

الترجمة كإعادة كتابة : تقييم جودة الترجمة وسهولة القراءة في النسخة العربية من كتاب كلمات أبائي

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Translation as Rewriting: An of Translation Quality and Readability in the Arabic Version of Abai's Book of Words

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الملخص:

تتناول هذه الدراسة الترجمة العربية لكتاب الأقوال التي انجزها المترجم الليبي عبد السلام الغرياني، وتهدف الى تقييم جودة الترجمة العربية ومعاينة مقروئيتها وتحديد ما إذا كانت الترجمة بالمفهوم التقليدي للترجمة أم إعادة كتابة. على الرغم من الانتشار الواسع للكتاب بفضل ترجمته إلى العديد من اللغات مما اكسبه اعترافاً دولياً، فإنه لا توجد حتى الآن دراسة أكاديمية انكبت على تقييم النسخة العربية الأولى أو تحليل الاستراتيجيات التي اعتمدها المترجم، مما يترك فجوةً بحثيةً ملحوظة في مجال دراسات الترجمة.

ولمعالجة هذه الفجوة، تعمل هذه الدراسة على تقييم جودة الترجمة باستخدام نظرية الترجمة كإعادة كتابة لأندرية لوفيفير باعتبارها الإطار التحليلي الرئيس، مع الاستعانة بمنهج تقييم جودة الترجمة. وتشير النتائج إلى أن النسخة العربية تتسم بمستوى عال من الإبداع والتأويل، وتتمثل جودة الترجمة في سلاسة الأسلوب وانسيابية القراءة، وهو ما يدعم وصفها بالنموذج المثالي لإعادة الكتابة.

وتخلص الدراسة إلى التوصية على أن تعمل المؤسسات التعليمية والبحثية ودور النشر على انشاء هيئة موحدة تجمع بين جميع الجهود الفردية في الترجمة وممارساتها وذلك عبر إطار وطني منظم لأنشطة الترجمة في ليبيا.

الكلمات المفتاحية: كتاب الاقوال، الترجمة العربية، الترجمة إعادة كتابة، المقروئية، تقييم جودة الترجمة.

Abstract

This study explores the Arabic translation of *The Book of Words* (2015) by the Libyan translator Abdulsalam El-Geryani. It aims to evaluate the quality of the Arabic translation, examines its readability, and determines whether it functions primarily as translation or as rewriting. Although the book is widely translated and internationally recognized, no academic research to date has evaluated this first Arabic version or analyzed the translator's strategies, leaving a notable gap in translation studies.

To address this gap, the study assesses translation quality using André Lefevere's theory of rewriting as the main analytical framework, supported by a translation quality assessment approach. The findings indicate that the Arabic version is highly creative and interpretive, demonstrating quality through natural flow and smooth readability, which supports its characterization as rewriting.

The study concludes by recommending that educational and research institutions and publishers collaborate to establish a unified body that brings together all individual efforts in practice and translation studies. This should be supported through a structured national framework for translation activities in Libya.

Keywords: The Book of Words, Arabic translation, translation as rewriting, readability, translation quality assessment

Translation as Rewriting: An Assessment of Translation Quality and Readability in the Arabic Version of *Abai's Book of Words*

1. Introduction

Abai Qunanbaev's *Book of Words* eloquently presents an integrated picture of exploration and meditation by a profound mind grounded in a deep understanding of Kazakh society during the second half of the nineteenth century. No wonder it holds a distinctive place in Kazakh intellectual history; it combines philosophical reflection, ethical instruction, and social criticism, refined through careful observation of human character and collective life. Goodreads (ND) reviews, "This book is merely a small

part of the abundant Kazakh spiritual culture, and it has made its way into the series of ingenious works and rare literary monuments of humanity."

Abai is recognized as a writer whose works have acquired universal significance, forming part of the shared cultural heritage of humanity exactly like the great authors such as Shakespeare, Goethe, and Pushkin. This explains why today, his intellectual and literary legacy extends well beyond Kazakhstan.

The book is richly illuminated with wisdom and remarkable experience of a Muslim thinker, and it therefore deserves to be encountered by Arabic readers. Just as it has been made available to global audiences through translations into many languages, it can continue to speak to new readers and cultures. El-Geryani (2015: 7) concludes, "*Book of Words* has become one of the noblest and most significant works of serious writing in the history of world literature".

The first English translation was prepared by Richard McKane, with the collaboration of David Aitkyn, and published by El Bureau in Almaty, Kazakhstan, in 1995. Since its first publication in English, it has been translated into numerous languages around the world because of its enduring literary value and universal appeal.

The first Arabic translation was published in November 2015 as part of the Doha Magazine *Book Series* in Qatar, translated into Arabic by the Libyan translator Abdulsalam Al-Gharyani.

This translation is a brave initiative and a pioneering contribution to the Arabic translations of major works. It brings Arab readers to one of the most influential works of Central Asian literature. Goodreads (ND) "A marvelous book full of life wisdom, emotional turmoil and irrefutable truths from a great thinker, philosopher, poet and illuminator of the Kazakh Central Asian Culture in the 19th Century - Abay Kunanbayev."

This study examines the Arabic translation of *Book of Words* which its readability appears as a creative and interpretive act rather than a purely linguistic transfer. Alhasadi (2008: 46) confirms, "The value of what is translated depends fundamentally on its content, regardless of its adherence to any formal constraints or acoustic embellishments, starting from poetic meters and ending with the language of dialogue".

1.1 The Book and the Author

Book of Words or in Kazakh *Qara Sözder* is a collection of texts composed between 1890 and 1898 in the Kazakh language by Abai Kunanbayev (1845 – 1904) using the Arabic script. The complete work was first published in 1933, also in Kazakh but transferred to Latin alphabet, following Kazakhstan's official adoption of the Latin script in the late 1920s. Subsequently, after the Soviet Union introduced the Cyrillic alphabet for Kazakh, the work was republished in Cyrillic.

This fantastic authorship comprises of 45 short pieces of prose that shows great insights into life, faith, and death written word after word by illuminated mind of a great genius who passionately contemplates the way his people act and react individually and collectively in their community toward values of life. El-Nabi (2016) states, "The Book of Words reflects the peak of Abai's creative genius, attained during the 1880s".

The author, Abai (Ibrahim) Qunanbayuli was born in 1845 at the bottom of the Chingiz Mountain in the today's Abai district (former Karkaraly) located in Eastern Kazakhstan region (formerly the Semipalatinsk region).

He is a well-known Kazakh poet, a great thinker, composer, philosopher, educator, and the founder of written Kazakh literature, and its first classic. The heritage he left his nation is rich in songs and poems, translations and prose. His extensive knowledge of Russian, Arabic, and Persian enabled him to engage with diverse literary and philosophical traditions, and so he introduced Kazakh readers to the works of major Russian writers and poets, including Alexander Pushkin, Mikhail Lermontov, and Ivan Krylov, through his translations, many of which have become integral to Kazakhstan's literary heritage. He also translated selected works by European authors such as Friedrich Schiller, Johann Wolfgang von Goethe, and Lord Byron, thereby broadening the horizons of Kazakh literary culture.

Beyond his literary achievements, Abai was actively engaged in the public life of his community. He participated in local administration and sought to promote justice and fairness in the resolution of social and legal disputes.

1.2 The Translation and the Translator

The first Arabic translation of *Book of Words* (*Abai Kitab al-Aqwāl* اباي كتاب الأقوال) was achieved by a Libyan translator. This claim was stated by the writer Mamdouh al-Nabi in a long, detailed title for an article published in an Arab newspaper in 2016: "The First Arabic Translation of Book of Words by the Kazakh Writer Abai Qunanbai: Courageous Reflections on Society, Nature, Human Existence, and the Beauty of the World and Humanity."

This translation has made an important contribution to the Arabic literary and cultural corpora by making a globally acclaimed work accessible to Arabic readers. However, little, if any, serious scholarly attention has been devoted to Libya's contributions to the field of translation. This article by al-Nabi, for example, never mentions the translator, his efforts, or even his nationality. The word translator is referenced only once, without his name, in a citation of a passage taken from the translation's preface. The review otherwise focuses solely on presenting the author and the content of his book.

Based on extensive research into the history and development of the translation movement in Libya, Ibn Elhaj (2025) observes that the authorities responsible for cultural and educational sectors have overlooked the need to establish institutions that promote translation and provide support for professional translators. Consequently, this institutional deficiency has constrained the advancement of translation as both a scholarly discipline and a professional profession in Libya. He (2025:17) comments that "These negative attitudes toward the translation movement in our country (Libya) have led to several unfortunate outcomes, the first of which was a widespread ignorance of the movement and its output both locally and regionally in the Arab world, to the extent that some of our Arab brothers came to imagine that we are a culturally bankrupt nation, entirely barren in the field of translation". Highlighting translation statistics from 1833 to 2024, he noted that over 1,100 books have been translated by nearly 538 translators.

Against this context of limited scholarly engagement with translation in Libya, the Arabic translation of *Book of Words* was published without receiving the critical attention necessary to evaluate its quality or examine the translator's strategies for reconstructing the poetic, philosophical, and ideological dimensions of the source text. Lefevere (2017: 8) declares, "Translation is, of course, a rewriting of an original text. All rewritings, whatever their intention, reflect a certain ideology and a poetics...".

As a work that embodies its author's humanistic vision and commitment to moral education, intellectual enlightenment, and social reform through profound philosophical reflection, *Book of Words* presents considerable challenges for translation. El-Masudi (2013:91) confirms, "The language of literature is not technical; rather, it is an open-ended language characterized by richness of meaning and complexity".

Nevertheless, the Arabic version remains natural, fluent, and highly readable, reflecting the remarkable effort and translational competence of its translator, Abdulsalam El-Geryani.

Abdulsalam El-Geryani was born in Tripoli on 2 April 1965. He spent a long period of his life outside Libya, publishing many stories and studies that he translated from English in the newspaper as *Al Arab Al Aalami*, which is published in London, and in the journal *Al Hayat al Thaqafiyya* issued by the Ministry of Culture in Tunisia. He continues to publish many translated studies in the Libyan newspaper *Al Sabah*, issued by the General Authority for Libyan Press.

He also published numerous short stories in the cultural supplement of *Al Jamahiriya* issued by the Libyan Press Foundation, and in the newspaper *Oea* issued by *Al Ghad Media Services Company* in Libya, as well as in the magazine *Rowa Thakafia روى ثقافية* issued by the Libyan Ministry of Culture. He has other important works in translation from English into Arabic, including a collection of short stories from modern Finnish literature titled *Time Difference*, and his translation of the novel *Brooklyn* by the Irish writer Colm Tóibín, which won the Costa Prize for the novel and was later adapted into a film, as well as the novel *The Post Office Girl* by the Austrian writer Stefan Zweig. He also has a collection of short stories titled *Akebad*,

and another titled *Tales from the Grand Hotel*. This translation of Abai Book of Words is one of his distinctive works.

1.3 Research Gap

Despite the publication of the first Arabic translation of *Book of Words* in 2015, no scholarly study has examined this translation. Consequently, the translator's strategies, rewriting practices, and the quality of the Arabic translation remain unexplored. This study addresses this gap by evaluating the quality and readability of the Arabic translation using Lefevere's theory of rewriting, complemented by a translation quality assessment framework.

1.4 Research Question and Research Objective

The key research question guiding this study is: How did the translator rewrite *Book of Words* while recreating its content, form, and literary identity? To answer this question, several subordinate questions are addressed. These questions examine the procedures and strategies adopted by the translator to reproduce the work for Arabic readers, including the use of the preface and footnotes, as well as his choices of diction, syntax, and textual structure.

To achieve the objective of the study, the following sub-questions are proposed:

- What translation strategies did the translator employ in rewriting the text?
- How do the preface and footnotes contribute to the translator's rewriting of the work?
- How do the translator's choices of diction and syntactic structure reflect Lefevere's concept of translation as rewriting

In this context, the present study aims to assess the quality and the readability of the first Arabic translation of *Book of Words* by adopting Lefevere's Theory of Translation as Rewriting as its theoretical framework. By critically evaluating the translation through Lefevere's framework and Juliane House's Translation Quality Assessment (TQA) model, the study seeks to highlight the translator's achievement and contribute to the understanding of literary translation as an act of rewriting that mediates between cultures while reconstructing the artistic and ideological identity of the original work.

2. Theoretical Framework and Methodology

The study adopts a qualitative case-study design applying Andre Lefevere's Translation as Rewriting theory on purposively selected passages from the EN-AR pair of Abai the Book of Words to focus on areas most relevant to the research objective.

The theoretical perspective provides the foundation for investigating how the translator of Book of Words reconstructed the source text for Arabic readers through strategic choices in language, style, and paratextual elements. Applying Lefevere's Theory of Translation as Rewriting to the first Arabic translation of the work makes it possible to examine the translator's creative agency and to understand the translation as a process of cultural, ideological, and literary rewriting. House (2015: 14) states "translation is not only a linguistic act; it is also an act of communication across cultures.

To evaluate the quality of this rewriting and its readability, the study employs Juliane House's Translation Quality Assessment (TQA) model as its analytical framework. House (2015: 12) asserts "Translation quality assessment can thus be said to be at the heart of any theory of translation." House's model facilitates a systematic comparison between the source text and the target text by assessing their functional equivalence and identifying overt and covert translation shifts.

Combining Lefevere's theory with House's TQA model enables the study to examine not only how the translator rewrote the original work but also how successfully the Arabic translation reconstructs its literary voice, philosophical vision, aesthetic qualities, and stylistic features while producing a natural, fluent, and readable text for the target audience

2.1 The Translator 's Rewriting Strategies: Based on a Lefever Analysis

André Lefevere's Theory of Translation as Rewriting conceptualizes translation as a creative and interpretive process rather than a purely linguistic transfer. According to Lefevere (2017), every translation is a form of rewriting in which the translator reconstructs the source text through a series of conscious decisions shaped by linguistic, cultural, ideological, and literary considerations. Instead of reproducing the source text mechanically, translators inevitably reshape it by selecting lexical items, modifying

stylistic features, reorganizing textual structures, and employing paratextual elements such as prefaces, footnotes, and explanatory notes to make the text accessible and meaningful for the target audience. Lefevre (2017: 8) states, "Rewritings can introduce new concepts, new genres, new devices and the history of translation is the history also of literary innovation, of the shaping power of one culture upon another."

Consequently, translation is viewed as an act of mediation in which the translator assumes an active role in recreating the source text within the norms and expectations of the target culture. This perspective is particularly suitable for the present study because it provides a framework for identifying and analysing the rewriting strategies employed by the Arabic translator of *Book of Words*, including omission, addition, semantic modification, restructuring, and paratextual intervention. However, while Lefevre's theory explains how and why the translator rewrites the source text, it does not evaluate the quality or effectiveness of those interventions. Therefore, the study complements Lefevre's framework with House's (2015) Translation Quality Assessment model, which assesses the impact of the translator's rewriting on the target text by examining whether semantic, pragmatic, and textual meanings, as well as the communicative function of the source text, have been successfully preserved. In this way, Lefevre's theory serves to identify and interpret the translator's rewriting strategies, whereas House's model evaluates their consequences for translation quality and functional equivalence. Together, the two frameworks provide a comprehensive analytical approach to examining both the translator's decisions and the quality of the resulting Arabic translation.

Translation is a complex process involving both major and minor tasks that extend far beyond the mere transfer of words from one language into another. It is not concerned solely with conveying meaning. Translators become particularly aware of this complexity when they encounter a world shaped by different customs, beliefs, social practices, and all that the term *culture* encompasses, embedded within the boundaries of a source text. Ethelb (2019: 33) asserts, "Translators, as much as creative writers and politician, participate in the powerful acts that create knowledge and shape culture".

A good illustration of this challenge is *Book of Words* by Abai, which has been translated for readers belonging not merely to a different language community but also to a different cultural environment. As the translator explains in his preface, (2015:7) the book is: "A collection of the author's reflections on the meaning of life, the purpose of human existence, and the hardships endured by his people, conveyed in words filled with sorrow and anguish. Through these Words, he presents a profound and perceptive vision of his society, depicting the lives of his people while employing both sharp criticism and irony to expose the flaws that impede social progress".

The question, therefore, is how this collection of reflections can be transferred to Arab readers in a manner that ensures their comprehension and acceptance of the translated text while preserving the meditative, didactic, and philosophical nature of the source text, together with the author's distinctive voice and the elegance of his language.

Applying Lefevere's theory of translation as rewriting makes it possible to identify the translator's procedures through the following aspects:

The inclusion of a translator's preface

The use of footnotes.

The choice of vocabulary and grammatical structures.

The use of omission and addition.

These choices are examined through the title, the preface, and the footnotes, whereas the strategies of omission and addition are investigated through selected passages from the translated text as well as the choice of vocabulary and grammatical structures.

The translator employs an uncommon syntactic structure in Arabic by combining the author's name and the title of his book into a single phrase: أباي: كتاب الأقوال. Although this construction departs from conventional Arabic titling practices, it results in a seamless and natural expression that preserves the close association between the author and his work. The translation of the title also reflects a deliberate lexical choice. While the word (*words*) is commonly translated into Arabic as كلمات, the translator intentionally opts for الأقوال, the plural form of قول. This choice extends beyond literal equivalence, as الأقوال carries stronger philosophical and cultural connotations than كلمات. Rather than referring merely to isolated

words, it evokes wise sayings, reflections, and enduring maxims. Consequently, the Arabic title conveys the idea that the book is a collection of the author's accumulated wisdom and life experiences, distilled into concise reflections and offered to readers as moral and intellectual guidance.

The translator's lexical decision therefore reinforces both the denotative and the connotative dimensions of the title, making it more consistent with the philosophical nature of the original work.

Ibn Manzur (1990: 222) clarifies the word saying قول in Arabic "As for their metaphorical extension in naming beliefs and opinions (saying), it is because a belief is hidden and cannot be known except through a saying, or through what takes the place of a saying, such as the evidence of the circumstance. Thus, since they do not become manifest except through a saying, they were named a saying".

From Lefevere's perspective, the translator's choice of the title constitutes an act of rewriting rather than a literal translation. By replacing the more common equivalent الأقوال with كلمات, the translator reshapes the readers' expectations before they encounter the text itself. The new title foregrounds wisdom, reflection, and moral instruction rather than merely a collection of words. Consequently, the title functions as a paratextual intervention that reinterprets the work for Arab readers while preserving its spiritual tone.

According to Lefevere (2017), the translator's preface is a paratextual element and an integral part of the translator's rewriting because it guides readers' interpretation of the translated work and reveals the translator's ideological, cultural, and literary choices.

The preface to كتاب أبي الأقال represents an important translational choice because it addresses key questions likely to arise in the minds of Arab readers. It introduces the following aspects:

The broader European context surrounding the author's homeland, Kazakhstan.

Nineteenth-century Kazakhstan, the social environment into which the author was born.

The family in which he was raised, including his influential father, his affectionate mother who gave him the nickname "Abai," and his

grandmother, who enriched his mind with stories and wisdom while nurturing his appreciation of poetry and music.

His early education, during which he learned the principles of Islam and began to challenge traditional authority through his interest in poetry, world literature, and languages such as Russian, German, and Arabic.

His efforts to preserve the oral literature of his people by recording it in written form and his commitment to transmitting knowledge through translation.

His journey of self-discovery through profound experiences and personal struggles.

His vision for the future and his message to future generations, emphasizing faith, loyalty, education, and hard work.

His position within Kazakhstan and his subsequent international recognition, reflected in the widespread translation of his works.

Without this rich and informative preface, Arab readers might encounter difficulties in understanding, appreciating, or even accepting certain aspects of the text. Munday (2008:49) states "Translators' prefaces are a source of extensive information on the translation approach adopted in earlier centuries."

On the other hand, the translator does not address the following issues:

His translation strategy or philosophy.

His ideological or cultural mediation.

His expectations regarding readers' reception of the text.

His precise contribution to rewriting the work for Arab readers.

From the translator's perspective, these issues may be of greater interest to scholars than to general readers.

Like the preface, footnotes function as a significant paratextual element through which the translator rewrites the source text. By providing explanations, clarifications, and contextual information, they influence readers' interpretation of the translated work and reveal the translator's ideological, cultural, and literary decisions.

Whereas the source text contains thirty footnotes presented in a glossary at the end of the book, the target text adopts a different arrangement and includes a considerably smaller number of footnotes. This reduction can be

explained by the fact that many of the original notes clarify concepts that are already familiar to Arab Muslim readers. For example, there is little need to explain terms such as **Surah** (سورة), **Tariqah** (طريقة), or **Iman** (إيمان).

The footnotes in the target text are placed either at the bottom of the page or in parentheses immediately following the relevant expression. This arrangement allows readers to consult the explanation without interrupting the flow of reading. The target text contains ten footnotes, which can be classified into three categories:

Explanations of Kazakh proper names referring to household items, animals, beverages, or geographical regions.

Explanations of Kazakh lexical items transliterated into Arabic.

Clarifications of culturally or pragmatically specific expressions; for example, the word *now* is used in one context to refer to the nineteenth century rather than to the present time.

The selective use of footnotes also reflects the translator's role as a rewriter. By omitting explanations of concepts already familiar to Arab Muslim readers and providing clarification only where cultural or linguistic gaps exist, the translator adapts the text to the knowledge and expectations of the target audience. These interventions reshape the reading experience without altering the central message of the work, illustrating Lefevere's view that translation is a form of rewriting governed by the needs of a particular culture and readership.

Instead of domesticating culturally specific references, the translator retains original terms and provides explanatory notes rather than replacing them with familiar Arabic equivalents. He chose to rewrite the text through paratextual intervention, enabling readers to engage with the cultural distinctiveness of the original while facilitating comprehension. From Lefevere's perspective, these footnotes demonstrate that translation is not merely a linguistic transfer but a process of rewriting in which the translator actively mediates between cultures and shapes the target reader's interpretation of the source text.

2.2 The analysis of the Translator's Choices: Based on Lefevere Theory and House Model

2.2.1 Choices

Example 1

"But how shall I engage in scholarship" p.3

The translator chose the word which might more appropriate to the context

لكن، كيف أنهمك في ثقافة...ص12

House's model suggests that lexical substitutions should be evaluated according to whether they preserve semantic and functional equivalence. Although *ثقافة* does not fully correspond to *scholarship*, it broadly conveys the idea of intellectual pursuit. Therefore, the translation slightly modifies the propositional meaning but does not seriously impair the communicative function of the passage.

Example 2

The ST deals with the word God in two ways one it keeps in its general meaning any god and the other the way when it indicates the author's belief while the translator uses only Allah whenever the word god comes across

According to House, this repeated lexical choice shifts the cultural and ideological orientation of the text. While *Allah* is the natural equivalent in Islamic discourse, its consistent use removes the semantic distinction present in the source text and introduces a more specific religious perspective. As a result, the translation exhibits a partial loss of semantic nuance and a modification of interpersonal meaning, reducing functional equivalence.

Example 3

in the sentence, "No, I'm afraid that won't do either"

Here (I'm afraid) is used as a polite way to soften a disagreement or rejection; it does not mean he is scared as it is translated here.

لا، أخاف من هذا الفعل أيضا ص12

This represents an **overtly erroneous error** because the idiomatic meaning has been misinterpreted. The literal translation changes the propositional meaning by introducing actual fear instead of polite disagreement. Consequently, the interpersonal function of the utterance is altered, and the translation fails to achieve functional equivalence.

Example 4

"Who will not utter prayers for the repose of your soul? It is translated with different semantic indication.

أتدري ما الذي تضيفه الصلوات إلى سكينه روحك ص 40

House's perspective, the restructuring does not significantly alter the propositional meaning but changes the interpersonal function of the utterance. The source text employs a rhetorical question to persuade the reader, whereas the target text adopts an explanatory tone. Although the central idea remains understandable, the persuasive force of the original is reduced, leading to a slight decrease in functional equivalence

2.2.2 Omissions

Example 1

the first instance of the translator's rewriting through the strategy of omission is evident in the format of the book. In the source text, each section is identified by both a number and the label *Word* (e.g., *Word One*, *Word Two*). In the target text, however, the translator omits the lexical label and retains only the numerical sequence, thereby simplifying the organizational structure of the work. From House's (2015) perspective, this omission does not alter the propositional meaning or communicative purpose of the text. Instead, it represents a textual modification that simplifies the presentation while preserving the overall function of the work. Since the semantic content remains intact and the reader can still follow the organization of the text without difficulty, the omission has only a minimal effect on functional equivalence and therefore does not constitute a significant translation-quality error.

Example 2

In the following sentence, "he who is swayed by the feelings of love and justice is a wise man and a learned man" This omission appears to stem from the translator's assumption that *justice* does not collocate naturally with *love* in Arabic.

الذي يؤثر مشاعر الحب هو رجل حكيم وعليم ص 148 According to House's model, the omission results in an **overtly erroneous error** involving the loss of propositional meaning. The source text presents *love* and *justice* as complementary moral virtues, whereas the target text reduces the ethical scope by retaining only one value. Consequently, the semantic richness and philosophical balance intended by the author are weakened, resulting in a lower degree of functional equivalence.

Example 3

in this sentence, educate children, maybe? No, this, too is beyond my powers. P.3 he omits the word *maybe*.

هل أعلم الأطفال؟ لا هذا- أيضاً- فوق طاقتي

The omission removes the author's hesitation before rejecting the idea.

House model would regard this as an overtly erroneous error because the omission affects interpersonal meaning rather than propositional content. The adverb *maybe* reflects uncertainty and self-reflection, whereas its omission makes the statement more direct and categorical. Although the central message is preserved, the author's reflective tone is weakened, slightly reducing functional equivalence

Example 4

In the following passage, the translator omits an essential clause:

"My dear children, the solace of my heart! I have just written a few words on human actions, and I bequeath what I have written to you as a memento. *Read carefully and try to understand the meaning of these words*, and your hearts will be full of love." (p. 64)

أطفالي الأعزاء، يا سلوان القلب، كتبت، لتؤي، بعض الأقوال عن الأعمال الإنسانية،
أورثكم ما كتبت على سبيل التذكرة، وسيغمر الحب أفئدتكم. (ص. 107)

The translator omits the clause "**Read carefully and try to understand the meaning of these words**," which serves as the author's direct instruction to his readers. This omission weakens the didactic force of the passage by removing the explicit connection between careful reading, understanding, and the moral reward of having hearts "full of love." Since the omission does not appear to serve any linguistic, stylistic, or cultural purpose, it is best interpreted as a **slip error** rather than a deliberate rewriting strategy. From a translation-quality perspective, the omission results in a loss of meaning and reduces the communicative effectiveness of the target text. According to House's model, this omission constitutes an **overtly erroneous error** involving the loss of propositional meaning. It also weakens the interpersonal function by removing the author's direct appeal to the reader. Consequently, the target text fails to reproduce the full communicative purpose of the source text and achieves a lower degree of functional equivalence. Baker (2011: 32) manifests, "When a translation is described

as 'inaccurate', it is often the propositional meaning that is being called into question".

Example 5

The translator combines semantic modification with omission:

"Children spoilt from infancy will show no interest in learning and religion, or respect for their tutors. They will never grow up to become **worthy men, righteous mullahs and true Muslims.**" (p. 65)

الأطفال الذين تعرّضوا لإفراط في التدليل، منذ الولادة، لا يظهرون شغفاً بالتعليم أو بالدين، أو احترام مدرّسيهم الخاصّين. سوف لن ينمو كبشر حقيقيين.... (ص. 108)

Here, the translator changes the adjective "**worthy**" to "**real**" (حقيقيين), producing the expression "**real human beings**" instead of "**worthy men.**"

This semantic shift alters the evaluative meaning of the source text, as *worthy* emphasizes moral virtue, whereas *real* merely suggests authenticity or genuineness. Furthermore, the translator omits the complementary phrase "**righteous mullahs and true Muslims,**" thereby removing the religious and ethical dimension that completes the author's intended message. Unlike strategic rewriting motivated by cultural or ideological considerations, this omission lacks any apparent justification and results in a substantial loss of semantic content, diminishing both the completeness and the communicative value of the translation.

According to House's model, the lexical substitution and omission constitute **overtly erroneous errors** because they alter the propositional meaning and weaken the interpersonal function of the source text. The omission significantly reduces the author's moral and religious message, while the substitution diminishes the evaluative force conveyed by *worthy*. As a result, the target text fails to preserve the complete communicative purpose of the original and exhibits a reduced degree of functional equivalence.

2.2.3 Additions

Example 1

The author uses the metaphor "The red-headed Urus" to report the way his people mock from the Russians in this anecdote "The red-headed Urus once he spies an aul, gallops fit to break his neck towards it, permits himself to do whatever comes into his head, demands to hear all the rumours and gossip, and believes everything he is told." P 3

The translator adds the word Russian to make it clear to the Arab readers "ذات مرّة، حاول ثور من نوع أورس ذي الرأس الأحمر البحث عن قرية من طراز اوول في نوبة عدو سريعة، فكسر عنقه وهو يبحث عنها، الروسي يفعل ما يخطر في باله، ويصدق كل ما يقال له" ص 15

According to House's model, this addition enhances comprehensibility without altering the central propositional meaning. The explanatory addition compensates for a potential cultural gap and facilitates the target reader's understanding of the metaphor. Therefore, despite being an intervention, it preserves the communicative function of the passage and maintains a satisfactory level of functional equivalence.

Example 2

"Many religions there might be all consider that love and justice are the attributes of God. P 97 here he adds the phrase سبحانه وتعالى

ص 149 "كلّ الأديان ترى أن الحب والعدل من صفات الله سبحانه وتعالى

From House's perspective, this constitutes an addition that alters interpersonal meaning. While the propositional meaning remains largely unchanged, the addition strengthens the Islamic orientation of the statement and narrows the more universal expression found in the source text. Consequently, the target text reflects a stronger cultural and religious colouring than intended in the original, resulting in a partial shift in communicative function.

3. Main Findings

The findings demonstrate that the Arabic translation reconstructs the source text through six principal rewriting strategies: omissions, additions, lexical substitutions, restructuring of the book's format, and preface and explanatory footnotes. Because one of the main challenges in translation is maintaining fidelity to the source text while producing a natural and readable target text throughout the translation process, each strategy contributes, to varying degrees, to improving the text's readability for Arabic readers ensures the translation is usable and natural for the target audience. Omissions and lexical substitutions generally simplify the discourse and enhance fluency, while preface, additions, and footnotes provide cultural and contextual clarification that facilitates comprehension.

The restructuring of the book's format also reflects an attempt to present the work in a manner more accessible to the target readership. These findings indicate that readability functions as a guiding principle throughout the translation, shaping the translator's rewriting decisions while negotiating the balance between accessibility and fidelity to the source text. Together, they help balance fidelity (staying true to the source) with domestication (making the text readable and appropriate for the audience).

Overall, the findings indicate that readability serves as a guiding principle throughout the translation, shaping the translator's rewriting decisions while balancing accessibility with fidelity to the source text.

4. Limitation

The present study is limited to the analysis of a single Arabic translation of *The Book of Words*. Its assessment is based on a comparison between the Arabic translation and the English version used as the source text for analysis. Accordingly, the study does not examine the fidelity of the English version to Abai's original work. Previous scholarship has already addressed this issue. For example, B. O. Buteyev (2025) conducted a detailed comparative textual analysis of the Tugrul and Mursayit manuscripts, revealing significant discrepancies in their lexical, phonetic, morphological, and semantic features. Therefore, evaluating the English translation against the original Kazakh text falls beyond the scope of the present study.

The analysis focuses primarily on textual and paratextual rewriting rather than reader reception.

The assessment relies mainly on Lefevere's theory and House's model; applying additional translation theories could provide different perspectives.

The study does not compare the Arabic version with translations into other languages.

Because the research is qualitative, some interpretations inevitably involve scholarly judgment.

5. Recommendation

Translators of philosophical and literary texts should strive to preserve both semantic meaning and stylistic characteristics while providing cultural accessibility.

More scholarly attention should be devoted to Libyan translators and their contributions to Arabic translation studies.

Academic institutions should encourage research on underexamined Arabic translations of internationally significant literary works.

The Ministries of Education and Culture should work collaboratively with universities and other scientific and cultural institutions to support and advance the translation movement in Libya, which still requires substantial institutional backing to gain broader recognition and to highlight its valuable contributions to cultural and intellectual development. Together, they should promote translation activities, encourage scholarly contributions, and increase recognition of the valuable role Libyan translators play in enriching cultural and intellectual exchange.

6. Conclusion

The study concludes that translation should be viewed as an act of rewriting rather than a purely linguistic process. Through qualitative textual analysis, the Arabic translation of Book of Words was examined using Lefevere's Theory of Translation as Rewriting and evaluated through House's Translation Quality Assessment model. Through qualitative textual analysis, the Arabic translation of Abie the Book of Words was examined using Lefevere's Theory of Translation as Rewriting and evaluated through House's Translation Quality Assessment model.

The findings demonstrate that the translator assumed an active interpretive role by reshaping linguistic, stylistic, structural, and cultural elements to meet the expectations of the target readership. Lefevere's theory effectively explains the translator's rewriting strategies, while House's model confirms that the translation achieves a satisfactory level of quality by fulfilling the communicative function of the source text and maintaining overall functional equivalence. Although certain modifications alter aspects of the original form, the assessment indicates that these rewriting decisions primarily serve to enhance readability and accessibility for Arabic readers without compromising the philosophical and ideological essence of the source text. Consequently, the Arabic translation may be regarded as a successful act of cultural mediation that balances fidelity to the source text with the communicative and cultural needs of the target audience.

Briefly, it can be said that the translator rewrites *Book of Words* primarily to maximize readability for Arabic readers while preserving the philosophical and ideological essence of the source text.

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