

A Contrastive Study of Conceptual Metaphors in Mahmoud Darwish's "*Forgotten As If You Never Were*"

By

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Abstract

This research explores how conceptual metaphors in Mahmoud Darwish's poem (*Forgotten As If You Never Were*) change or remain stable when تُنسَى، كأنك لم تكن translated into English. Based on Lakoff and Johnson's Conceptual Metaphor Theory (1980), the study treats metaphor not as decoration, but as a deep cognitive process that shapes human understanding. The problem this study tackles is how conceptual metaphors might shift or lose resonance when moving from Arabic into English.

The study sets out to answer two main questions: 1) What conceptual metaphors , " and how are these تُنسَى، كأنك لم تكن does Mahmoud Darwish employ in his poem " metaphors cognitively structured in the Arabic original? 2) How are these conceptual metaphors rendered into English translation, and what linguistic shifts occur during this process?

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To answer these questions, the study analyses Darwish's Arabic poem and its official English translation by Fady Joudah. It extracts metaphorical expressions, identifies the source and target domains, and compares how the metaphors are mapped in each language. The analysis focuses on metaphors related to memory, identity, existence, and freedom.

The findings show that while the core conceptual metaphors are generally preserved in translation, important shifts and subtle losses occur, especially with culturally rooted images. Some metaphors, such as *FORGETTING IS ERASURE OF EXISTENCE* and *LIFE IS A JOURNEY*, are carried over well into English. Others, particularly those tied to Palestinian identity and cultural memory, lose part of their emotional force due to differences between Arabic and English cultural contexts. This confirms that translation not only carries meaning but also reshapes how metaphors are felt and understood across languages.

1. Introduction

Metaphor is not only a linguistic embellishment; it is also a fundamental cognitive mechanism through which individuals conceptualize and interpret their experiences. According to Lakoff and Johnson's *Conceptual Metaphor Theory* (1980), "metaphors systematically structure how humans perceive abstract concepts by mapping them onto more concrete, physical domains."

This research investigates how conceptual metaphors embedded in Mahmoud Darwish's poem "*Forgotten As If You Never Were*" change or remain stable when translated from Arabic into English. Given the cognitive and cultural specificity of

metaphors, the potential loss, gain, or shift in meaning during translation is a core linguistic concern. The central issue is understanding the impact these translational shifts have on the original conceptual mappings and on the broader interpretive effects of Darwish's poetry in the target language.

The study will address the following questions: 1) What conceptual metaphors , " and how are these كَأَنَّكَ لَمْ تَكُنْ does Mahmoud Darwish employ in his poem " metaphors cognitively structured in the Arabic original? 2) How are these conceptual metaphors rendered into English translation, and what linguistic shifts occur during this process?

The researcher aims at: 1) Identifying and analyse the conceptual metaphors employed by Mahmoud Darwish in the original Arabic poem 2) Comparing these metaphors to their English translations, highlighting any significant linguistic and conceptual shifts.

It is hypothesised that: 1) Conceptual metaphors identified in the Arabic original may undergo significant modifications when translated into English due to linguistic and cultural differences. 2) Certain conceptual metaphors, particularly culturally embedded ones, may lose their cognitive resonance in translation, leading to a diminished emotional or conceptual impact in English.

This study will be limited to the analysis of the conceptual metaphors identified " and its official English كَأَنَّكَ لَمْ تَكُنْ within Mahmoud Darwish's poem " translation *"Forgotten As If You Never Were"* by Fady Joudah, published in *The Butterfly's Burden* (2007). The analysis will not generalize to Darwish's other works or broader poetic translation practices due to scope limitations.

This study offers insight into how metaphor shapes meaning across languages. By examining the translation of conceptual metaphors in Darwish's poem, This study highlights the cognitive and cultural challenges of conveying poetic imagery. The

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findings contribute to translation studies by showing how metaphor translation affects emotional depth, cultural complexities, and conceptual clarity.

2. Literature Review

2.1 Conceptual Metaphor Theory

Lakoff and Johnson (1980) first presented Conceptual Metaphor Theory (CMT), which contends that metaphor is a basic cognitive mechanism rather than only a linguistic phenomenon in their seminal book *Metaphors We Live By*. Lakoff and Johnson (1980) contend that human thought is essentially metaphorical, that people map abstract ideas onto more concrete experiences to help them to understand them. These conceptual analogues organise communication, cultural cognition, and logical thought.

Lakoff argues, first and foremost, that metaphors are a matter of thought and not just language. Our thinking is inherently metaphorical, and language is a medium through which this aspect of ourselves is expressed. A metaphor is more than just a rhetorical device; it is "a major and indispensable part of our ordinary, conventional way of conceptualizing the world". We can't speak or think about language and thought without certain metaphors (Lakoff 1993).

CMT defines metaphor as a cross-domain mapping across conceptual domains: "The word metaphor has come to mean 'a cross-domain mapping in the conceptual system'". One domain of our experience can be understood in terms of another. A typical example is the metaphor LOVE IS A JOURNEY. It maps travellers onto lovers, vehicles onto love relationships, and journeys onto events in a relationship.

These ontological correspondences form an abstract structure that may be expressed in various surface forms such as “Our relationship has hit a dead-end street” or “We’re stuck” (Lakoff 1993).

It is not necessary for the expression “Love is a journey” to appear in an actual utterance. The metaphor is a name of the mapping, which is realized through metaphorical expressions. If the core of this metaphor does not exist in language, Lakoff’s answer is that it exists in thought, in the realm of concepts

Metaphorical mappings are not arbitrary. The Invariance Principle states: “The image-schema structure of the source domain is projected onto the target domain in a way that is consistent with the inherent target domain structure” (Lakoff 1993: 245). This means that the cognitive structure of the source domain is preserved and mapped in a consistent way, and only those structures consistent with the target domain are projected. Mappings are thus asymmetrical and partial (Mácha, 2016).

To begin with, it must be clarified that CMT does not serve as a broad theory for understanding “figurative” language, since it does not apply to forms like irony, metonymy, or oxymora. CMT mainly addresses specific types of metaphor, particularly those where the target domain is implicit, such as in “I don’t see the main point of that paper,” which is based on “Knowing is seeing.” It does not necessarily cover others, like resemblance metaphors where both source and target domains are explicitly presented, as in “My job is a jail.” Nevertheless, there are proposals suggesting how CMT might explain certain resemblance metaphors, for example, interpreting “My job is a jail” through “Social restrictions are physical restrictions” (Gibbs, 2011).

Key contributions to CMT emerged in the 1980s through George Lakoff and Mark Johnson’s study of metaphor in everyday meaning making. Before their work, metaphor was mainly seen as a feature of language rather than a tool for structuring thought. Cognitive linguistics is based on the systematic identification

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of metaphors functioning as mental schemas, arguing that these are essentially conceptual relationships. Such mappings show how conceptual metaphors are firmly embedded in linguistic expressions and help organise human experience in a coherent way (Vicente, 2020).

CMT claims that human physical interaction with the surrounding environments informs conceptual metaphors. In this sense, thought is anchored in the human ability to perceive position, dimension, motion, and orientation, providing concrete mental forms to often intangible situations and experiences. The proposition of an embodied cognition challenges the Cartesian premise of a disembodied mind. In the opposite direction, CMT signals the significant role of the body and sensorimotor imagery schemas in cognition (Vicente, 2020).

2.2 Metaphor in Translation Studies

Conceptual asymmetries between source and target languages appear at every level of language and pose serious challenges for translators, demanding advanced skills. According to Lewandowska-Tomaszczyk (2010), interlingual translation requires a sequence of "re-conceptualisations" of the original message to render it appropriately in the target language. One significant example is the translation of conceptual metaphor. Conceptual metaphor theory views metaphors as "basic resources for thought processes in human society" rather than as mere ornaments (Schäffner, 2004: 1258).

Lakoff (1993: 203) states, "the locus of metaphor is not in language at all, but in the way we conceptualize one mental domain in terms of another." Mapping

between source and target domains is partial and asymmetrical, guided by ontological and epistemic correspondences. It involves primary metaphors, grounded in sensory-motor experience, and complex metaphors, which combine primary ones and show cultural variation. Complex conceptual metaphors are especially relevant in translation research (Lakoff, 1993).

Translation is shaped by its context and influenced by various factors. Some scholars distinguish between two kinds of meaning transfer in metaphor translation: mapping across conceptual domains and the translation of that mapping. This process has also been described as re-mapping. Early studies often focused on literal expressions of metaphor. Later work introduced more refined classifications. These include strategies such as translating a metaphor with the same metaphor, using a different metaphor, or rendering only the sense. Other procedures involve omitting the metaphor or reversing its function. One model proposes two stages in handling metaphor: first, analysing the metaphor and its function; then, selecting an appropriate translation strategy (Massey & Ehrensberger-Dow, 2017).

The field has moved toward empirical and descriptive approaches that integrate cognitive linguistics with product and process methods. Some researchers propose combining text-based and process-oriented perspectives, noting that conceptual metaphor theory fits well within process-focused studies. Although research on conceptual metaphor translation is still limited, related areas have received more attention. Studies have explored figurative language, grammatical metaphor, and the challenges involved in translation. Findings show that primary metaphors tend to be easier to understand. Greater difficulty arises when the source and target domains clash during re-mapping (Massey & Ehrensberger-Dow, 2017).

Massey's (2016) study, part of the Capturing Translation Processes project, examined how professionals, MA and BA students handle two complex metaphors. Results showed MA students fell between professionals and beginners in problem-

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solving and resource use, with experience and training playing key roles. The study demonstrated the feasibility of combining product and process data to investigate conceptual metaphor re-mapping in translation. Researchers continued with triangulated data from keystroke logs, RVPs, and texts by professionals and students translating into their L1.

Research on how translators actually re-map conceptual metaphors between languages is still new, but some related studies exist. Some researchers have used process-based methods to explore how people use figurative language and metaphors when being creative. These methods have also been used to study how translators understand, struggle with, and mentally process metaphorical language. One key finding is that "higher monitoring skills [...] are activated when (de)metaphorization operates..." during the translation of grammatical metaphors. In a think-aloud study, Tirkkonen-Condit found that the more the source and target domains clash, the harder the translation becomes. This can cause translators to get "stagnated to" the source-language domain. The findings show that translation works on the level of concepts, not just words (Massey & Ehrensberger-Dow, 2017).

2.3 Criticism

CMT has faced criticism regarding the lack of detail in its research methods and explicit criteria for how analyses can be conducted and replicated in a systematic way. Scepticism also exists about the explanatory value of the theory, particularly regarding the scientific criteria toward its falsification: A fundamental objection toward CMT comes from the admission that a metaphorical expression can be

linked to several conceptual metaphors and not only to a sole understanding. Also, the embodiment argument, proposing that conceptual metaphors have a sensorimotor basis attached to human biology, has been criticized for implying at the same time, on one hand, its universality and, on the other, a linguistic and cultural variability (Vicente, 2020).

3. Methodology

3.1 Data Description

The data for this study consists of Mahmoud Darwish's Arabic poem "تُنسى، كأنك لم تكن" and its official English translation "*Forgotten As If You Never Were*" by Fady Joudah, published in *The Butterfly's Burden* (2007). The poem is a free-verse elegy reflecting themes of memory, loss, exile, and personal identity. It employs dense metaphorical language, abstract imagery, and philosophical reflection, making it rich material for conceptual metaphor analysis.

Both the Arabic and English texts were extracted from the published collection, ensuring accuracy to the original literary form.

3.2 The Criteria for Selecting the Data

The poem was selected based on the following criteria:

1. The text contains a high frequency of conceptual metaphors, which are central to this study.
2. An official English translation by a recognised translator (Fady Joudah) is available, allowing for accurate comparison.
3. The poem reflects culturally specific experiences (e.g. exile, memory, identity) that offer insight into how metaphors function across languages.
4. Mahmoud Darwish is a major figure in Arabic literature. His work is often studied for its linguistic complexity and philosophical depth.

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3.3 The Model

The research adopts Conceptual Metaphor Theory (CMT) as outlined by Lakoff and Johnson (1980) and further refined by Kövecses (2010). According to CMT, a conceptual metaphor is a systematic set of correspondences between two domains of experience, where an abstract target domain is understood through a more concrete source domain. This mapping process forms the basis of metaphorical thought and language, influencing cognition and perception.

CMT asserts that metaphors are not simply linguistic expressions but are fundamental cognitive structures that shape how humans interpret their experiences. Kövecses explains that conceptual metaphors involve systematic mappings between a source domain (e.g., fire, journey, war) and a target domain (e.g., anger, life, argument). These mappings are guided by metaphorical inference (or entailment), where additional knowledge from the source domain extends to the target domain.

CMT also distinguishes between primary metaphors, which are grounded in bodily experience (e.g., intensity is heat), and complex metaphors, which result from multiple mappings interacting (e.g., life is a journey). Additionally, cultural variation in metaphor plays a key role in how different languages encode abstract concepts, affecting metaphor translation.

/ *Forgotten As If You Never Were*، كأنك لم تكن، تُنسَى، Thus, in analysing Mahmoud Darwish's "*Forgotten As If You Never Were*," the research examines how conceptual metaphors are structured in Arabic and whether they undergo shifts in translation.

3.4 Research Procedure

1. Extracting metaphorical expressions from both the original Arabic poem and its English translation.
2. Classifying source domains and their corresponding target domains in both languages.
3. Comparing systematic mappings in the Arabic text with their English counterparts to assess shifts, losses, or modifications in metaphorical meaning.
4. Evaluating the impact of translation on metaphorical entailments and whether conceptual metaphors maintain their cognitive and emotional resonance across languages.

4. Data Analysis

لم تكن This section provides a detailed analysis of Mahmoud Darwish's poem " (Forgotten As If You Never Were), focusing on conceptual metaphors using Conceptual Metaphor Theory (CMT) as formulated by Lakoff and Johnson and expanded by Kövecses. CMT explains that humans understand abstract concepts by relating them to more tangible, concrete experiences. By analysing the Arabic poem and its English translation, this study examines how Darwish uses metaphors to conceptualize forgetting, identity, existence, and artistic legacy, and whether these conceptual mappings remain stable or shift in translation.

4.1 The Analysis

Extract 1:

Darwish opens his poem with a powerful conceptualization of forgetting as erasure, linking it to violent and irreversible images:

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Arabic Original:

"تُنْسَى، كَأَنَّكَ لَمْ تَكُنْ

تُنْسَى كَمَصْرَعِ طَائِرٍ

ككَنِيسَةٍ مَهْجُورَةٍ تُنْسَى،

كحَبِّ عَابِرٍ

وَكوردَةٍ فِي اللَّيْلِ تُنْسَى"

English Translation:

"Forgotten, as if you never were.

Like a bird's violent death

like an abandoned church you'll be forgotten,

like a passing love

and a rose in the night . . . forgotten."

This passage sets forth the central conceptual metaphor FORGETTING IS ERASURE OF EXISTENCE. Darwish explicitly links forgetting with images of complete and irreversible obliteration. The target domain (forgetting) is abstract, while the source domains (violent death of a bird, abandoned church, transient love, and nocturnal rose) are all vividly concrete, sensory-rich, and emotionally charged. Each source domain intensifies the existential despair conveyed by forgetting. Darwish portrays forgetting not as a simple act of not remembering, but as absolute erasure, comparable to destruction, isolation, and disappearance.

Kövecses argues that conceptual metaphors often stem from embodied experiences, meaning that sensory experiences profoundly shape abstract " ("bird's violent death") activates *مصراع طائر* conceptualization. The poet's use of "

a specific physical image—violent death—drawing attention to fragility and " is culturally dense, suggesting not merely مصرع suddenness. The Arabic word " physical death but tragic demise, enhancing emotional intensity. In translation, the phrase “violent death” captures the brutality but may lose the subtle emotional depth tied to cultural tragedy inherent in the Arabic original.

Further, the image of an abandoned church evokes a complex domain of cultural and spiritual abandonment. The concrete domain (church) serves as a container symbolizing cultural memory, history, community, and spiritual significance. Being “forgotten like an abandoned church” thus conceptualizes memory and identity as structures once thriving and now empty, neglected, and silent. The English translation faithfully conveys abandonment but cannot entirely replicate the specific emotional and cultural implications that Arabic readers associate with sacred yet deserted places.

The images of "a passing love" and "a rose in the night", both images highlight brief moments of beauty quickly vanishing into oblivion. Love, already an abstract experience, is concretized through its fleetingness, metaphorically intensifying the experience of existential forgetting. Similarly, the metaphor “a rose in the night” visually symbolizes beauty obscured and lost to darkness, emphasizing vulnerability, transience, and forgottenness. In Arabic poetry, both love and flowers are common symbols of beauty that is destined to vanish. The translation preserves visual imagery and general metaphorical mappings; but slightly lose cultural meanings about temporary beauty and fleeting emotions commonly found in Arabic poetry.

Extract 2:

Darwish moves from personal forgetting to a broader reflection on poetic identity and legacy:

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Arabic Original:

"أنا للطريق... هناك من سَبَقْتُ خُطَاهُ خُطَايَ
مَنْ أُمْلَى رُؤَاةً عَلَى رُؤَايَ. هُنَاكَ مَنْ
نَثَرَ الْكَلَامَ عَلَى سَجِيَّتِهِ لِيَدْخُلَ فِي الْحِكَايَةِ
أَوْ يَضِيءَ لِمَنْ سِيَّاتِي بَعْدَهُ
أَثَرًا غَنَائِيًّا... وُحْدَسًا"

English Translation:

"I am for the road... There are those whose footsteps preceded mine,
those whose vision dictated mine. There are those
who scattered speech on their accord to enter the story
or to illuminate to others who will follow them
a lyrical trace... and a speculation."

This passage uses the metaphor LIFE IS A JOURNEY, a widely studied conceptual metaphor that structures how people understand movement through time and experience. Darwish describes life and poetic influence as a path where individuals follow predecessors and leave traces for others.

Mapping of Conceptual Domains:

- Life → A Road ("أنا للطريق")
- Poetic Influence → Footsteps ("هناك من سَبَقْتُ خُطَاهُ خُطَايَ")
- Words → Light ("يضيء لمن سيأتي بعده")

The source domain of "the road" symbolizes journeying, exile, and movement toward a visionary destination. In the Arabic cultural context, the road also evokes

themes of displacement and diasporic experiences, directly reflecting Darwish's own Palestinian identity and narrative. In translation, the metaphor persists conceptually yet undergoes subtle semantic shifts. While the English phrase "I am for the road" conveys general journeying, its cultural entailments of exile, political displacement, and diasporic longing in Palestinian experience might partially dissipate.

The metaphor of footsteps suggests that poetic influence is passed down like a trail " (his footsteps preceded mine) خُطَاةُ خُطَايَ left by travellers. The Arabic phrase " implies continuity, inheritance, and literary tradition. While the translation ("footsteps preceded mine") retains the literal meaning, it does not fully convey the cultural and poetic depth of the Arabic phrase, which suggests a collective historical movement rather than just individual influence.

Darwish also describes words as light, reinforcing the metaphor WORDS ARE " / "illuminate to others who will follow لَمَنْ سِيَأْتِي بَعْدَهُ ILLUMINATION (" them"). This metaphor suggests that poetry guides future generations, shaping their understanding and vision. The English translation maintains the metaphor's meaning, although "illuminate" might sound slightly more abstract than the Arabic "يضيء", which has a stronger physical and spiritual connotation of enlightenment.

Extract 3:

Later in the poem, Darwish explores the theme of poetic identity and marginalization:

Arabic Original:

"أَنَا مَلَكُ الصَّدَى .
لا عَرْشَ لي إِلَّا الْهَوَامِشُ ."

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English Translation:

"I am the king of echo.

My only throne is the margin."

Here, the poet explicitly states that he exists only as an echo and on the margins. This conceptual metaphor **IDENTITY IS ECHO** suggests that his voice is secondary, a reflection of something that came before.

" (king of echo) suggests a paradoxical existence—ruling over **مَلِكُ الصَّدى** In Arabic, " something intangible and dependent on another sound. The translation as "king of echo" is accurate but does not fully capture the Arabic cultural and poetic connotations of repetition, exile, and secondary existence.

This notion of marginality is reinforced metaphorically when Darwish declares: " ("My only throne is the margin"). This metaphor reinforces a **لا عَرْشَ لي إلاَّ الهوامش** sense of poetic and political displacement. Darwish, as a Palestinian poet, frequently wrote about exile, and this metaphor directly reflects his outsider status. Margins symbolise exclusion, minority voices, resistance, and creative freedom outside authoritative centres. As Kövecses notes, "states are locations / bounded regions," a metaphor that enables abstract concepts like identity or political status to be understood spatially. The translation retains the basic meaning but lacks the historical and emotional weight that the Arabic expression carries.

Extract 4:

As the poem progresses, Darwish deepens his discussion of memory and historical narrative. He suggests that his role as a poet is to recover and reawaken lost voices and forgotten experiences:

Arabic Original:

"رُبَّمَا نَسِيَ الْأَوَّلُ وَصَفَ
شَيْءٍ مَا، أَحْرَكْتُ فِيهِ ذَاكِرَةً وَحَسًّا
نُنْسَى، كَأَنَّكَ لَمْ تَكُنْ
خَبْرًا، وَلَا أَثَرًا... وَتُنْسَى"

English Translation:

"Perhaps the forefathers forgot to describe
something, I might nudge in it a memory and a sense
Forgotten, as if you never were
news, or a trace... forgotten."

This passage introduces the metaphor MEMORY IS ACTIVATION, reinforcing the idea that history and identity do not merely exist but must be deliberately revived. The poet sees himself as someone who reawakens forgotten truths, "nudging" memory into motion.

Mapping of Conceptual Domains:

- Remembering → Movement ("أَحْرَكْتُ فِيهِ ذَاكِرَةً")
- History → Physical Trace ("خَبْرًا، وَلَا أَثَرًا")

" presents memory as something physical that can be moved, أَحْرَكْتُ. The verb " reawakened, or reshaped, conveying active reanimation of memory. CMT suggests that "there is a correlation in experience between intensity and heat... when we engage in activities at a high intensity... our body develops body heat." This supports the metaphorical framing of remembering as an embodied, effortful act. Darwish equates memory with an object that requires activation. The translation "I

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might nudge" conveys part of this meaning but softens the intensity of the Arabic " (to stir/move) suggests تحريكverb. "Nudging" implies a slight movement, while " more deliberate, forceful engagement with memory.

The final two lines here reinforce the poem's dominant metaphor: FORGETTING IS NONEXISTENCE. Darwish writes that if something is forgotten, it is as if it never existed—not even as "news" or a "trace." This metaphor strongly suggests historical erasure, emphasizing the connection between memory, recorded history, and identity. In English, "news or a trace" accurately captures the literal meaning " of خبراً، ولا أثراً",

Extract 5:

In the final lines of the poem, Darwish presents a paradoxical conclusion: while he previously framed forgetting as erasure, he now suggests that it can also be a form of freedom:

Arabic Original:

"مَنْ سيقول شعراً في مديح حدائق المنفى،
أمام البيت، حراً من عبادة أمس،
حراً من كنياتي ومن لغتي، فأشهد
أنني حيٌّ
وحرٌّ
حين أنسى"

English Translation:

“Those who will recite eulogies to the gardens of exile,
in front of the house, free of worshipping yesterday,
free of my metonymy and my language, and only then
will I testify that I’m alive
and free
when I'm forgotten!”

Here, Darwish explicitly maps FREEDOM onto FORGETTING and poetic existence onto JOURNEYING. This extract presents a surprising reversal: after describing forgetting as destruction, Darwish now conceptualizes it as freedom. Also, the conceptual metaphor FREEDOM IS DETACHMENT FROM LANGUAGE AND HISTORY emerges powerfully. Kövecses explains that “more physical domains typically serve as source domains for more abstract targets,” enabling us to conceptualise freedom through embodied experiences like detachment or release. In Darwish’s poem, forgetting functions metaphorically as a kind of physical separation—from history, language, and self—reframed as existential liberation. Darwish suggests true freedom comes only through relinquishing linguistic and historical attachments. The metaphors concretize abstract ideas of liberation, emphasizing existential and creative independence through forgetting.

Mapping of Conceptual Domains:

- Forgetting → Freedom ("!حين أنسى")
- Memory & Language → Burden ("عبادة أمس" / "my language")

Darwish describes himself as "free of worshipping yesterday," indicating that memory, cultural heritage, and historical obligations can be restrictive. By rejecting attachment to the past, he paradoxically claims a new form of life and artistic independence.

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" ("free of my metonymy and my language") is حرّاً من كُنَايَاتِي وَمِنْ لُغَتِي The phrase " especially complex. Here, language is framed as both an identity and a limitation. " (metonymy) intricately symbolizes poetic language, indirectness, cultural كُنَايَاتِي identity, and historical allusions deeply embedded in Arabic poetic tradition. Saying he is free from metonymy suggests a departure from traditional poetic constraints. The translation adequately captures core metaphorical mappings; however, the deep cultural specificity embedded within Arabic metonymic practices and poetic traditions might slightly reduce its resonance for non-Arabic readers.

4.2 Discussion

The present study examines how Mahmoud Darwish's poem "Forgotten As If You Never Were" employs conceptual metaphors from a cognitive linguistic perspective and explores the various conceptual mappings associated with the experience of forgetting, identity, and freedom.

The results showed that by employing conceptual metaphors, Darwish could intensify and embody abstract notions such as erasure, marginalization, and liberation. As a result he opens the path for readers to grasp forgetting as an existential condition connected to death, displacement, and renewal rather than only as a cognitive lapse.

The study shows that conceptual metaphors are employed as cognitive tools to make abstract emotions tangible and accessible when confronted with challenging

thematic instances, that is, their aim is to define these complex experiences for the reader in a way that strengthens emotional engagement and clarifies existential struggles.

Furthermore, analysing conceptual metaphors within a literary context has a distinctive role, especially from a cognitive perspective since it clarifies the fundamental structures influencing poetic meaning. Linguistically, the study aims to offer a more thorough knowledge of the nature of metaphor and emphasises its function as an active cognitive tool that can be employed in both poetry and everyday communication. By Examining the several applications of conceptual metaphors, the study aims to enhance current knowledge about cross-cultural metaphorical thought and its challenges in translation.

Conclusion

This research has examined how conceptual metaphors within Mahmoud Darwish's poem " (*Forgotten As If You Never Were*) " *نسى، كأنك لم تكن* change or remain stable when translated from Arabic into English. Guided by Conceptual Metaphor Theory (CMT) as articulated by Lakoff and Johnson (1980) and expanded by Kövecses, the study systematically identified and analysed key conceptual metaphors, contrasted their mappings in Arabic and English, and evaluated the impact of translational shifts on cognitive, emotional, and cultural resonance.

Addressing the study's primary questions, the analysis revealed that Darwish extensively employs conceptual metaphors such as FORGETTING IS ERASURE OF EXISTENCE, LIFE IS A JOURNEY, and FORGETTING IS NONEXISTENCE. Each metaphor cognitively structures abstract concepts of memory, identity, and existential conditions through concrete, sensory-rich

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imagery—ranging from the violent death of a bird to an abandoned church, from ephemeral love to echoes and marginal spaces.

In response to the second research question concerning translational shifts, it was found that the English translation effectively preserved the core cognitive mappings of these metaphors. However, subtle linguistic shifts, semantic losses, and modifications occurred inevitably due to cultural specificity and linguistic differences. For example, metaphors grounded deeply in Palestinian cultural and historical contexts, such as references to exile ("المنفى"), marginality ("حداائق"), experienced reduced emotional intensity ("كناياتي"), or collective memory ("الهوامش") when translated into English.

These findings confirm the study's hypotheses: while conceptual metaphors generally maintain cognitive stability across translation, culturally specific metaphors face greater challenges in preserving their original emotional and cognitive resonance. The losses or shifts observed during translation show how cultural context shapes metaphorical meaning and highlight the complexity translators face when rendering poetic texts.

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