence.

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