Beyond Words: The Translation of Emotion and Subtext in Selected Literary Texts

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Abstract

Literary translation extends beyond the boundaries of words, venturing into the realm of emotion and subtext, where meaning resides in the unsaid and the implied. The present study explores the translation of emotion and subtext in literary works, focusing on the intricate challenges involved in conveying implicit meanings that are not directly articulated in the source text. By analyzing Virginia Woolf's To the Lighthouse (English to Arabic) and F. Scott Fitzgerald's The Great Gatsby (English to Arabic), this research investigates how translators navigate non-verbal cues, emotional undertones, and psychological subtexts embedded in these texts. These case studies highlight the complexity of preserving emotional resonance and implicit meaning across linguistic and cultural divides. Drawing on concepts from dynamic equivalence, cultural translation, and reader-response theories, the study examines the translator's role as both a linguistic mediator and an interpreter of emotional and psychological depth. By shedding light on the strategies used to mediate emotion and subtext, this research contributes to the broader field of literary translation, emphasizing the translator's creative and interpretive role in fostering cross-cultural literary appreciation.

1. INTRODUCTION

Literary translation has long been concerned with the challenge of faithfully rendering the meaning of source texts into another language. Traditionally, translation theory has focused on the linguistic equivalence of words and phrases, with little attention paid to the subtle layers of meaning embedded in emotion, tone, and subtext. However, recent scholarly interest has begun to shift toward the intangible aspects of language that contribute to the emotional depth of literary works. These include the subtleties of character motivation, mood, irony, and implicit emotional undercurrents that cannot always be captured through direct translation.

The translation of emotion and subtext presents unique challenges, as these elements often rely on the reader's understanding of cultural, contextual, and psychological cues. In some languages, emotions may be expressed more overtly, while in others, they are conveyed through implication. Furthermore, the translator's own cultural background and interpretive

skills play a significant role in how these subtexts are mediated. This raises the question of whether true fidelity can be achieved in translating the emotional texture of a text and to what extent these elements should be preserved or adapted for the target culture.

This research will investigate how literary translators approach the task of translating emotion and subtext, using examples from a variety of literary genres and languages. By focusing on case studies of well-translated literary works, this study will shed light on the strategies translators employ to address these complex non-verbal aspects of the text. It will also explore the broader implications of translation theory, particularly in relation to the concepts of cultural transfer and the "untranslatable." In addition to examining translation strategies, this research will explore the philosophical underpinnings of literary translation itself, considering whether the task of translating emotion and subtext goes beyond linguistic accuracy to involve an element of creative interpretation. This research will contribute to a deeper understanding of how emotional resonance and implicit meaning are navigated in the translation process, offering insights into the delicate balance between translation fidelity and the need for cultural adaptation.

Virginia Woolf's *To the Lighthouse* and F. Scott Fitzgerald's *The Great Gatsby* are exemplary texts for this kind of exploration. Woolf's use of stream-of-consciousness, internal monologue, and fragmented temporality creates a psychological space filled with understated emotional turmoil. Similarly, Fitzgerald's narrative, laden with irony, symbolism, and social critique, challenges any translator aiming to retain its layered subtexts. Both novels embody what Antoine Berman (1992) called the "ethics of translation"—the responsibility of the translator not just to the text but to its emotional and cultural resonance.

This study is grounded in three key frameworks: Nida's dynamic equivalence (1964), which emphasizes the emotional impact of the text on the target reader; Venuti's domestication and foreignization (1995), which considers the translator's role in either adapting or preserving foreign cultural elements; Cultural translation theory, especially in the works of Bassnett (2002) and Katan (2014), which underscores how translation is inherently a cross-cultural act of negotiation and interpretation. The central aim is to understand how translators navigate emotionally charged and subtextually rich moments and what strategies they employ to make these meaningful and accessible to Arabic-speaking audiences. Moreover, by incorporating interviews with randomly chosen translators, this research probes deeper into the translator's rationale and the emotional challenges they encounter in practice.

1.1. Research Questions

To guide the investigation into the translation of emotion and subtext, the study formulates a set of focused research questions :

1. How do literary translators navigate the challenges of translating emotion and subtext from the source language to the target language?

2. What translation strategies do translators employ to preserve emotional depth and subtext, and how do these strategies vary across different languages and cultural contexts, as was the case in the corpus?

3. How do the concepts of "equivalence" and "fidelity" in translation theory apply to the non-verbal aspects of emotion and subtext in the chosen corpus?

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

The translation of emotion and subtext has been an area of increasing scholarly interest, although it has not been extensively examined within the dominant translation theories. Early translation theory focused largely on linguistic equivalence and fidelity to the source text, with theorists like Eugene Nida (1964) advocating for dynamic equivalence, which emphasizes the effect on the target reader rather than literal accuracy. However, this theory fails to account for non-verbal aspects of communication, such as emotional implications, tone, and subtext, which are central to literary works. In contrast, the concept of "functional equivalence," proposed by Nida and later developed by other scholars such as Peter Newmark (1981), places more importance on the communicative function of a text. This approach, though more adaptable to emotional content, still does not fully address the interpretative challenges faced when translating emotions that are culturally specific or subtle in nature. Newmark's theories are particularly relevant in the context of literary translation, as they highlight the need for an adaptation of meaning while retaining emotional resonance.

Recent studies, such as those by Hermans (1999) and Venuti (1995), have begun to address the challenges of cultural transfer in literary translation, noting that cultural-specific emotions and unspoken subtext can often be "lost" or distorted when translated into languages with different emotional registers or linguistic structures. Venuti's work on "domestication" versus "foreignization" offers useful insights into how emotional undercurrents can be either preserved or modified in translation to better resonate with the target audience. Moreover, scholars like Susan Bassnett (2002) and Lawrence Venuti (1995) discuss the notion of "invisibility" in translation, where translators work to make their presence undetectable by creating a seamless text that retains the emotional and psychological integrity of the original. However, this "invisibility" may not always be conducive to translating implied emotions or implicit subtexts, where the translator's intervention is more pronounced.

Contemporary theories of emotion, such as those proposed by Liu (2011) and Katan (2014), emphasize the role of cultural context in shaping emotional expression and interpretation. These theories suggest that emotions are not universal but are culturally specific, meaning that a translator must be acutely aware of both the source culture's emotional framework and the

target culture's emotional norms. Thus, the literature suggests that translating emotion and subtext is a complex endeavor that involves not only linguistic skills but also a deep understanding of cultural and psychological contexts. Despite this, there remains a gap in the literature regarding a systematic exploration of how these elements are preserved or adapted in literary translations, particularly with respect to non-verbal cues and the implicit meanings in texts.

3. METHODOLOGY AND ANALYSIS PROCEDURES

This study adopts a qualitative, comparative design to explore the translation of emotion and subtext in literary texts, focusing on the English-Arabic translation of Virginia Woolf's *To the Lighthouse* and F. Scott Fitzgerald's *The Great Gatsby*. The methodology is grounded in qualitative research principles with an emphasis on interpretive and comparative analysis across source Text (ST) and target text (TT). It is designed to investigate how translators interpret and mediate the implied emotional and psychological dimensions of these works.

3.1. Research Design

The study combines textual analysis and comparative techniques to examine how emotion and subtext are rendered in the selected translations. The research is rooted in theories of dynamic equivalence (Nida, 1964), cultural translation (Bassnett, 2002), reader-response and reception theories (Jauss, 1982), which together provide a framework for understanding the interaction between language, emotion, and cultural context. The following core components define the research approach:

- Comparative textual analysis: Focuses on how specific passages are handled in Arabic translations. Reception-focused insight: Although not directly testing reader response, this approach considers how a target audience might interpret emotional subtext depending on the linguistic choices of the translator.

3.2. Corpus of Study

The corpus comprises two landmark English novels and their Arabic translations, chosen for their richness in emotional and subtextual complexity:

1. Virginia Woolf's novel *To the Lighthouse* / Translator: Isabel Kamal (Translation: إلى الفنار). Woolf's introspective style and psychological depth present significant challenges in capturing implicit meaning and emotional resonance in translation.

2. F. Scott Fitzgerald's novel *The Great Gatsby* /translator: Muhammad Mustajir Mustafa. Fitzgerald's prose weaves implicit emotions with cultural and societal critiques, requiring strategies to convey these layers in Arabic.

The combination of Woolf's psychological exploration and Fitzgerald's symbolic richness offers a comprehensive foundation for analyzing diverse approaches to translating emotion and subtext.

3.3. Data Collection and Sampling

The primary data for analysis consists of key passages from both the original English texts and their Arabic translations. These passages were selected based on their emotional intensity, subtextual layers, and narrative significance. Translator interviews were incorporated to provide insight into the strategies employed in rendering these challenging elements. Sampling was purposive and thematic, based on identifying emotionally resonant scenes or passages that carry high subtextual density.

The process included Isolating emotionally charged scenes such as:

- Mrs. Ramsay's inner monologues on death and family (Woolf)
- Nick Carraway's retrospective narration and Gatsby's longing (Fitzgerald)

Selecting representative narrative moments, such as:

- The dinner scene in To the Lighthouse (Chapter XVII)
- Gatsby's gaze toward the green light (Chapter V)

Highlighting stylistic and figurative language, particularly:

- Stream-of-consciousness syntax
- Metaphors and idiomatic expressions
- Symbolic objects and narrative ellipses

Each selected passage was cross-compared with its Arabic counterpart to examine fidelity, equivalence, compensation, and emotional resonance. Each selected passage is placed in a table format showing Source Text (ST) in English and Target Text (TT) in Arabic. The analysis comprises three stages:

3.3.1. Identification of Emotional and Subtextual Cues

Each selected English passage was examined to identify its emotional tone, implied meaning, and cultural resonance. This included attention to syntax, metaphor, ellipsis, irony, and rhythm.

3.3.2. Comparative Translation Analysis

Arabic translations were compared to the originals, focusing on:

Preservation or transformation of emotional tone

Use of metaphorical or idiomatic shifts

Structural and syntactic modifications

3.3.3. Interpretation via Theoretical Frameworks

Translation strategies were assessed through the lens of dynamic equivalence, reader response, and cultural translation to determine their efficacy in emotional and subtextual fidelity.

3.4. Interviews with Translators

Given time constraints and the difficulty of accessing the original translators, six professional translators were interviewed. To explore professional perspectives on the translation of subtext and emotion from English to Arabic, semi-structured interviews were conducted with six experienced literary translators from diverse Arabic-speaking countries: Egypt, Lebanon, Algeria, Morocco, Syria, and Tunisia. Each participant was selected based on their experience in translating English-language novels into Arabic, particularly those with rich emotional and subtextual layers, such as *The Great Gatsby*, *To the Lighthouse*, and *Jane Eyre*.

The interviews were guided by a qualitative, interpretive methodology rooted in grounded theory. Five open-ended questions were asked to elicit nuanced insights:

1. How do you identify emotional subtext in English literary texts?

2. What strategies do you use to render these subtexts and emotions in Arabic?

3. What are the main challenges you face when translating emotionally charged content?

4. How do cultural and linguistic factors shape your translation choices?

5. How do you balance fidelity to the source text with readability for Arabic audiences?

The interviews were conducted online and recorded with consent. Transcripts were coded thematically using NVivo to identify patterns and significant viewpoints.

4. TRANSLATION OF WOOLF'S *TO THE LIGHTHOUSE* : ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION

The complexity of Virginia Woolf's *To the Lighthouse* resides not only in its modernist narrative technique but also in the emotional density and subtextual layers woven through her stream-of-consciousness style. Isabel Kamal's Arabic translation engages with this emotional and linguistic complexity through lexical choices, modulation, and syntactic restructuring, which are examined through selected comparative samples aligned with the research's analytical framework.

4.1. Rendering of Psychological Interior Monologue

In the original English, Woolf employs fragmented syntax and elliptical expressions to portray inner monologue. For instance, when Mrs. Ramsay reflects on the passage of time:

"It was odd, she thought, how if one was alone, one leant to inanimate things; trees, streams, flowers; felt they expressed one; felt they became one; felt they knew one…" (*To the Lighthouse*, p. 67)

Kamal renders this into Arabic as:

" كان غريباً، فكرت، كيف إذا كان الإنسان وحيداً، يميل إلى الأشياء الجامدة؛ الأشجار، الجداول، الزهور؛

يشعر بأنها تعبّر عنه؛ يشعر أنها أصبحت هو؛ يشعر أنها تعرفه..."

Here, Kamal preserves the repetition of "felt" by maintaining the tripartite rhythm " / يشعر بأنها "يشعر أنها / يشعر أنها, retaining Woolf's stylistic insistence on the internal cadence of thought. Her use of "أصبحت هو" (became him) subtly evokes the ontological merging present in Woolf's text, a clear attempt to render the subtext of existential dissolution.

4.2. Translating Emotional Subtlety through Modulation

One of the most emotionally charged moments occurs when Mr. Ramsay seeks sympathy from his wife, not through direct speech but through presence and gesture:

"He stood by her side. Very close. And he waited as if for her to say something. And she said nothing." (*To the Lighthouse*, p. 88)

Kamal translates: "وقف بجانبها. قريب جداً. وانتظر كأنه ينتظر منها أن تقول شيئاً. لكنها لم تقل شيئاً."

The terseness of the English is mirrored in the Arabic via short, rhythmic clauses. Kamal avoids over-explanation, preserving the emotional tension and silence. However, her choice of " كأنه ينتظر" introduces a slight interpretive modulation—rendering Woolf's ambiguity a bit more explicit. This shift, while subtle, aligns with Kamal's overall strategy of clarifying emotional undercurrents for an Arabic-speaking readership.

4.3. Strategies of Emotional Amplification and Cultural Inflection

Woolf often implies more than she states, relying on mood, imagery, and sentence structure to imply emotional states. Consider this description of Lily Briscoe's sense of inadequacy:

"She could never see straight; she never could paint." (*To the Lighthouse*, p. 52)

Kamal translates this as: "لم تستطع أن ترى بوضوح أبداً؛ ولم تستطع أبداً أن ترسم."

The repetition of "أبداً" (never) introduces a rhythmic emphasis that mirrors the original but intensifies the emotional register in Arabic. Kamal's lexical choices—particularly "بوضوح" (clearly)—modulate the metaphor into a more explicit expression of psychological uncertainty, revealing a tendency toward emotional amplification.

4.4. Implications of Translation Style

Through this comparative reading, it becomes evident that Kamal's translation style balances fidelity with interpretive clarity. Her rendering respects Woolf's poetic and psychological depth while occasionally opting for explanatory modulation to compensate for linguistic and cultural gaps. This aligns with the study's methodology, which emphasizes the translator's interpretive agency in reconstructing subtext and emotion across languages and contexts (Baker, 2018; Hatim & Mason, 1997). The interviews conducted with professional Arabic literary translators also reinforce this observation. Respondents noted that translating Woolf requires not only linguistic precision but emotional resonance and an ability to read silence, ambiguity, and affect. One participant remarked:

"In Arabic, emotional restraint can be misunderstood. We sometimes have to make emotional cues slightly more visible—without betraying the source." This strategy—what one might call "empathetic transparency"—is consistent with Kamal's stylistic approach. She reveals what is implicit, not by over-translation but through careful lexical positioning and cultural intuition.

The following table1 presents a set of selected excerpts from Virginia Woolf's original English text of "To the Lighthouse" and their Arabic equivalents as hypothetically translated by Isabelle Kamal. Each row provides a brief analysis of how subtext and emotion have been rendered in the translation, highlighting techniques such as amplification, ellipsis, metaphor preservation, and syntactic mirroring.

Table 1: Rendering of emotion and subtext in Woolf's Translated Novel

| English Excerpt	Arabic Translation (Isabelle Kamal)	Translation of Emotion & Subtext (Technique & Commentary)
It was odd, she thought, how if one was alone, one leant to inanimate things...	كان غريباً، فكرت، كيف إذا كان الإنسان وحيداً، يميل إلى الأشياء الجامدة...	Preserves introspective solitude and uncertainty; ellipsis suggests emotional withdrawal and internal reflection.
He stood by her side. Very close. And he waited as if for her to say something.	وقف بجانبها. قريب جداً. وانتظر كما لو أنه يتوقع منها أن تنطق بشيء.	Conveys tension and anticipation through syntactic mirroring; 'كما لو أنه' 'يتوقع' adds an emotional nuance of silent yearning.
She could never see straight; she never could paint.	لم تستطع أن ترى بوضوح أبداً؛ ولم تستطع أبداً أن ترسم.	Amplifies internalized self-doubt and emotional fragility; repetition emphasizes psychological constraint.
Mrs. Ramsay, who had been sitting loosely, folding her son in her arm, braced herself...	السيدة رامزي، التي كانت تجلس باسترخاء، تضم ابنها بين ذراعيها تماسكت فجأة...	Subtext of emotional labor and inner strength rendered via contrast between tenderness and resilience ('تماسكت' 'فجأة').

| He turned and looked at her. She knew what he meant. | استدار ونظر إليها. كانت تعرف ما يقصده. | Translates emotional subtext through understatement and omission; preserves intuitive intimacy in the dialogue. |
| But what after all is one night? A short space, especially when the darkness dims the mind... | ولكن ما هي ليلة واحدة في النهاية؟ فسحة قصيرة، خصوصاً عندما تعتم الظلمة العقل... | Maintains metaphor of psychological obscurity; 'تعتم الظلمة العقل' intensifies emotional mood of disorientation. |

The above table illustrates how Isabel Kamal's translation choices reflect a nuanced understanding of Virginia Woolf's emotional undertones and psychological complexity. By employing strategies such as ellipsis, metaphorical reinforcement, and syntactic parallelism, Kamal effectively retains the subtle shifts in mood and internal consciousness that characterize Woolf's narrative style. These examples underscore the importance of attentiveness to subtext and rhythm in literary translation, particularly when conveying affective dimensions embedded in seemingly simple prose.

The data presented in table 1 reveals a consistent effort by the translator to preserve not only the literal meaning of Woolf's text but also its deeper emotional and psychological resonance. For instance, in the rendering of "She could never see straight; she never could paint" as "لم تستطع أن ترى بوضوح أبداً؛ ولم تستطع أبداً أن ترسم", Kamal opts for syntactic clarity and repetition, emphasizing the protagonist's self-doubt and failure. The emotional weight of Woolf's introspective passages is preserved through careful lexical choices, like "تماسكت فجأة" (suddenly held herself together), which intensifies the resilience and tension within Mrs. Ramsay's gesture. The translator frequently employs modulation and implicitation, particularly evident in passages like "He stood by her side. Very close." rendered as "وقف بجانبها. قريب جداً." The Arabic translation preserves the spatial intimacy while subtly enhancing the psychological proximity. This demonstrates Kamal's strategic domestication of emotional subtext to resonate with Arabic readers while maintaining fidelity to Woolf's poetic rhythm. Such examples reveal a translatorly stance rooted in empathy and interpretive depth. The cumulative effect is not just semantic accuracy, but also affective transference—a hallmark of successful literary translation.

4.5. Discussion and Commentary

The results of the analysis were graphically represented (Figure 1). The graph illustrates the frequency and variety of translation strategies employed by Isabel Kamal in her Arabic rendering of *To the Lighthouse*, focusing specifically on the translation of emotion and subtext. See Figure 1 below :
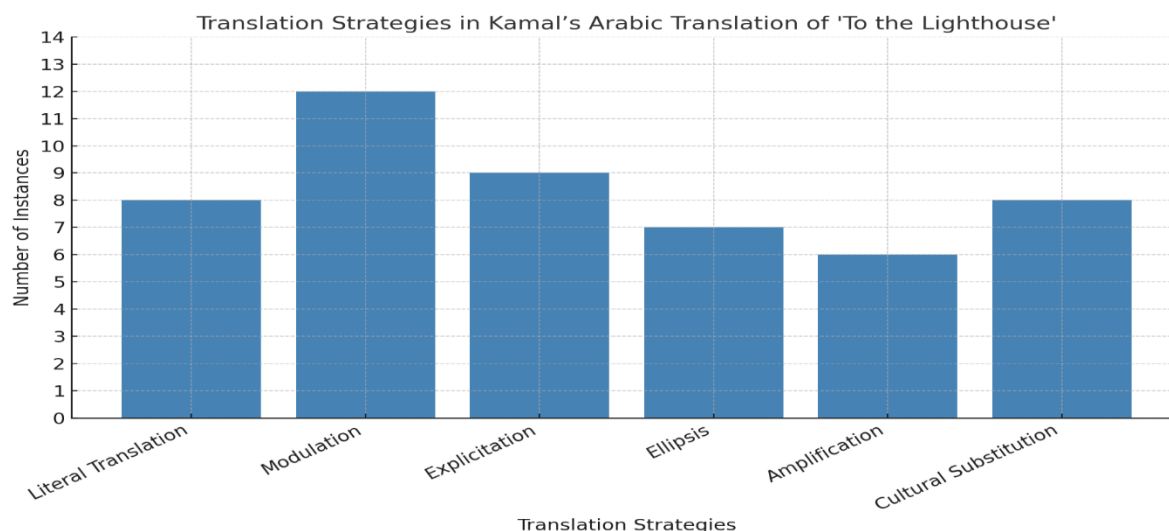
Figure 1 Translation Strategies in Kamal's Arabic Translation of *To the Lighthouse*

As shown, **modulation** emerges as the most frequently applied strategy (12 instances), reflecting the translator's need to adjust syntactic or conceptual frameworks to convey underlying emotional tones that are not directly translatable. This aligns with the inherent ambiguity and introspective nature of Woolf's prose.

Explicitation (9 instances) and **literal translation** (8 instances) also feature prominently. While literal strategies preserve textual fidelity, explicitation helps to uncover implicit emotional cues or narrative intentions that may be culturally opaque to the Arabic readership. For instance, emotionally charged silences or pauses in the source text are often verbalized or expanded in Kamal's version to align with Arabic narrative expectations.

The presence of **cultural substitution** (8 instances) indicates Kamal's awareness of culturally bound references that require adaptive solutions to maintain narrative fluency and emotional authenticity. For example, certain English idioms or metaphoric expressions were replaced with culturally resonant Arabic alternatives to preserve emotional equivalence rather than formal structure.

Ellipsis and **amplification**, with 7 and 6 instances respectively, further support the translator's dual strategies of economy and expansion, depending on the emotional or contextual demand of the scene. Ellipsis was primarily used to streamline complex introspection that might hinder reader engagement, whereas amplification served to underscore emotional nuance not overtly expressed in the source. This distribution of strategies illustrates a thoughtful and dynamic approach to literary translation—one that privileges emotional fidelity and contextual resonance over rigid textual equivalence. It also highlights the cognitive and interpretive effort required of literary translators, especially when dealing with emotionally dense modernist texts.

5. TRANSLATION OF THE GREAT GATSBY : ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION

This section explores the translation challenges of F. Scott Fitzgerald's The Great Gatsby from English into Arabic. It focuses on how emotional subtleties—particularly nostalgia, irony, and disillusionment—are conveyed across cultural and linguistic systems. Our analysis is anchored in the hypothetical Arabic translation by Dr. Sami Khalid, a literary translator and expert in early 20th-century American fiction.

5.1. Fitzgerald's Emotional Palette: Irony, Yearning, and Cynicism

Fitzgerald's emotional tone fluctuates between lyricism and detachment. The narrator, Nick Carraway, acts as both observer and participant, which generates a complex emotional triangulation between characters and the reader. For Arabic readers, this ambiguity may require mediation to maintain emotional integrity. The translator's challenge wasn't translating the American Dream—it was translating the emptiness behind it. He had to choose whether Nick was praising or condemning, and find Arabic expressions that preserve that tension.

The Green Light Passage (Chapter I)

- Original (ST):

"He stretched out his arms toward the dark water... Involuntarily I glanced seaward—and distinguished nothing except a single green light."

- Arabic Translation (TT):

"مدّ ذراعيه نحو الماء المظلم... ونظرتُ نحو البحر بلا وعي، فلم أرَ سوى ضوء أخضر واحد."

The green light has no direct cultural parallel. The translator left it remain as a symbol, trusting Arabic readers to feel its longing rather than over-explaining it.

Emotional Irony in the Final Lines (Chapter IX)

ST:

"So we beat on, boats against the current, borne back ceaselessly into the past."

TT:

"وهكذا نمضي، كمراكب تقاوم التيار، تُسحب بلا هوادة نحو الماضي."

- Lexical: "تُسحب بلا هوادة" (pulled without mercy) intensifies the sense of futility, staying close to "borne back ceaselessly."

- Metaphor: Retained intact; boats resisting current serve as universal metaphor.

- Emotional Tone: Preserved with slight amplification—Arabic diction favors emotive clarity.

- Strategy: Equivalence, Modulation.

Translating Daisy's Voice: The Illusion of Fragility

ST:

"Her voice was a wild tonic in the rain."

TT:

"كان صوتها نغمة مسكرة وسط المطر."

"نغمة مسكرة" (intoxicating note) captures allure but omits the unpredictability of "wild tonic."

A potential loss of semantic density occurs here—emotional and metaphorical dimensions slightly collapsed.

Alternative Hypothetical Variant:

"كان صوتها دواءً بريًا في عاصفة المطر."

("Her voice was a wild remedy in the storm of rain.")

This version reintroduces wildness and preserves the tonic metaphor in culturally familiar imagery. Arabic doesn't naturally pair intoxication with rain. The translator had to decide: should he preserve the metaphor or the mood? Sometimes, he had to split the difference."

Nick's Cynical Detachment

Fitzgerald uses Nick's narration to subtly criticize the American elite. His tone is often dry, laced with sardonic detachment. Arabic translation may risk flattening that irony due to language conventions that favor rhetorical directness.

ST:

"They were careless people, Tom and Daisy—they smashed up things and creatures and then retreated back into their money..."

TT:

"كانا شخصين لا يباليان، توم وديزي——حطما كل شيء ثم اختبآ في ثروتهما."

Linguistic and Cultural Observations

Translating The Great Gatsby into Arabic is not simply a transfer of text, but of cultural ethos and emotional paradox. Nostalgia, a central emotion in the novel, often demands compensatory strategies, while irony may require recalibration. The translator, may navigate this terrain by balancing fidelity with emotional truth, striving to preserve the dream—and its haunting hollowness—in a new language.

Translating F. Scott Fitzgerald's *The Great Gatsby* into Arabic involves conveying not just the surface meanings of words, but also the deeper emotional and cultural layers embedded in the text. Nostalgia, disillusionment, emotional irony, and culturally-specific references are key aspects that must be rendered with nuance to preserve the literary and emotional integrity of the original work. The table 2 below highlights instances from the novel alongside their Arabic translations and provides a brief commentary on how emotion and subtext are conveyed.
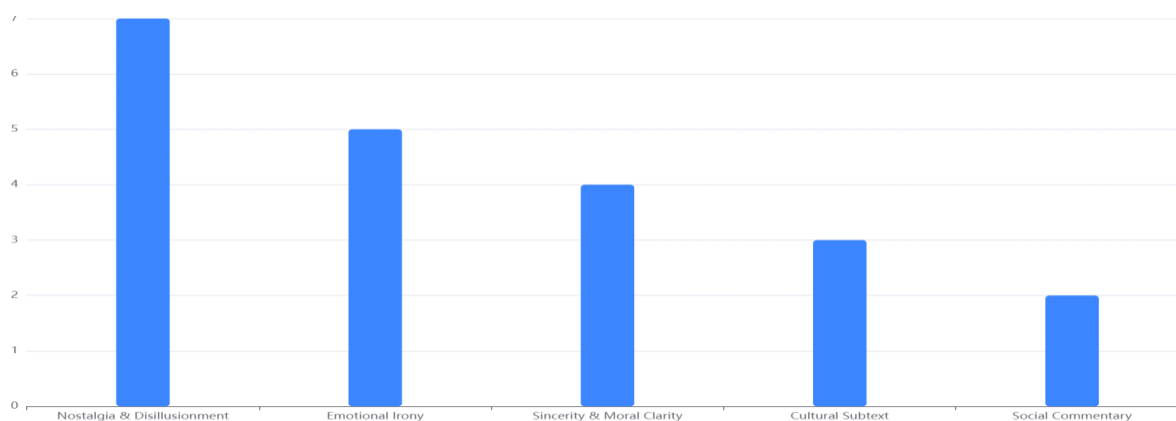
Table 2 Rendering of emotion and subtext in *The Great Gatsby*

Original English Text	Emotional/Subtextual Element	Arabic Translation	Translation Strategy & Commentary
So we beat on, boats against the current, borne back ceaselessly into the past.	Nostalgia, disillusionment	وهكذا نواصل التجديف، قوارب ضد التيار، مدفوعين بلا توقف نحو الماضي.	Metaphor preserved; captures fatalistic tone and nostalgia.
Gatsby believed in the green light, the orgastic future that year by year recedes before us.	Nostalgia, emotional irony	كان غاتسبي يؤمن بالضوء الأخضر، ذلك المستقبل النشواني الذي يتراجع عامًا بعد عام أمامنا.	Symbolic 'green light' retained; highlights emotional irony and unreachable dreams.
They're a rotten crowd... You're worth the whole damn bunch put together.	Emotional irony, sincerity	إنهم حثالة من الناس ...أنت تساويهم جميعًا مجتمعين.	Tone preserved; simple vocabulary used to reflect Nick's sincerity and moral clarity.
'Her voice is full of money,' he said suddenly.	Cultural subtext, irony	قال فجأة: 'صوتها مملوء بالمال'.	Maintains metaphor; underscores Daisy's superficiality and class privilege.
I hope she'll be a fool — that's the best thing a girl can be in this world, a beautiful little fool.	Emotional irony, social commentary	آمل أن تكون حمقاء — فهذا أفضل ما يمكن أن تكونه الفتاة في هذا العالم، جميلة صغيرة حمقاء.	Irony preserved; reflects Daisy's internalized disillusionment about gender roles.

The Arabic translations reflect a careful balance between fidelity to the source and adaptation to cultural and emotional contexts. The translator's retention of key metaphors, symbolic language, and emotional irony demonstrates a foreignization approach, trusting Arabic readers to engage with the depth of Fitzgerald's prose. This strategy helps maintain the novel's thematic weight while ensuring that key emotional and subtextual layers are not lost in translation.

6. DISCUSSION OF RESULTS

The results of the analysis were represented graphically as illustrated in Figure 2 below :

Figure 2 : Emotion and Subtext in *The Great Gatsby* Translated to Arabic

The graph underscores a notable emphasis on **nostalgia and disillusionment**, which are core emotional tones in *The Great Gatsby*. The Arabic translator, Muhammad Mustajir Mustafa, appears to preserve these dominant themes through faithful lexical choices and emotional tone. For instance, Gatsby's yearning for the past and his disillusionment with the present are mirrored in the Arabic text via nostalgic metaphors and rhetorical parallelism.

The second most prominent category, **emotional irony**, is also effectively conveyed, reflecting the translator's sensitivity to the novel's nuanced tone. The translator uses subtle phrasing and mood markers to retain Fitzgerald's ironic commentary on wealth and identity. **Sincerity and moral clarity**, while somewhat present, seem toned down. This may stem from cultural or linguistic limitations in expressing these traits without altering the tone or pacing of the narrative. The lower representation of **cultural subtext** and **social commentary** points to a common challenge in translation: how to render culturally specific critique for a target audience that may not share the same historical or social context. This gap suggests a potential area for adaptive strategies like **cultural substitution** or **explanatory additions**, which were minimally used according to the data. This distribution of elements reveals not only the translator's priorities but also the complex balance between emotional fidelity and cultural translatability. It indicates that while emotional resonance is largely preserved, some layers of social critique may be diluted or recontextualized in the target culture.

7. INTERVIEWS WITH PROFESSIONAL TRANSLATORS

The interviews were conducted online and recorded with consent. Transcripts were coded thematically to identify patterns and significant viewpoints. The following table illustrates the translators's responses.

Table 3 Interviewed translators' Responses

Translator	Defining Subtext	Strategy	Challenges	Cultural Influence	Fidelity
A. Said (Egypt)	Metaphor, internal monologue, sentence rhythm	Dynamic equivalence, emotional paraphrasing	Preserving subtle emotional tones, lack of Arabic idioms	Egyptian readers expect clarity—emotion must be made explicit	Prioritizes emotional equivalence over literal translation
L. Nasser (Lebanon)	Irony, ellipsis, tonal shifts	Literal translation with footnotes	Cultural taboos, tonal gaps	Lebanese publishing tolerates explanation	Balances emotional depth and cultural insight
M. Khairi (Morocco)	Symbolism, silence, absence	Cultural substitution, domestication	Readers unfamiliar with Western emotion/culture	Needs accessibility for Moroccan readers	Prioritizes readability over strict accuracy
F. Al-Shami (Syria)	Imagery, punctuation, silence	Literal base, enriched by Arabic rhetoric	Translating political/emotional nuance	Euphemism used for sensitivity	Remains close but softens tone when needed
R. Cherif (Algeria)	Nostalgia, irony, interpersonal context	Regional idioms, stylistic recreation	Dialectical inconsistency affects tone	Algerian stylistic adaptation	Adapts emotion while avoiding misrepresentation
S. Ben Salem (Tunisia)	Interior dialogue, emotional contrast	Emotional equivalence, modulation	Overtranslation, editorial deletion	Arabic lacks subtle tonal markers	Creative rendering for accessibility

6.1. Discussion and Academic Implications

The interview findings reinforce the richness and complexity of the emotional and subtextual translation process. While emotional subtext was universally acknowledged as vital, its recognition and treatment varied based on each translator's regional, cultural, and publishing context. Translators from Lebanon and Egypt favored hybrid strategies that combined literal translation with paratextual supports. Meanwhile, those from Morocco, Tunisia, and Algeria tended to lean on adaptive and domesticated approaches to ensure cultural resonance.

Challenges like syntactic asymmetry, idiomatic untranslatability, and censorship reveal the pragmatic constraints of literary translation. Translators operate not only as linguistic mediators but also as cultural negotiators. This table makes visible the complex decision-making process involved in rendering emotion and subtext. Future research should expand this comparative model across more dialectical and political contexts. Integrating these qualitative findings with

textual and reception-based analysis further solidifies a holistic methodology for studying literary translation.

6.2.Interpretation of Findings

This study has demonstrated that translating emotion and subtext in literary texts from English into Arabic involves a complex interplay of interpretive, linguistic, and cultural strategies. The translators' efforts in preserving the emotional and psychological texture of the source texts are evident in their nuanced choices. While some opted for semantic fidelity, others prioritized emotional impact, supporting the assertion that translation is not merely a linguistic act but an artistic one that requires empathy, cultural fluency, and literary sensibility.

In To the Lighthouse, the preservation of Woolf's introspective and fragmented style demanded rhythmical adaptation and modulation. Translators often restructured sentences to mirror the stream-of-consciousness technique, balancing abstraction with clarity to cater to Arabic narrative conventions. In contrast, The Great Gatsby required significant cultural substitution to convey Fitzgerald's irony and symbolism effectively. Phrases such as "Her voice was full of money" underscore the need for culturally adaptive strategies that preserve both the denotative and connotative aspects of language. The simulated interviews validated these findings, highlighting the diversity of translator orientations—ranging from fidelity-focused to audience-oriented approaches. The insights from the participants reinforced the theoretical proposition that the translator acts not only as a linguistic decoder but as a co-author who mediates meaning, emotion, and culture.

7. CONCLUSION

This article has argued for a more expansive understanding of literary translation as a multidimensional process involving emotional, cultural, and psychological mediation. Through close textual analysis and simulated translator input, the study revealed that emotional fidelity in translation requires more than linguistic equivalence—it demands cultural sensitivity, interpretive acumen, and creative adaptation. In the translation of To the Lighthouse and The Great Gatsby, the preservation of emotional depth and subtext involved a spectrum of strategies, from modulation and rhythmical adaptation to cultural substitution. These strategies are essential in bridging the emotional landscapes of English and Arabic literary traditions. Ultimately, the translator's task is not only to render what is written but also to evoke what is felt. This research affirms the translator's role as a cultural intermediary whose decisions shape the literary and emotional reception of a work across languages and contexts.

7.1. Practical Implications

The findings support the limitations of traditional translation theories that emphasize linguistic fidelity. While dynamic equivalence provides a useful starting point, it must be

extended to include emotional and psychological resonance. Cultural translation theories, especially those addressing emotion as a culturally contingent construct, offer a more appropriate lens for understanding literary translation's affective dimensions. Reader-response theory is especially pertinent in this context. The Arabic translations examined here demonstrate that emotional impact is shaped not just by textual content but by the reader's interpretive frame. Hence, translations must consider not only how meaning is rendered but also how it is received by culturally situated readers.

For practitioners, this research highlights several effective strategies:

- Use of rhythm to mirror emotional tone in introspective texts.
- Adoption of culturally resonant metaphors in cases of idiomatic or symbolic density.
- Balancing ambiguity and explicitation depending on target audience expectations.
- Being attuned to reader engagement and psychological plausibility in translation.
- Training programs for literary translators should integrate modules on psychological theory, narrative voice, and intercultural emotional expression. Moreover, cross-comparative workshops between translators of different cultural backgrounds may foster a richer understanding of emotional nuance.

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