

Evaluation of Arabic-English Literary Translation Via Larson's Translation Quality Assessment

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تقييم الترجمة الادبية من العربية الى الانكليزية وفق نموذج لارسون لتقييم جودة الترجمة.

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Abstract

This paper attempts a comparative evaluation of two English versions of the text comprising an extract of a timeless classic of Arabic literature, *Children of Our Alley* (1959) written by Naguib Mahfouz against the background of the criteria of translation quality proposed by Mildred L. Larson in her model. The context of the source text (ST) is a heart-wrenching conversation of great intensity of emotions, familiar expressions, and bright pictures. The two translated texts (TTs) that are discussed include Peter Theroux (1981) and Philip Stewart (1996) translations. This study is based on qualitative, descriptive design, with the translation continuum (according to Larson, starting with literal to idiomatic) and the core quality criteria representing the attributes of accurateness, effectiveness, and naturalness developed by Larson being the subject of study. According to the findings, both of the more translations are accurate and clear enough to render the same fundamental meaning and the intensity of emotions, as they are present in the ST. The main difference however occurs in their compliance with the naturalness criteria. The translation of Theroux (TT1) is biased towards the idiomatic endpoint of the Larson continuum and makes use of very natural and culturally adequate idioms and phraseology of English language. On the other hand, the translation put forth by Stewart (TT2) will be more literal to modified literal towards the end and with more than usually lexical and grammatical features of the ST. Though precise and transparent, TT2 also fails on a few occasions to use more idiomatic English words, which makes it sound more unnatural than TT1. This analysis thus establishes that although the other two translations are respectable, Theroux translation qualifies as more superior than the other since it succeeds in being more natural and idiomatic to the extent that the translator approximates the ideal of an idiomatic translation as postulated by Larson. **Keywords:** Translation Quality Assessment, Larson's Model, Idiomatic Translation, Literary Translation, Naguib Mahfouz, Arabic-English Literary Translation.

الخلاصة

تحاول هذه الدراسة إجراء تقييم مقارنة لنسختين إنكليزيتين يتكونان من مقتطف كلاسيكي خالد من الأدب العربي، أطفال زقاقنا (١٩٥٩) كتبه نجيب محفوظ على خلفية معايير جودة الترجمة التي اقترحها ميلدريد. لارسون في نموذجها. سياق النص المصدر (ST) هو محادثة مفجعة ذات كثافة كبيرة من العواطف والتعبيرات المألوفة والصور المشوقة. يتضمن النصان المترجمان (TTs) اللذان تمت مناقشتها ترجمات بيتر ثيروكس (١٩٨١) وفيليب ستوارت (١٩٩٦). وتستند هذه الدراسة على التصميم النوعي والوصفي، مع استمرارية الترجمة (وفقاً للارسون، بدءاً من الحرفية إلى الاصطلاحية) ومعايير الجودة الأساسية التي تمثل سمات الدقة والفعالية والطبيعية التي طورها لارسون كونها موضوع الدراسة. ووفقاً للنتائج، فإن كلتا الترجمتين الدقيقتين والواضحتين بما يكفي لتقديم نفس المعنى الأساسي وشدة العواطف، كما هي موجودة في النص المصدر ومع ذلك يحدث الفرق الرئيسي في امتثالها لمعايير الطبيعة. ترجمة ثيروكس (TT1) متحيزة نحو نقطة النهاية الاصطلاحية لاستمرارية لارسون وتستخدم التعابير والعبارات الطبيعية جداً والمناسبة ثقافياً للغة الإنكليزية. من ناحية أخرى، ستكون الترجمة التي قدمها ستوارت (TT2) أكثر حرفية إلى حرفية معدلة في النهاية وبميزات معجمية ونحوية أكثر من المعتاد للنص المصدر على الرغم من الدقة والشفافية، إلا أن TT2 تفشل أيضاً في مناسبات قليلة في استخدام كلمات إنكليزية أكثر اصطلاحية، مما يجعلها تبدو غير طبيعية أكثر من TT1. وبالتالي يثبت هذا التحليل أنه على

الرغم من أن الترجمتين الأخريين مقبولتان، إلا أن ترجمة ثيوكس تعتبر أكثر تفوقاً من الأخرى لأنها تتجح في أن تكون أكثر طبيعية واصطلاحية إلى الحد الذي يقترب فيه المترجم من المثل الأعلى للترجمة الاصطلاحية كما افترض لارسون. الكلمات المفتاحية: تقييم جودة الترجمة، نموذج لارسون، الترجمة الأدبية، نجيب محفوظ، الترجمة الأدبية من العربية إلى الانكليزية.

1. Introduction

Translation, as a complicated task of cross-cultural communication, includes far from just the linguistic transfer of words but also the accurate conveyance of meaning, tone, and cultural context from a source language (SL) to a target language (TL). This complication is increased in the field of literary translation, where translators are required to reproduce aesthetic, emotional, and stylistic dimensions for the original text, with care to achieve the acceptability and events of the same effect within a cultural context. Accordingly, it presents insight into the effectiveness of different translation strategies and their impacts on the target audience, assessing the translations quality thus becomes essential. In the context of literary translation from Arabic to English, this study investigates the intricate topic of the quality of translation assessment (TQA), with a focus on a section from Naguib Mahfouz's seminal work *Children of Our Alley* (1959). The first Arab to obtain the Nobel Prize in Literature, Naguib Mahfouz is famous for his complex narrative construction and his philosophical depth, in addition to his mastery of the art of Arab prose, where he combines in his writings the simple dialogue style and classical literary forms. Translating a text that is rich in culture and context creates significant challenges, taxing that translators navigate linguistic, cultural, and stylistic complications. The selected passage from the novel "Children of Jabalawi" clearly highlights these challenges, as it abounds in idiomatic phrases, and relies on intense emotional dialogue and vibrant pictorial language, which requires the translator to conduct an in-depth and accurate analysis. This study is based on the Milder Larson model of assessing translation quality, as a methodological framework that allows for the systematic evaluation of translation. This model is based on what Larson put forward in her reference work *Meaning-Based Translation: A Guide to Language Parity* (1984, American University Press), in which he presented a rigorous practical methodology for evaluating translation quality. The model proposes a spectrum of translation styles ranging from "literal" translation to "idioms" translation, focussing on three main criteria for quality assessment: accuracy, clarity, and naturalness. (Larson, 1984, pp 17-20). This framework is particularly pertinent for literary texts, as it allows for an assessment of not only flexibility of semantic but also the crucial aspects of stylistic flexibility and cultural suitability in the target language. This research aims to provide a comparative analysis of two prominent English translations of selected excerpts from the works of Naguib Mahfouz, completed by Peter Therox (1981) and Philip Stewart (1996). The translators have made a very important contribution to making Mahfouz's work available to English-speaking readers, but their translation philosophies are often reflected in clear textual differences in their outputs. This study seeks to employ Larson's continuity and quality criteria in order to: (1) evaluate the levels of accuracy, clarity and naturalness achieved by each translation; (2) locate each translation on Larson's continuity from literal to idiomatic translation; and (3) provide a comparative assessment of the overall quality of both translations, highlighting the strengths and shortcomings of each approach when dealing with composite literary prose. Through this comprehensive analysis, the study aspires to contribute to the ongoing academic debate on the evaluation of translation quality in literary studies, as well as to provide applied insights on the use of theoretical models in the evaluation of translated narrative texts.

2. Theoretical Background and Literature Review

2.1. Introduction

Translation quality assessment (TQA) is one of the central and complex areas in translation studies, as it is concerned with measuring the accuracy, effectiveness and suitability of the translated text. The importance of this field stems from its extensive practical applications in multiple fields, such as professional translation services, translator training, and academic research (House, 2015, p. 1). Over time, the evaluation of translation quality has seen a significant shift from descriptive approaches focussed on error monitoring and calculation to more comprehensive and practical analytical frameworks, taking into account the purpose of translation and the context in which it is accomplished (Williams, 2009, p.3). Early models focussed mainly on linguistic errors and their classification according to lexical, grammatical and structural aspects (Nord, 1997, p.12). However, the development of this research field led to the recognition that the quality of translation is not limited to linguistic accuracy only, but extends to cultural and pragmatic dimensions and the effectiveness of communication (Hatim & Mason, 1990, p.7). The tendency to adopt more comprehensive models to ensure the quality of translation reflects a fundamental and profound shift in the field of translation studies, as interest is

no longer limited to purely linguistic aspects, but rather towards a broader perspective that attaches importance to the cultural context and functional dimension of the translated text. (Snell-Hornby, 1988, p. 1). This transformation has resulted in the development of multiple frameworks and models to ensure translation quality, each of which provides a distinctive approach to evaluating translated works. The central debates in the field of translation quality assurance address fundamental issues, most notably the existing tension between subjectivity and objectivity, the importance of pre-defined criteria against intuitive analysis, in addition to the need to achieve a careful balance between the honesty of the source text and the acceptance of the target text (Brunit, 2000, pp. 169–182). While some models focus on the loyalty of the source text (ST), others prioritise the functions of the target text (TT) and its reception within its new cultural context (Reiss & Vermeer, 1984, p. 34). In this context, this study is based on the model of Mildred L. Larsson, which offers a balanced approach by emphasising meaning-based translation and assessing quality based on a set of integrated criteria

2.2. Mildred L. Larson's Model of Translation Quality Assessment

Mildred L. Larson's model, primarily expressed in her core work *Meaning-Based Translation: A Guide to Cross-Language Equivalence* (1984), provides a practical and accessible framework for assessing translation quality. Larson's approach is deeply rooted in the principle that translation is essentially about transferring meaning from the source language to the target language, rather than simply replacing words (Larson, 1984, p. 3). Arguing that a good translation should provoke the same response in the target audience as the original text did in its source audience, sympathise the communicative purpose of translation (Larson, 1984, p. 6).

Larson presents a **translation continuum** that ranges from "literal" to "idiomatic" (Larson, 1984, pp. 17-20).

- **Literal Translation:** This involves conveying word-for-word or phrase-for-phrase, and often closely adheres to the grammatical and lexical forms of the SL. although it may maintain some aspects of the ST structure, it often leads to unnatural or embarrassing wording in TL, which may obscure the original meaning or make it difficult to understand the text (Larson, 1984, p. 18). Because they fail to convey meaning normally and often lead to distortion. Larson considers purely literal translations as generally undesirable
- **Modified Literal Translation:** This type makes minor modifications to the literal translation to improve nature, but it still largely follows the structure of the source language.
- **Near Idiomatic Translation:** This translation is characterized by its closeness to natural formulations in the target language, but it may still carry some structural features of the source language.
- **Idiomatic Translation:** This is Larson's ideal perspective; idiomatic translation seeks to convey the meaning of the source text in the natural forms of the target language. This approach is based on achieving dynamic equivalence, so that the relationship the receptor and the message is substantially the same as that of the recipient with the translated message is similar to the relationship of the original recipients with the message in its SL. (Larson, 1984, p. 10). This approach also prioritizes natural and clarity, which makes the translation appear to be written starting with the TL.
- **Unduly Free Translation:** At its most extreme, this type exceeds the limits of idiomatic translation, as it may involve adding information not contained in the source text, deleting basic semantic elements, or distorting the intended meaning. This approach is undesirable, because it entails a violation of accuracy and the sacrifice of the principle of honesty in conveying meaning (Larson, 1984, p. 19).

Central to Larson's model are three core criteria for assessing translation quality:

1. **Accuracy:** This standard measures the extent to which the translation fulfils the meaning of the original text, by examining whether it included deletion, addition, distortion or mistransmission of the original message (Larson, 1984, p. 52). Accuracy is an essential element of translation, as any translation that does not succeed in conveying the correct meaning is fundamentally defective, regardless of the quality of its other characteristics.
2. **Clarity:** This indicates the degree of clarity of the translated text and ease of understanding by the target audience, as the clear translation is keen to stay away from confusing methods, complex sentences and mysterious expressions, ensuring that the message is transmitted smoothly and transparently and makes it easy to understand and available to the reader (Larson, 1984, p. 53).
3. **Naturalness:** This standard focusses on how smooth and original translation is in the target language. Natural translation depends on the use of appropriate idiomatic expressions, precise linguistic choices, and common grammatical structures in the target language, so that it appears to be written starting with that language. It also avoids what is known as "translation language", i.e. expensive and unusual formulations that often result from excessive literal translation (Larson, 1984, p. 54). Nature is an essential element in attracting the reader and ensuring that translation achieves its communicative function effectively.

Larsson's model is particularly useful in the practical evaluation of translation quality (TQA), as it provides clear and applicable criteria that can be systematically used in the evaluation of translated texts. It also goes beyond limiting the evaluation in counting minor partial errors, to focus on a more comprehensive assessment of the success of the translation in performing its communicative function in the target language. (Nida & Taber, 1969, p. 12).

2.3. Literature Review:

2.3.1. Translation Quality Assessment Models

The field of TQA is rich with different models and approaches, with each contributing unique perspectives on what constitutes a "good" translation. These models can be broadly categorized based on their focus: source-oriented, target-oriented, error-based, or comprehension.

2.3.2. Early and Linguistic-Oriented Models: Early TQA efforts were often mandatory and focused on linguistic equivalence. For examples, the comparative method of **Vinay and Darbelnet's (1958)**, defined translation procedures and their effects, and implicitly proposed criteria for evaluating deviations from direct translation (Vinay & Darbelnet, 1958, p. 25). But, their model described translation procedures more than a comprehensive framework of TQA.

2.3.3. Katharina Reiss's Text-Type Approach (1971): Reiss suggested that the appropriate translation method, and therefore the quality standards, depends on the type of text (Reiss, 1971, p. 17). She distinguished between media, expressive and operational texts, arguing that each requires a different translation strategy and, therefore different evaluation priorities. For example, accuracy is crucial for media texts, while stylistic equivalence is crucial for expressive texts. This was an important step towards contextualising TQA.

2.3.4. Juliane House's Model of Translation Quality Assessment (1977, revised 1997): House's model is a prominent example of a practical functional approach in translation studies, as it based on accurate linguistic analysis of both the ST and TT in order to determine their "profile" across various textual and situational dimensions (e.g., Field, Tenor, Mode). The aim is to assess whether the TT achieves "functional equivalence" with the ST. House also distinguishes between "overt" and "covert" translations, each with different quality expectations. An overt translation is clearly a translation, while a covert translation aims to function as an original in the target culture (House, 1997, p. 66). The model provides a systematic framework for detecting "mismatches" between the source text and target text files, indicating areas loss of quality in translation.

2.3.5. Gideon Toury's Descriptive Translation Studies (DTS) (1995): Toury contributed to the transfer of Translation Studies from the prescription orientation to the description orientation. His work is not a TQA model in the traditional sense of providing criteria for "goodness," but rather a framework for understanding *why* translations are the way they are. Toury introduced the concept of "norms" as socio-cultural constraints that influence the decisions of translator. (Toury, 1995, p. 54). These criteria were divided into initial criteria for translation policy, introductory criteria related to the choice between adequacy and acceptability, and operational criteria that include detailed textual decisions during the translation process. Toury believes that the quality of translation is measured by its conformity with the prevailing norms in the target culture, not based on the concept of absolute parity (Toury, 1995, p. 61). Although its presentation does not provide a direct evaluation model, it provides a basic theoretical framework for understanding the context in which translation quality is studied.

2.3.6. Christiane Nord's Functionalist Approach (1997): Based on the Reiss and Vermeer theory "Skopos theory", Nord emphasizes the pivotal role of a "translation brief" or "skopos" (purpose) in judging translation quality (Nord, 1997, p.29). According to Nord's vision, translation is appropriate for the purpose whenever the conditions and requirements specified in the translation summary are met. This means that errors are not absolute but specific in relation to the intended function of the translation. Her model includes ST analyzing, translation brief, and then comparing TT with brief to identify functional deficiencies.

2.3.7. Error Typologies: Many TQA models include detailed error typologies to categorize and quantify translation errors. These can range from linguistic errors (grammar, spelling, vocabulary) to functional errors (meaning distortion, cultural inappropriateness, failure to meet the brief). Examples include the **LISA QA Model** (Localization Industry Standards Association), which classifies errors by type (e.g., accuracy, terminology, fluency, style) and severity (critical, major, minor) (LISA, 2000, p. 5). Although useful for practical quality control, error-based models have been criticised for the possibility of reducing complex linguistic and cultural phenomena to a mere number, ignoring the overall impact of translation (Brunette, 2000, p. 175).

2.3.8. Holistic and User-Oriented Approaches: Contemporary trends in TQA highlighted the importance of holistic approach and taking user perceptive into account. In this context, models such as the **Dynamic Quality Framework (DQF)**, developed by TAUS (Translation Automation User Society), seek to measure quality more dynamic and context-sensitive way, often based on human feedback and post-editing efforts (TAUS, 2012, p.3). These models start from recognition that the concept of "quality" is not fixed, but is relative and is shape according to the needs and expectations of the end user.

2.3.9. Larson's Model in Context: Larson's *Meaning-Based Translation* (1984) is prominent model for clearly highlighting the extension between literal-to-idiomatic translation, with its primary focus on conveying meaning. Although it is not characterized by the explicit complexity that characterizes some linguistic-pragmatic models such as House model, nor by purely descriptive nature of the Toury model, Larson's model offers a solid framework for evaluating the quality of the translation in a way that is closely related to communicative translation. This model focusses directly on accuracy, clarity and naturalness as essential requirements for any successful translation, especially in literary contexts where emotional and aesthetic dimensions are of particular importance. Unlike models that are limited to monitoring error, Larson's criteria assume a qualitative evaluation that focusses on the efficiency of meaning transmission and how is received by the reader, in line with the communicative objectives purposes of the translation process. This approach intersects with Nida's concept of dynamic valence (Nida, 1964, p.159), both of which prioritize recipient response rather than strictly adherence to linguistic form. Accordingly, Larson's model is a suitable and effective framework for evaluating literary translations, as the main goal is to reproduce the effect of the original text and experience it in a new audience.

Conclusion of Theoretical Background: The complexity of the concept of "quality" in translation and its evaluation methods is reflected in the multiplicity of translation quality assessment (TQA) models. As each model offers a different vision that extends from linguistic accuracy to the functional dimension and cultural relevance. Larson's model is a well-established framework for evaluating literary translations, characterized by a clear hierarchy based on three basic criteria: accuracy, clarity, and naturalness. Therefore, this model is suitable for comparative analysis adopted in this research, because it allows a systematic evaluation of the success of translators in conveying the meaning while balancing the honesty of the source text and the nature of the target text.

3. Methodology

This study uses a qualitative, descriptive, and comparative approach to scrutinise the quality of translation, based on Mildred L. Larson's framework. The main text under study consists of a highly emotional individual part taken from Naguib Mahfouz's Arabic literary work, *Children of Gebelawi* (1959, p. 118), as the original text. The choice of this original text was motivated by its complex combination of spoken interactions, deep feelings, everyday expressions, and metaphorical expressions, which embodies a major obstacles for the translation. From two separate English-language for this particular part form the translated texts (TTs):

TT1: Peter Theroux's translation, published in 1981 (p. 88).

TT2: Philip Stewart's translation, published in 1996 (pp. 72-73).

The theoretical framework guiding the analysis is Mildred L. Larson's model of translation quality assessment, as expounded in her work *Meaning-Based Translation: A Guide to Cross-Language Equivalence* (1984). The framework of Larson is particularly suitable for the current research because it prioritises translation based on meaning and uses clear assessment criteria. The focus of the analysis is on three basic criteria for quality, which include a detailed comparison of each line of the source text and the corresponding target text:

1. **Accuracy:** This standard determines the extent to which the translated content reflects the meaning of the original source text. The review verifies that each part conveys the basic concept, supporting data, and exact elements correctly without omissions, additions, or significant changes.
2. **Clarity:** This aspect evaluates the ease and simplicity of understanding the target text. The assessment determines whether the wording of the translation is easy to understand, unambiguous, and free of strange phrasing or complicated structures that can make it difficult for the native English speaker to understand.

3. **Naturalness:** This requirement forms the cornerstone of the Larson's theory of idiomatic translation. The analysis decides whether the translated text flows smoothly and appears original, avoiding the abnormal feel of "translation," using regular English, making appropriate choices of words, and using common grammatical structures.

In addition to these criteria, the analysis places each translation along Larson's scale from literal to idiomatic. This involves assessing the extent to which each translator prioritises dynamically (idiomaticity) meaning transmission rather than maintaining a strict word-to-word (literal) similarity to the ST during its translation. Here are some distinct linguistic features that have been examined: presenting phrases full of strong emotion (e.g., "بصوت يشرق بالدمع").

- The rendering of idiomatic expressions (e.g., "أخلق شاربِي").
- The conveyance of metaphorical language (e.g., "حتى الحشرات المؤذية لا تيأس من العثور على ظل").
- The overall flow and stylistic choices in dialogue and narrative.

The results of this in-depth comparative assessment will highlight the strengths and weaknesses of each translation in terms of its compliance with Larson's quality standards, which contributes to providing a more accurate and comprehensive understanding of the level of translation quality in the field of fictional literature.

4. The Analysis of Peter Theroux's (TT1) and Philip Stewart's (TT2) Translations.

This section presents the comparative analysis of the translations of Peter Theroux's (TT1) and Philip Stewart's (TT2) from the selected excerpt from the book *Children of Our Alley*, by Naguib Mahfouz, and was evaluated in the light of the continuity of translation and the quality standards set by Mildred L. Larson: accuracy, clarity, and naturalness.

ST. Naguib Mahfouz's seminal novel, Children of Our Alley (1959).

-أنت تبكي وأنت الذى أخطأت.

فقال أدهم بصوت يشرق بالدمع:

-الخطأ كثير والعقاب كثير ولكن حتى الحشرات المؤذية لا تيأس من

العثور على ظل.

-هكذا تعلمنى الحكمة.

- عفوا عفوا، الحزن أرمقنى، والمرض ركبنى، حتى أغنامى مهددة

بالهلاك.

- جميل أن تخاف على أغنامك. (p. 118)

TT1. Peter Theroux's (1981)

"You are crying, but it is you who sinned".

"The sin was great and the punishment was great," said Adham in a voice choked with tears. "But even the lowest insects don't despair of finding some shade".

"So you are teaching me wisdom"!

"I'm sorry, I'm sorry, 'm plagued by grief and illness—even my sheep are threatened with ruin".

"That is very nice, that you are concerned for the sheep."

(P. 88)

TT2. Philip Stewart (1996)

- You cry, but you are the one who has done wrong. Adham said in a tearful voice:

-It was a great wrong but a great punishment. But even insects don't lose hope of finding shelter.

-And so you teach me wisdom?!

-Forgive me! Forgive me! I'm crushed by sorrow and illness. Even my sheep are threatened with destruction.

- How good of you to be afraid for your sheep. (P. 72-73)

4.1. Placement on Larson's Translation Continuum

• **TT1 (Peter Theroux, 1981): Idiomatic to Near Idiomatic** TT1 consistently demonstrates a strong inclination towards the idiomatic end of Larson's continuum. Theroux gives priority natural, flowing English, often employing recognized idioms and making subtle adaptations to enhance the impact and resonance of the text in the target language. The aims of this approach is dynamic equivalence, where the translation reads as if it were originally designed in English.

• **TT2 (Philip Stewart, 1996): Literal to Modified Literal** TT2 tends to commit more closely to the lexical choices and of the grammatical structures ST. Although it avoids being unduly free, Stewart's translation often keeps a more literal presentation, and sometimes missing opportunities for a more natural or idiomatic English phrasing. This places TT2 closer to the literal or modified literal end of Larson's continuum.

4.2. Assessment by Quality Criteria

The analysis of specific segments reveals the following:

4.2.1. Accuracy

- **"أنت تبكي وأنت الذي أخطأت" (You cry, and you are the one who erred/sinned.)**
 - **TT1:** "You are crying, but it is you who sinned." (Accurate. "Sinned" is strong and appropriate for the context; "but" reflects the implied contrast.)
 - **TT2:** "You cry, but you are the one who has done wrong." (Accurate. "Done wrong" is a correct rendering.)
 - **Finding:** Both translations achieve high accuracy in conveying the core accusation and emotional state.
- **"بصوت يشرق بالدمع" (in a voice gushing with tears / filled with tears.)**
 - **TT1:** "in a voice choked with tears." (Accurate with Minor Adaptation. "Choked with tears" is a highly idiomatic and vivid English expression, conveying the same emotional and physical manifestation as the original, representing a good functional equivalent.)
 - **TT2:** "in a tearful voice." (Accurate with Slight Loss. "Tearful voice" is accurate but less vivid and less idiomatic compared to TT1's choice, slightly diminishing the intensity of the original.)
 - **Finding:** Both are accurate, but TT1's choice is more natural and impactful.
- **"الخطأ كثير والعقاب كثير" (The error is much / great and the punishment is much / great.)**
 - **TT1:** "The sin was great and the punishment was great." (Accurate. "Great" for "كثير" is contextually perfect, and the past tense aligns with the statement about a past action.)
 - **TT2:** "It was a great wrong but a great punishment." (Accurate. "Great wrong" and "great punishment" are accurate, and "but" implies the necessary contrast.)
 - **Finding:** Both translations are highly accurate and effective in conveying the magnitude of the error and punishment.
- **"حتى الحشرات المؤذية لا تياس من العثور على ظل" (even harmful insects do not despair of finding a shadow/shade.)**
 - **TT1:** "But even the slightest insects don't despair of finding some shade." (Accurate with Simple Adaptation. "Lower insects" for "الحشرات المؤذية" (harmful insects) are a justified contextual adaptation, emphasising their modest status and proportional to the metaphor of search for consolation. "Some shade" for "ظل" is natural. This is a naturalizing adaptation that enhances clarity and naturalness without distorting the core meaning.)
 - **TT2:** "But even insects don't lose hope of finding shelter." (Accurate with Minor Omission. "Insects" omits "المؤذية" (harmful/annoying), which is a minor loss of detail. "Don't lose hope" for "لا تياس" is accurate. "Shelter" for "ظل" is a plausible interpretation, especially if the "shade" is for protection.)
 - **Finding:** Both maintain accuracy, but TT1's adaptation ("lowest insects") adds a layer of contextual nuance absent in TT2.
- **"هكذا تعلمني الحكمة" (Thus wisdom teaches me.)**
 - **TT1:** "So you are teaching me wisdom!" (Accurate. The rhetorical "So you are teaching me wisdom!" is an excellent and natural English way to express this ironic or sarcastic challenge.)
 - **TT2:** "And so you teach me wisdom!?" (Accurate. Effectively captures the rhetorical nature and tone.)
 - **Finding:** Both translations accurately capture the rhetorical question and underlying tone.
- **"عفوا عفوا، الحزن أرهقتي، والمرض ركبنى، حتى أغنامي مهددة بالهلاك" (Pardon, pardon, grief exhausted me, and illness mounted me, even my sheep are threatened with ruin/destruction.)**
 - **TT1:** "I'm sorry, I'm sorry, 'm plagued by grief and illness—even my sheep are threatened with ruin." (Accurate with Minor Adaptation. "I'm sorry, I'm sorry" for "عفوا عفوا" is perfect. "Plagued by grief and illness" is an excellent idiomatic translation for "الحزن أرهقتي، والمرض ركبنى" (grief exhausted me, illness mounted me), conveying the overwhelming burden. "Threatened with ruin" for "مهددة بالهلاك" is accurate.)
 - **TT2:** "Forgive me! Forgive me! I'm crushed by sorrow and illness. Even my sheep are threatened with destruction." (Accurate with Minor Adaptation. "Forgive me! Forgive me!" for "عفوا عفوا" is good. "Crushed by sorrow and illness" is a good functional equivalent for "الحزن أرهقتي، والمرض ركبنى" conveying the overwhelming burden. "Threatened with destruction" for "مهددة بالهلاك" is accurate.)
 - **Finding:** Both translations are highly accurate, with TT1 offering a slightly more idiomatic rendering of the physical burden.
- **"جميل أن تخاف على أغنامك" (It is beautiful that you fear for your sheep.)**

- **TT1:** "That is very nice, that you are concerned for the sheep." (Accurate with Minor Adaptation. "That is very nice" for "جميل" is a good functional equivalent in English for this slightly sarcastic or dismissive tone. "Concerned for the sheep" for "تخاف على أغنامك" is natural and accurate.)
- **TT2:** "How good of you to be afraid for your sheep." (Accurate with Minor Adaptation. "How good of you" for "جميل أن تخاف" is a good functional equivalent for the subtly sarcastic/dismissive tone. "Afraid for your sheep" is accurate.)
- *Finding:* Both translations accurately capture the sarcastic undertone.

4.2.2. Clarity

- **TT1:** No significant issues. The language is clear, consistently, free of any ambiguity, and is characterized by smooth flow. It is easy to track the dialogue, and the emotional context shows clearly and easily.
- **TT2:** No significant issues. The language is clear, simple and easy to understand, and not tainted by any confusion or ambiguity that may hinder the process of understanding.

4.2.3. Naturalness

- **TT1 : Highly Natural.** TT1 shows ultra-natural superior. Their lexical and structural choices, such as "choked with tears," "lowest insects," "plagued by grief and illness," and "concerned for the sheep," are characterized by a clear idiomatic character and appear authentic in English. The dialogue is characterized by smooth flow, and the nuances of the emotional state, from Adham's despair and contempt for the other character, convey clearly and strikingly, making the text seem like an original English work.
- **TT2 : Moderately Natural.** Despite the accuracy of TT2, some of its expressions appear to be less idiomatic compared to TT1. For example, the expression "in a tearful voice" is subtle and semantic, but it lacks the vitality conveyed by the expression "choked with tears," and the phrase "don't lose hope" performs the meaning functionally, but it is less natural and tradeable than "don't despair". In general, the text has an acceptable smoothness, but sometimes it lacks the stylistic refinement and smooth linguistic naturalization that characterized TT1, which in some places leads to the emergence of traces of the structure of the source language.

4.3. Findings

The findings clearly show that the translation of Peter Theroux's (TT1) and Philip Stewart's (TT2) are of high quality, as they succeeded in effectively conveying the deep meaning and intense emotional charge of the original Arabic source text. With minimal semantic distortion or loss of information, both translations show a high degree of accuracy, as they honestly convey the suffering of the character, the complexity of the dialogue, and the metaphorical language. In the same vein, the two translations achieve a high level of clarity, making the narrative understandable and smooth for the English-speaking public. However, the most prominent difference between the two translations is the extent to which each adheres to the norm of nature, a standard that is closely related to the position occupied by each translation on Larson's spectrum extending from literal to idiomology. The translation of Theroux (TT1) is characterized by its good use of idiom expressions, and this is reflected in his ability to choose natural and spontaneous English formulas such as "choked with tears", "plagued by grief and illness" and "concerned for the sheep". These choices have contributed to giving the translation a clear smoothness and authenticity, so that it appears closer to an authentic English literary text than to a translated work. For the target audience, this approach succeeds in conveying the emotional and stylistic impact of Najib Mahfouz's prose with a high degree of effectiveness. In contrast, Stewart's translation (TT2) tends to be a more literal approach, in some places up to literal translation modified according to the Larson classification. Despite its accuracy and clarity, its reliance on direct lexical compositions and equations, such as "in a sad voice" or "no hope of finding refuge," leads to the production of a less eloquent and profound meaning compared to the translation of TT1. Although these formulations remain understandable and somewhat natural, they sometimes lack the idiomatic richness and stylistic flourish that characterized Theroux's translation.

5. Conclusion

Mildred L. Larson's method was employed in this study for assessing translation quality to compare two English translations of a passage from the Children of Our Alley by Naguib Mahfouz. Larson's translation series (literal and idiomatic) and the three main quality criteria-accuracy, clarity, and naturalization- were the main concentration of the exam. The basic meaning and emotional core of the original text are precisely and clearly conveyed in both Philip Stewart's (TT2) and Peter Theroux's (TT1) translations. There are noticeable changes, omissions, and distortions in both translations, but a fundamental difference appears in the nature of these changes. Theroux's TT1 model is consistently inclined to idiomatic translation, using authentic English

expressions , structures and styles, giving it a higher degree of naturalness and enabling it effectively reproducing the emotional impact of the original text.

While its accuracy and clarity are more precise, the Stewart's TT2 model takes a more literal approach, resulting in less idiomatic and less natural English expressions.

In conclusion, although both translations are laudable attempts to transform Mahfouz's great literary work, Peter Theroux's version (TT1) stands out as generally better, mainly because it seems more natural idiomaticity. This study emphasises how important it is for literary translations to look natural, because it makes the reading experience much better and makes the translated piece more technically effective. The Larson's framework has proven to be effective in carefully examining these sensitive aspects, providing clear perspectives on how different translation methods affect the final quality and reception of literature.

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