

Research Article

Application of Juliane House's Translation Quality Assessment Model on Two Poems

Mohamed Saïd Raïhani*

King Fahd School of Translation, Abdelmalek Essaâdi University, Tangier, Morocco

Abstract

This paper, "Application of Juliane House's Translation Quality Assessment Model on Two Poems", investigates translation strategies through the theoretical lens of Juliane House's TQA model that offers unique insights by integrating linguistic, pragmatic, and cultural dimensions into a coherent analytical framework. This study examines how different textual genres demand distinct translation strategies and evaluates the effectiveness of these strategies through a detailed comparative analysis of source and target texts. Through a comparative study of source texts and target texts in Arabic, French, and English, it applies House's dimensions of register, genre, and language function to identify strengths, deviations, and errors in practical translations. Findings highlight how overt strategies prioritise foreignising fidelity to the source text, while covert strategies emphasise domestication for target-audience fluency. By applying House's TQA model to concrete examples of both overt and covert translations between English, French, and Arabic, the research demonstrates how translation choices are systematically influenced by genre conventions, register variables, and functional requirements. The findings reveal that successful translations depend not only on linguistic equivalence but also on appropriate strategic decisions regarding cultural filtering and contextual adaptation. Accordingly, this research contributes to translation studies by providing empirical validation of House's theoretical framework and offering practical guidelines for translators navigating the complex decision-making processes involved in cross-cultural and cross-linguistic communication.

Keywords

Overt Translation, Overt Error, Covert Translation, Covert Error, Cultural Filter, Translation Quality Assessment, Translation Quality, Text Function, Translation Strategy

1. Introduction

The field of translation studies has evolved significantly over recent decades, shifting from prescriptive approaches that focus primarily on linguistic equivalence toward more descriptive models that consider the complex interplay of linguistic, cultural, and pragmatic factors in translation. [1-4] At the heart of this evolution lies the concept of translation strategy—a systematic framework guiding translators' deci-

sions when transferring meaning across linguistic and cultural boundaries. [5-7].

This paper aims to explore translation strategies, with a particular emphasis on Juliane House's functionalist model and its central dichotomy: overt and covert translation approaches. Her TQA model offers a comprehensive framework for analysing translations by considering both the tex-

*Corresponding author: mohamed_said_raihani@yahoo.com (Mohamed Saïd Raïhani)

Received: 27 May 2025; **Accepted:** 10 June 2025; **Published:** 7 July 2025



tual profile of source texts and the cultural and situational contexts in which translations operate.

By investigating both overt and covert translation strategies in practice, this research addresses several key questions: How do translators determine the appropriate strategy for different text types? What factors influence the choice between overt and covert approaches? How can House's model be applied to assess translation quality? What specific challenges arise when translating between such linguistic systems and cultural traditions as English, French, and Arabic?

This paper closely examines the theoretical and practical dimensions of translation strategy, focusing on Juliane House's dichotomy between overt (visible, source-text-oriented) and covert (invisible, target-audience-oriented) translation. While overt translation preserves the foreignness of the original text (such as sacred or literary works), covert translation adapts the content to function autonomously in the target culture (e.g., advertisements or technical manuals).

This paper applies House's Translation Quality Assessment (TQA) model to analyse parallel texts, evaluating lexical, syntactic, and pragmatic choices in French-Arabic-English translations. Through contrastive analysis, the research identifies patterns of fidelity (conceptual accuracy and structural parallelism) and common pitfalls (e.g., erroneous lexical substitutions, poetic compression, etc.).

The significance of this study lies in its potential to bridge theoretical frameworks with practical applications, providing translators with systematic approaches to strategic decision-making while contributing to the ongoing theoretical discourse in translation studies. As global communication continues to intensify in importance, understanding the complex processes involved in effective translation becomes increasingly vital for facilitating meaningful cross-cultural exchange.

2. Translation Strategy

2.1. Mainstream Conception of Translation Strategy

The mainstream conception of translation strategy has been limited for a long time, in that a translation should be either word-for-word or sense-for-sense (literal or free), from the very first paragraph to the very last one in the same translation project. In the late 1970s of the twentieth century, German linguist and translation scholar Juliana House offered a different perspective on translation strategies. In Juliane House's viewpoint, a translation strategy should listen to the linguistic (structural, semantic, and textual) and functional vibrations of the source text, rather than imposing ready-made ones on it for the sake of pleasing a certain ideology, creed, or theory. From her, the decision of a translation strategy does not depend on the translator's mood but on the source text's structure and function. When the tendency in the source text leans towards localness, holiness, or frank-

ness, an overt translation strategy is the most suitable one to render the block of words or ideas being addressed. When the source text's function is more important than its form, covert translation is the appropriate strategy to employ. However, in both cases, the translation strategy used is not adopted in advance and imposed on the translation project.

2.2. Juliane House's Contribution

Conceptualised by Juliana House in her pioneering work, A Model for Translation Quality Assessment, overt and covert translations are introduced as two distinct and opposed poles of translation strategy. [8] These two poles, throughout history, have been given different names but the target meaning remained almost the same. In other words, Juliane House's conception of overt and covert translation strategy aligns with other nomenclatures by other translation scholars.

In the fifth century, Saint Jerome coined the terms "word-for-word translation" and "sense-for-sense translation." In 1813, Friedrich Schleiermacher coined the terms "alienating translation" and "naturalising translation". In 1958, Jean-Paul Vinay & Jean Darbelnet coined the terms "direct translation" and "oblique Translation". In 1977, Juliane House coined the terms "overt translation" and "covert translation". In 1980, Gideon Toury coined the terms "source-text oriented translation" and "target-text oriented translation". In 1995, Lawrence Venuti coined the terms "foreignization" and "domestication."

3. Covert & Overt Translation

3.1. Overt Translation Strategy: Some Precisions

Overt translation strategy prioritises the source text over the target text. It is both source-oriented and author-oriented, seeking faithfulness to the cultural context and the original author's voice. It prioritises source text, being tied to the original context. It is more akin to linguistic mention than to linguistic use, as it uses language structurally. This strategy is based on the idea that the source text belongs to its original author. That is, in this strategy, the source text is often considered a central reference; the translated text or speech is explicitly introduced as a pure translation in the target language, with no pretension to be an original text. This effort, undertaken during the translation process, is often accompanied by an expected awareness among the target readers that they are not reading the original directly.

An overt translation strategy is expected to preserve the source text's linguistic features and maintain the original cultural context, seeking specificity. It targets accuracy, preservation of historical contexts, and respect for sanctity and truth. This strategy acknowledges its foreign origins, retaining source-text cultural markers, and refrains from

using cultural filters or adapting cultural references to the target audience. That is, the translator's mediation is visible, and the text translated sounds as foreign as a translation. This foreignness is what contributes to building the cultural transparency that distinguishes an overt translation strategy.

Equivalence in overt translation strategy is primarily formal and focuses on denotation, prioritising direct, literal meaning over other levels. Functional equivalence takes a secondary role when overt translation is stalled and can no longer proceed. As far as the cultural filter is concerned, it is

reduced, in overt translation strategy, to its minimal levels, being either turned down or off.

3.2. Fields of Overt Translation Strategy

Typical applications of overt translation strategy include historical stories, political speeches, religious scriptures, sacred texts, legal documents, academic papers, literary classics, treaties, and contracts. That is, the documents that have strong cultural ties with the original context.

3.3. Example of Overt Translation Strategy: Translation of Shakespeare's Soliloquy

Table 1. *Shakespeare's Soliloquy Face-to-Face with Its Arabic Translation.*

The English Translation	Romanisation of the Text	The Original Arabic Text
<p>“To be, or not to be: that is the question: Whether 'tis nobler in the mind to suffer The slings and arrows of outrageous fortune, Or to take arms against a sea of troubles, And by opposing end them? To die: to sleep; No more; and by a sleep to say we end.” [9]</p>	<p>Akūn aw lā akūn? Tilka hiya al-Mas'alah, Ayyu alhālatayn amthalu binnafs? Ataḥammulu al-Rajm bilmaqāly' wtalaqqy Sihām alḥazḥi al'ankadi, Amm alnuhūhu limukāfahati al-ma'ā'ib wa-law kānat baḥran 'ujājan wa-ba'da Jahdi al-s'irā' iqāmatu ḥaddin dūnahā, al-mawt, Nawm, thumma lā Shay'</p>	<p>"أكون أو لا أكون؟ تلك هي المسألة، أيّ الحالتين أمثلُ بالنفس؟ أتَحْمَلُ الرجم بالمقاليع وتلقّي سهام الحظّ الأنكد، أم النهوض لمكافحة المصائب ولو كانت بحرًا عجاجًا وبعد جهد الصراع إقامة حدّ دونها، الموت، نوم، ثم لا شيء." [10]</p>

3.3.1. Analysis of ST & TT, Using House's Dimensions

Table 2. *Analysis of Source Text and Target Text of Shakespeare's Soliloquy.*

Dimension	ST (Arabic Back-Trans.)	TT (Original English)	Mismatches?
Field	Philosophical dilemma on existence	Same existential theme	No mismatches
Tenor	Meditative, despairing tone	Same contemplative tone	No mismatches
Mode	Poetic dramatic monologue	Identical dramatic verse	No mismatches
Social Attitude	Solemn, introspective	Same gravity	No mismatches
Participant Relationship	Self-debate (internal)	Same soliloquy style	No mismatches
Province	Classical literature	Shakespearean drama	No (same domain)
Genre	Poetic soliloquy	Poetic soliloquy	No mismatches
Function	Expressive (existential crisis)	Identical function	No mismatches

Source text analysis, as outlined in Juliane House's TQA model, is a crucial step in establishing the source-text profile. It targets analysing the following categories: genre, register, and language. At the level of genre category, the text is literary (dramatic monologue; soliloquy in a play).

At the level of register category, there is a need to analyse three dimensions that form the register of the text: Field,

tenor, and mode.

Field (subject matter and social action): Philosophical reflection on life, death, and suffering. Style is elevated, poetic, and rich in metaphor.

Tenor (relationship between writer and reader): Introspective, monologic; speaker reflecting on the personal, existential dilemma. The tone is formal, poetic, and philosophical.

Emotionality is high, characterised by deep introspection and a lyrical nature. The relationship is reflective, dramatic, direct, but contemplative.

Mode (medium/channel of communication): Written to be spoken; poetic form with rhetorical devices.

At the level of language category, the analysis focuses on syntax, lexis, and style.

Syntax, to start with, is highly compressed, metaphor-rich Early Modern English.

Regarding lexis, the wording used is archaic but poetic: "slings and arrows," "sea of troubles".

As far as style is concerned, the imagery used employs original and more compressed, suggestive metaphors.

Good use of poetic devices such as metaphor, rhetorical question, and meter (iambic pentameter).

As for ambiguity, English keeps it central to Shakespeare's style.

After ST analysis, the extraction of the ST function follows. At this level, analysis will focus on three metafunctions: ideational, interpersonal, and textual metafunctions (although Juliane House does not give much importance to the latter metafunction).

Ideational Function represents Hamlet's internal struggle with the fundamental question of existence, weighing the suffering of life against the unknown of death, and exploring potential actions and their consequences within his mind. The speaker, in the play, explores complex abstract ideas (existence, death, etc.). Content, imagery, metaphor, and clarity of experience successfully convey the same themes of suffering, alienation, and endurance. Representing Hamlet's internal deliberation on the fundamental choice between enduring the suffering of life and the unknown of death, exploring the potential relief and drawbacks of each.

Interpersonal Function expresses Hamlet's internal state of profound doubt and suffering, characterised by deep doubt, sadness, and vulnerability. This invites audience empathy and understanding of his isolated and burdened state, allowing them to witness his vulnerable contemplation of life and death, and fostering empathy for his existential dilemma. Tone and emotion, voice and position, and stylistic intensity show intimacy and empathy. Emotional depth is present, but the intensity is remarkable. The rhetorical weight of Hamlet's voice is high. The interpersonal function communicates inner turmoil and appeals to the audience's empathy.

Textual Function creates a coherent and impactful dramatic monologue in Arabic that resonates with an Arabic-speaking audience through a formal and literary register, employing appropriate linguistic structures and rhetorical devices to convey the central theme and its exploration within the context of the translated play. Cohesion, repetition, poetic rhythm, and lexical density are strong cohesive devices that maintain flow and structure.

In plain terms, the soliloquy functions as a crucial window into Hamlet's psyche, allowing the audience to grasp the depth of

his internal turmoil and the philosophical weight of his predicament, which drives his subsequent actions (or inaction).

After the first axis, ST analysis, there comes the second one, TT analysis, which follows the same steps as the former analysis, analysing the three categories: genre, field, and language.

The genre is literary—dramatic poetry, specifically monologue. It is fully preserved. The form and purpose (inner reflection in a play) remain intact. The Arabic retains the genre as a philosophical soliloquy expressing internal conflict, existential dread, and moral reasoning.

At the stage of register category, the three dimensions that form the register of the text should be analysed: Field, tenor, and mode.

Field (Subject matter and social action): Human suffering, decision, moral reasoning, death. Style is elevated, formal, and slightly explanatory. Subject matter and conceptual depth are retained.

Tenor (Relationship between writer and reader) is introspective and monologic. The speaker reflects on the personal, existential dilemma. Relationships are reflective, distant yet formal, speaking to oneself or the audience. The tone is formal, literary, and philosophical. Emotionality is moderate and slightly explanatory in translation.

Mode (Medium/channel of communication): Written to be spoken or performed. Poetic form with rhetorical devices. Monologic, stylised speech.

At the phase of language category, the analysis focuses on syntax, lexis, and style.

Syntax, in this soliloquy, is elevated, more explanatory and prosaic.

From a lexical perspective, the wording used is formal and literary, incorporating Arabic equivalents (e.g., "الرجم بالمقاليع").

On the style side of things, translated imagery is faithful but slightly more literal or clarified.

Pertaining to poetic devices, there is a good use of repetition, parallelism, and metaphor.

Ambiguity-wise, it is slightly reduced in the Arabic translation, which clarifies some abstract elements.

3.3.2. Assessing the Arabic Translation

In terms of the strengths of the translation, conceptual fidelity is confirmed to the extent to which the overall logic of the simulation is believable and makes sense to the learner.

"الرجم بالمقاليع" → "slings and arrows" (metaphor preserved).

"بحراً عجائباً" → "sea of troubles" (image kept intact).

As for structural parallelism, it maintains rhetorical questions and rhythmic pauses.

On the subject of philosophical nuances referring to the subtle distinctions, complexities, and shades of meaning within philosophical concepts, ideas, and arguments, and going beyond simplistic, black-and-white interpretations to appreciate the intricate layers of thought involved in philo-

sophical inquiry; the translation identifies the subtle distinctions, spots the shades of meaning, understands the complexity and depth of the original, while moving beyond dichotomies and avoiding all sorts of oversimplification.

"أَمْنٌ لِلنَّفْسِ" → "nobler for the soul" (captures "nobler in the mind").

However, minor deviations are spotted at the level of lexical choices:

"الْحُظُّ الْآتِكُ" → "outrageous fortune" (Arabic adds "misfortune," but meaning aligns).

"جَهْدُ الصَّرَاحِ" → "by opposing" (Arabic expands "struggle's effort" vs. English brevity).

In terms of poetic condensation, Arabic uses more words ("وَلَوْ كَانَتْ بَحْرًا عَجَاجًا" versus "sea of troubles"), but this is natural in Arabic poetic style.

Regarding the critical errors, or erroneous errors, there are no overt erroneous errors at the level of (grammar/syntax). All the choices are intentional and have clear interpretations.

Likewise, there are no covert erroneous errors or subtle mismatches affecting text function:

(1) The metaphorical load of "slings and arrows of outrageous fortune" is partially altered by choosing "الرَّجْمُ بِالْمَقَالِيعِ" (stoning), which carries religious and punitive connotations.

(2) The concise existentialism of "to sleep: no more" becomes more elaborated, losing some terse ambiguity.

These are not mistakes, but cultural and stylistic compromises. Still, they may affect the emotional rhythm and philosophical neutrality of the original.

3.3.3. Statement of Translation Quality

Using House's 2015 TQA model, the Arabic translation of Shakespeare's soliloquy can be assessed as a high-quality overt translation with a faithful rendering of core meanings, a skilful adaptation to Arabic literary and philosophical style, and minor covert mismatches in metaphorical tone and imagery. It successfully preserves the ideational and textual functions of the original, but it modifies the interpersonal function by adopting a more formal and explanatory tone. As such, its translation function aligns primarily with the original, but some dramatic and emotional force is compromised in favour of clarity and linguistic naturalness in Modern Standard Arabic.

Translation Type: Khalil Mutran's translation is overt. The Arabic text is marked as a translation of a culturally specific, highly canonical English literary text. The original is deeply embedded in the English literary tradition, and the translation is meant to be recognised as a rendering of Shakespeare's famous lines, not a naturally occurring Arabic text.

Critical errors or mismatches: No overt or covert erroneous errors. No grammatical, lexical, or pragmatic mismatches.

Overall Assessment: Very good literary rendering with cultural accommodation; minor tonal shifts.

4. Covert Translation Strategy

4.1. Covert Translation Strategy: Some Precisions

Covert translation is a target-oriented strategy as it prioritises the communicative function of the source text in the target language and target culture. It is target-audience and, accordingly, function-oriented. It favours fluency, naturalness, acceptability, and readability in the target language and the target culture. It is more akin to linguistic use than to linguistic mention, as it uses language functionally. [11]

Function, in covert translation strategy, is more important than form, and the reader's experience is more important than faithfulness to the source text. This is because the source text is intentionally adapted to fit the target text's norms and cater to the target audience's expectations, aiming for universality and a global audience. The faithfulness that covert translation strategy targets is different from the one that overt translation strategy aims at. Covert translation's faithfulness is directed to the cultural context, the interpersonal relationships between the participants within the text, and the original author's voice.

A covert translation strategy is based on the idea that a text, once produced, is no longer the original author's property. It is everybody's. It is the reader's, and, consequently, the translator's. Accordingly, source text can be naturalised in every culture to which the translation is rendered. It also introduces the text translated implicitly as if it were an original or a second original text in the target language. Here, the translator's presence is intended to be invisible, and the target reader may or may not be aware whether what they are reading is a translation or an original.

Equivalence in covert translation strategy is functional as it aims to produce an effect on the target audience that is similar to the way the source text exerted an impact on the source audience. Thus, it focuses on connotation, prioritising implied, context-bound meaning over the other levels. Formal equivalence at the levels of syntax, semantics, and pragmatics often comes in the second rank.

As far as the cultural filter is concerned, it is often applied significantly, being a distinctive feature of this strategy. Cultural filtering, in this context, refers to adapting both the form and content of the source text to the target audience within the target context. Once applied, the source text is rewritten to conform to the target text's cultural norms, meet the expectations of the target audience, and fulfil the intended function of the actants behind the translational project (e.g., agent, publisher).

4.2. Fields of Covert Translation Strategy & Cultural Filtering

4.2.1. Fields of Covert Translation Strategy

Some typical applications of covert translation strategy in-

clude TV shows, advertisements, children's literature, films, pop culture, marketing materials, instruction manuals, and business correspondence.

4.2.2. Covert Translation Strategy & Culture Filtering

In the late 1970s of the twentieth century, a new concept was introduced into translation studies, cultural filtering. This concept, the cultural filter, was designed from the very beginning to account for the adaptation of a source text to the target culture's norms and expectations. The pioneering idea behind its coinage was to incorporate linguistic and cultural elements, making the translation both more acceptable and more familiar to the target audience, while potentially altering the original's cultural specificity. The lady scholar behind this invention was the German linguist and translator Juliane House, who in 1977 launched the first version of her translation quality assessment model (TQA). This model was revisited in 1997 and 2015, with further advancements in the world of translation studies.

House introduces the cultural filter in her TQA model, along with her distinction between two translation strategies—overt and covert translation—and two types of errors

resulting from the chosen strategy: overt erroneous errors and covert erroneous errors. In overt translation strategy, the translation reveals itself as source-text oriented, foreignised and faithful to the original. However, in covert translation, the source text is adapted to the target environment (target culture, readership, norms, etc.) to the extent that it shows up as if it were originally written in the target language, brought up in the target culture, and that it requires the touch of a cultural filter to adjust its cultural, social, and pragmatic aspects before being baptised it as a second original.

To House, the cultural filter is "a means of capturing socio-cultural differences in expectation norms and stylistic conventions between source and target linguacultures". [12] It allows translators to "adapt the source text to target cultural norms". [13] Sometimes leading to shifts that may affect the original's function. However, to many other scholars, excessive cultural filtering may lead to domestication and loss of the source text's foreignness. This, House acknowledges, but she maintains that some degree of filtering is necessary for functional equivalence in covert translations. [14] Otherwise, it will come up colourless and tasteless, having been uprooted from its original culture and left to die.

4.3. Example of Covert Translation Strategy: Translation of M. Darwish's Poem

Table 3. Darwish's Poem Face-to-Face with Its English Translation.

The English Translation	Romanisation of the Text	The Original Arabic Text
"How alone you were, son of my mother, Son of more than one father, How alone you were. The wheat is bitter in the fields of others, The water is salty, The cloud is steel, this star is wounding, And upon you is to live, and to live, and to give your skin in exchange for a single olive. How alone you were." ¹	"Kam kunta waḥdak, yā bna ummī, Yā bna akthara min abi, Kam kunta waḥdak Alqamḥu murrūn fī ḥuqūli al'ākharīn Wālmā'u māliḥ Wālgḥaymu fūlādhun. wa-hādhā annjmu jāriḥ Wa'alayka an Taḥyā Wa-ann Taḥyā Wa-Ann to'ty muqābila ḥabbati al-zaytūn jildak Kam kunta waḥdak."	"كَمْ كُنْتُ وَحْدَكَ، يَا ابْنَ أُمِّي، يَا ابْنَ أَكْثَرَ مِنْ أَبِي، كَمْ كُنْتُ وَحْدَكَ الْقَمْحُ مُرٌّ فِي حُقُولِ الْآخَرِينَ وَالْمَاءُ مَالِحٌ وَالْغَيْمُ فَوَلَادٌ. وَهَذَا النُّجْمُ جَارِحٌ وَعَلَيْكَ أَنْ تَحْيَا وَأَنْ تَحْيَا وَأَنْ تَعْطِيَ مَقَابِلَ حَبَّةِ الزَّيْتُونِ جِلْدَكَ [15] كَمْ كُنْتُ وَحْدَكَ."

4.3.1. Analysis of ST & TT, Using House's Dimensions

Table 4. Analysis of Source Text and Target Text of Darwish's Poem.

Dimension	ST Analysis	TT Analysis	Mismatches?
Field (Topic)	Poetic lament on isolation, suffering, and endurance	Same theme preserved	No mismatches

1- Mohamed Saïd Rathani's Translation.

Dimension	ST Analysis	TT Analysis	Mismatches?
Tenor (Tone)	Intimate, melancholic, lyrical	Same emotional tone	No mismatches
Mode (Medium)	Poetic verse (free verse)	Poetic verse (free verse)	No mismatches
Social Attitude	Deeply personal, sorrowful	Same emotional weight	No mismatches
Participant Relationship	Speaker → "son" (familial, tragic)	Same implied bond	No mismatches
Province (Domain)	Lyrical poetry	Lyrical poetry	No mismatches
Genre	Free-verse lament	Free-verse lament	No mismatches
Function	Expressive (emotional outpouring)	Expressive (same effect)	No mismatches

Source text analysis, as outlined in Juliane House's TQA model, is a step towards constructing the source-text profile. It targets analysing genre, register, and language categories. From a genre perspective, the text belongs to modern free verse poetry, likely political or existential in theme. It is highly expressive, metaphorical, and personal.

At the stage of register category, an in-depth analysis will target the three dimensions that form the register of the text: Field, tenor, and mode.

Field: Describes alienation, hardship, struggle, sacrifice, and existential solitude in a hostile world. It likely addresses the Palestinian experience, but it is framed in symbolic, personal terms. The speaker addresses "you" as a figure that is both specific (Palestinian identity) and universal (the lonely struggler). The imagery ("bitter wheat", "salty water", "steel clouds", "wounding stars") depicts a world that is hostile and inhospitable.

Tenor: Intimate, emotive, evocative, lamenting, and empathetic. It is directed toward a "you" who is closely related — "son of my mother," which implies personal or national closeness and shared suffering. The speaker addresses someone (perhaps himself or a collective identity) in the second person. There is a sense of solidarity between speaker and addressee, but also a feeling of distance and helplessness, a recognition of the other's isolation.

Mode: Written to be read. It is poetic and highly metaphorical with rich imagery and repetition. The repetition and fragmentation give it an oral, chant-like quality.

At the level of language category, the analysis focuses on syntax, lexis, and style. Generally, the target text appears to convey the core denotative meaning of the Arabic poem, unveiling the strengths of the translation.

1. "كَمْ كُنْتُ وَحْدَكَ" is translated as "How alone you were," capturing the sense of solitude.
2. "يا ابن أُمِّي" as "son of my mother" and "يا ابن أكثر من أبٍ" as "Son of more than one father" maintain the direct address and the intriguing notion of multiple father figures (which could carry cultural or symbolic weight).
3. The descriptions of the wheat, water, cloud, and star are translated relatively directly, preserving the harsh imagery.

4. "وعليك أن تحيا وأن تحيا" is rendered as "And upon you is to live, and to live," conveying the sense of obligation and repetition.

5. "وأن تعطي مقابل حبة الزيتون جلدك" is translated as "and to give your skin in exchange for a single olive," retaining the powerful metaphor of sacrifice.

On the other hand, potential weaknesses are identified in terms of word choices, rhythm, and sound, as well as figurative meaning. **Word Choice and Connotation:** While the denotative meanings are largely preserved, the connotations of the English words may differ slightly from those in Arabic. For example, the specific emotional weight carried by "جارخ" (wounding) may not be fully captured by the term "wounding."

1. **Rhythm and Sound:** Poetry relies heavily on rhythm and sound patterns, which can be difficult to replicate in translation. The musicality and flow of the original Arabic are likely altered in the English. This can impact the emotional impact and the overall "feel" of the poem.
2. **Figurative Language Nuances:** The interpretation and impact of the metaphors ("bitter wheat," "salty water," "steel cloud," "wounding star," "giving your skin for an olive") might shift slightly for an English-speaking audience due to different cultural associations or linguistic structures. The starkness of the imagery might be perceived differently.
3. "وعليك أن تحيا وأن تحيا": While "And upon you is to live, and to live" captures the literal meaning, it might lack the same sense of forceful necessity or perhaps even a quiet determination that the Arabic conveys through its grammatical structure and the repetition of the verb.

After the ST analysis, the extraction of the ST function follows. In this regard, the analysis focuses on Ideational, interpersonal, and textual metafunctions.

Ideational Function: Mahmoud Darwish's poem is primarily ideational. It communicates the harshness of existence under oppression ("bitter wheat", "salty water", "steel clouds"), a deep emotional landscape of solitude and endurance ("How alone you were"), the sacrifice demanded by existence in this context ("and to give your skin in exchange for a single olive"). These images evoke internal pain and

external struggle, layered with national and existential meaning. The Ideational Function in this poem expresses suffering, alienation, and the bitterness of living in foreign or hostile conditions, as well as the psychological and existential burden of a person (or people) forced to survive in an unwelcoming world.

Interpersonal Function: The poem conveys a profound emotional connection with the addressee (shared experience, mourning, empathy), engaging the reader emotionally to share in the burden and testify to suffering. It is an internal monologue where the sender is himself the addressee, revealing existential loss. Though not directed at another character, it engages the audience intellectually and emotionally. It is heard in the speaker's empathic, accusatory tone. The repetition of "How alone you were" frames the addressee as isolated, possibly even abandoned, invoking pathos in the reader.

Textual Function: Darwish's poem, "In Praise of the High Shadow", is highly cohesive through repetition ("How alone you were") for emotional resonance, parallel structures and logical progression, strong imagery chains ("bitter wheat", "salty water", "steel clouds") that create poetic cohesion, and unify the passage.

Analysing the source text and drawing the source-text profile requires analysing the genre, register, and language category. In terms of genre category, the target text is preserved as a poem. The translation keeps the free verse style.

At the register category level, the field is preserved. It is still focused on alienation, bitterness, and struggle.

The tenor maintains a personal, mournful tone.

The mode is written to be read. It is poetic. the repetition and metaphors in the source text are mostly retained.

At the level of language category, very shining linguistic choices participated in highlighting the strengths of the English translation, including lexical accuracy:

- 1) "يا ابن أُمِّي" → "Son of my mother" (preserves intimacy, though unusual in English, it fits the poetic tone).
- 2) "القمح مرٌّ" → "The wheat is bitter" (maintains metaphor).
- 3) "هذا النجم جارح" → "This star is wounding" (strong poetic choice).

Equally, syntactic and rhythmic faithfulness are added to the strong points of the English translation:

- 1) The repetition "وَأَنْ تَحْيَا وَأَنْ تَحْيَا" → "and to live, and to live" effectively conveys despair.
- 2) The final line "كَمْ كُنْتُ وَحْدَكَ" → "How alone you were" retains the lament's circular structure.

On its part, the ST figurative language is retained:

- 1) "الغيَم فولاذٌ" → "The cloud is steel" (keeps the harsh, metallic imagery).
- 2) "تُعْطِي مَقَابِلَ حَبَّةِ الزَّيْتُونِ جُلْدَكَ" → "give your skin in exchange for a single olive" (powerful metaphor intact).

Hunting for erroneous errors in the translation, no overt or covert erroneous errors are spotted. There are only some minor deviations:

"ابن أكثر من أب" → "Son of more than one father"

Possible alternative: "Son of many fathers" (more poetic,

but current choice is still valid).

"عَلَيْكَ أَنْ تَحْيَا" → "Upon you is to live"

Slightly archaic phrasing; "You must live" might sound more natural, but the current choice fits the solemn tone.

4.3.2. Statement of Translation Quality

The English translation of Mahmoud Darwish's poem can be assessed as a high-quality covert translation, with a faithful rendering of core meanings, and no erroneous errors, although it does contend with minor covert mismatches. The translation successfully preserves the ideational, interpersonal, and textual functions of the original Arabic poem.

Ideational Function (content, imagery and metaphor, clarity of experience...): The core semantic content is preserved: the isolation, harsh environment, and sacrifice required to survive are all conveyed. These metaphors are mostly retained, although some have lost their cultural resonance. For example, "olive" retains symbolic value but may not evoke the same nationalist and agrarian context. More direct and accessible, but less layered. Some semantic richness is simplified for comprehension.

Interpersonal Function (tone and emotion, voice and position, stylistic intensity...): Personal tone is retained, especially through direct address ("son of my mother"), but it feels slightly more detached. The rhythm of Arabic conveys urgency and heartbreak more powerfully. The voice remains empathetic, but the intensity is reduced, partly due to the rhythm and partly due to the more straightforward emotional language. Repetition is retained, but emotional pacing is flat. Some lines like "to live, and to live" do maintain the echo of struggle.

Textual Function (cohesion and repetition, poetic rhythm, lexical density...): The structure is mostly mirrored, especially the repetition of "How alone you were," and the listing of harsh conditions. Poetic rhythm lacks the same auditory rhythm but compensates through line breaks and word choice. Still poetic, but less musically evocative. The use of literal translation preserves meaning, but some poetic compression is diluted. "Give your skin in exchange for a single olive" is powerful, but more explicit than metaphorical.

Fully functional equivalence: The TT perfectly mirrors the ST's ideational, interpersonal, and textual functions.

Translation type: The translation is covert. The poem does not require cultural adaptation; the target text reads naturally in English.

Critical errors or mismatches: No overt or covert erroneous errors. No grammatical, lexical, or pragmatic mismatches.

Overall Assessment: The English translation of Mahmoud Darwish's poem is flawless. It can serve as an example of literary translation that adheres to House's 2015 TQA model standards, preserving both meaning and emotional impact.

5. Conclusion

This paper, "Application of Juliane House's Translation Quality Assessment Model on Two Poems", has attempted to assess the quality of two translations of two different excerpts written in two languages from different cultural backgrounds. The first excerpt is the well-known Shakespearean soliloquy from Hamlet, translated into Arabic by Egyptian-Lebanese poet Khalil Mutran, whereas the second is Palestinian poet Mahmoud Darwish's "In Praise of the High Shadow," translated into English. The analysis followed in this paper echoes the steps introduced in Juliane House's 2015 TQA Model.

The first step in Juliane House's model is identifying the source-text profile, analysing the source-text genre (poem/play), register (field, tenor, mode), and extracting the three-dimensional source-text function. The first primary aspect of the second primary aspect of text function is ideational function (content, ideas, emotions, events, and whatever the text says about the external or internal world). The second primary aspect of the source-text function is the interpersonal function embodied in the relationships the author establishes with their readers through tone and emotion, voice and position, stylistic intensity, and other means. The third primary aspect of the source-text function is the textual function, or how the text is organised (cohesion, coherence, repetition, poetic rhythm, lexical density, etc.). However, Juliane House does not seem to care for the third aspect, the Textual aspect or textual function.

The second step in Juliane House's model is inherently comparative. Its primary mission is to track down the target text profile and compare it with the source-text profile defined in the previous step to check the appropriateness of the choice of the translation strategy adopted (overt texts requiring foreignness preservation or covert texts needing cultural adaptation) compared to the predefined source-text function, spot the overt and covert erroneous errors (clear mistakes) and the dimensional mismatches (subtle mismatches in function or cultural adaptation), and compare the source-text function with the target-text function, which is commonly called "translation quality", and announce the statement of translation quality.

Juliane House's 2015 TQA model, as applied in this paper, proved high-fidelity sensitivity in reading the text and understanding it, and showed high-quality efficiency in dealing with the context, deconstructing the former into its minor categories (cultural context and context of situation), dimensions (genre, register, language), and variables, analysing the active relationships within its sphere to make them measurable, analysable, understandable, and translatable at the same time. More important of all is the preservation of source-text metafunctions (ideational, interpersonal, textual). [16]

All these elements contributed to shaping a clear understanding of the two texts and producing a good translation that conveyed to the target language and culture the same

cultural and emotional effect embedded in the source text.

Abbreviations

SL	Source Text
TL	Target Text
TQA	Translation Quality Assessment

Author Contributions

Mohamed Saïd Raïhani is the sole author. The author read and approved the final manuscript.

Conflicts of Interest

The author declares no conflicts of interest.

Appendix

Mohamed Saïd Raïhani (in Arabic: **مُحَمَّد سَعِيد الرَّيْحَانِي**), born on December 23, 1968, is a member of the Moroccan Writers' Union. He is holder of PhD. in Translation from King Fahd Advanced School of Translation (Tangier/Morocco) in 2023, M. A. in Creative Writing (English Literature) from Lancaster University (United Kingdom) in 2017, M. A. in Translation, Communication & Journalism from King Fahd School of Translation (Tangier/Morocco) in 2015 and B. A. in English Literature from Abdelmalek Essaâdi University (Tâouan/Morocco) in 1991.

Works in English

Magically Yours! (Short Stories), 2023.

Translation Quality Assessment of the Arabic Versions of English Literature, 2025.

Translatable, Untranslatable, 2025.

Back to Innocence (Short Stories), in preparation.

The Three Keys (An Anthology of Moroccan New Short Story), in preparation.

Short Story Collections in Arabic

Waiting for the Morning (Short Stories), 2003.

Season of Migration to Anywhere (Short Stories), 2006.

Death of the Author (Short Stories), 2010.

A Dialogue between Two Generations (Short Stories) in 2011 (A collection of short stories co-authored with Moroccan short-story writer Driss Seghir).

Behind Every Great Man, There Are Dwarfs (Short Stories), 2012.

No to Violence (Short Stories), 2014.

Flash Fiction in Arabic

Fifty Short-Shorts: Theme of Freedom (Flash Fiction), 2014.

Fifty Short-Shorts: Theme of Dream (Flash Fiction), 2024.

Fifty Short-Shorts: Theme of Love (Flash Fiction), 2025.

Novels in Arabic

The Enemy of the Sun, the Clown Who Turned Out to Be

a Monster (Novel), 2012.

I Would Have Loved to Tell It All (A Photo-Autobiographical Novel), 2025.

The Star of Muawiya ibn Abi Sufyan (A Trilogy), in preparation.

When Lucifer Will Write His Autobiography (A Decalogy), in preparation.

Interviews in Arabic Collected in Published Books

Anas Filali, Raḥanyat (Forty Interviews with Mohamed Sa'īd Raḥani), Amman/Jordan: Sayel Publishing Co, 1st Ed., 2012.

Collective Work, With Raḥani in His Cultural Lodge (Thirty Interviews on Culture, Art & Literature with Mohamed Sa'īd Raḥani), Tāouan/Morocco: Maktabat Salma Al-Thaqafiah, 1st Ed., 2016.

References

- [1] Munday, Jeremy: *Introducing Translation Studies: Theories and Applications*. 4th Edition. (London/New York: Routledge, 2016). Pages 8-12.
- [2] Pym, Anthony: *Exploring Translation Theories*. 2nd Edition. (London/New York: Routledge, 2014). Pages 6-15.
- [3] Toury, Gideon: *Descriptive Translation Studies - and Beyond* (revised edition). (Amsterdam: John Benjamins Publishing Company, 2012). Pages 24-35.
- [4] Baker, Mona (Ed.): *Routledge Encyclopedia of Translation Studies*. (London/New York: Routledge, 2001). Pages 77-80.
- [5] Nord, Christiane: *Translating as a Purposeful Activity: Functional Approaches Explained*. 2nd edition. (London/New York: Routledge, 2018). Pages 62-78.
- [6] Venuti, Lawrence: *The Translator's Invisibility: A History of Translation*. 2nd edition. London/New York: Routledge, 2017). Pages 240-250.
- [7] Jean-Paul Vinay & Jean Darbelnet: *Comparative Stylistics of French and English: A Methodology for Translation*. (Amsterdam: John Benjamins Publishing Company, 1995). Pages 30-45.
- [8] House, Juliane: *Translation Quality Assessment: A Model Revisited*. (Tübingen: Gunter Narr., 1997). Pages 66-69.
- [9] Shakespeare, William: *Hamlet*. 1st edition. (London: Penguin Popular Classics, 1994). Page 81.
- [10] Shiksbīr, Wilyām: *Hamlet*. Tarjamat Khalīl Muṭrān..(Al-Qāhirah: Mu'assasat Hindāwī lil-ta'īīm wa-al-Thaqāfah, 2012).
- [11] House, Juliane: *A Model for Translation Quality Assessment*. (Tübingen: Gunter Narr, 1981). Pages 94-195.
- [12] House, Juliane: *Translation Quality Assessment: Past and Present*. (London: Routledge, 2015). Page 90.
- [13] House, Juliane: *Translation Quality Assessment: A Model Revisited*. (Tübingen: Gunter Narr Verlag, 1997). Page 70.
- [14] House, Juliane: *Translation as Communication Across Cultures*. (London/New York: Routledge, 2016). page 82.
- [15] Mahmoud Darwish: *Madīḥ al-zill al-‘Ālī* (= In Praise of the High Shadow). (Bayrūt: Dār al-‘Awdah, 1983).
- [16] Raīhani, Mohamed Saīd: *Assessment of the Quality of the Arabic Translation of English Literature*. First edition. 2025. Pages 33-62.