

Analyzing Literary Translation Methods Based on Relevance Theory in the Arabic Version of Matt Haig's The Midnight Library

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© 2025 جامعة العلوم والتكنولوجيا، المركز الرئيس عدن، اليمن. يمكن إعادة استخدام المادة المنشورة حسب رخصة مؤسسة المشاع الإبداعي شريطة الاستشهاد بالمؤلف والمجلة.

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تحليل أساليب الترجمة الأدبية على أساس نظرية الصلة في النسخة العربية من رواية مكتبة منتصف الليل للكاتب مات هيغ

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الملخص

يتناول هذا البحث ترجمة كتاب *مكتبة منتصف الليل* لمات هيغ، مع التركيز على أفكاره الفلسفية العميقة، وتأثيره العاطفي، وتفاصيله الثقافية. يناقش الكتاب موضوعات إنسانية عامة مثل الأمل، والندم، والبحث عن المعنى، وكل ذلك في إطار قصة غنية بالطبقات اللغوية والثقافية. تعتمد الدراسة على نظرية الملاءمة لاستكشاف كيفية تحقيق المترجمين التوازن بين الحفاظ على اللغة الأصلية ونقلها إلى ثقافات أخرى، مع الحفاظ على القوة العاطفية والفكرية للنص. تواجه عملية الترجمة تحديات رئيسية تشمل ترجمة الاستعارات الحية التي يستخدمها هيغ، والعبارات الاصطلاحية، والمراجع الثقافية، بطريقة تتيح تواصلًا فعالًا مع جمهور جديد مع الحفاظ على وفاء النص للأصل. تؤكد الدراسة على أهمية اتباع نهج مرن في الترجمة، حيث يظهر أن الترجمة الحرفية غالباً ما تعجز عن إيصال التفاصيل الدقيقة لرحلة شخصية نورا. وبدلاً من ذلك، توصي باتباع أسلوب ترجمة أكثر حرية، مستنداً إلى فهم عميق لجوهر القصة وأبعادها.

كلمات افتتاحية: نظرية الملاءمة، الدراسات المعرفية، التكيف الثقافي، التشابه التفسيري

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Abstract:

This study looks at the complex process of translating Matt Haig's **The Midnight Library**, focusing on its deep philosophical ideas, emotional impact, and cultural details. The book deals with universal themes like hope, regret, and the search for meaning, all wrapped in a story that is rich in language and cultural layers. The basis of exceptionally difficult translation has been established. The study adopts Relevance Theory to explore how translators are able to strike a balance between keeping the original language intact and transforming it into other cultures, to maintain both the emotional and intellectual force of the story.

Key challenges include translating Haig's vivid metaphors, idiomatic phrases, and cultural references in a way that connects with new audiences while staying faithful to the original. The study emphasizes the need for a flexible approach, showing that word-for-word translation often fails to capture the subtleties of Nora's journey. Instead, it suggests a freer style of translation, guided by a deep understanding of the story's heart.

Keywords: *Relevance theory, cognitive studies, cultural adaptation, interpretive resemblance*

Introduction

Matt Haig's *The Midnight Library* is notable for its engaging examination of life's endless possibilities and the significant influence of individual choices. The book's philosophical and emotional richness has struck a chord with readers around the globe, solidifying its place in modern literature. Using a complex narrative that creates a challenging conventional storytelling strategy, Haig has highlighted many existential ideas, such as hope, regret, and the quest for meaning. Smith (2021) noticed, "Haig's writing transcends the ordinary, offering readers a unique opportunity to reflect on their own lives through the lens of Nora's journey" (pp. 121-138). The novel includes complex themes woven into the narrative structures that create the novel's linguistic quality. Therefore, such linguistic quality and the emotional and intellectual effect of the source text should be taken into consideration in order to create a significant piece of translation. In addition, a thoughtful balance between linguistic precision and cultural adaptation is required in the translation of such valuable work.

The translator is demanded to delve into the navigation of complex meaning, cultural allusions, and emotional delicacies to confirm the similarities of audience experiences either in the target or in the original text. These intricate procedures demand decision-making that goes beyond the linguistic correspondence; it requires a harmonization between the emotional currents and philosophical complexities available in the original text. Regarding this, Baker (1992) observed that successful literary translation hinges not merely on word-for-word equivalence but on the translator's ability to convey the spirit of the text. For example, there are some vivid metaphors and idiomatic phrases that are captured within universal human conditions and culture-specific contexts that are often employed by Haig. Therefore, translating such types of metaphors involves the necessity of language proficiency and a full understanding of the socio-cultural contexts of both the source and the target textual readerships.

In addition, Haig's methods of storytelling imply a complicated relationship between misery and potential, highlighting universal themes through strangely personal perceptions. As Jones (2020) states, in literary translation, the textual, linguistic, and emotional gaps, together with cultural gulfs, must be bridged to dissolve the separation that takes place between the audiences from different social backgrounds. This highlights the importance of how Nora contemplates her regrets and her search for real substitutions. The translator's role is to sustain the philosophical spirit of the source text and its confirmation that aligns with the different cultural attitudes of the target audiences. Consequently, adopting literal translation is not suitable enough to reflect Nora's internal feelings, and in this case, free translation is the best alternative that may not also be safe regarding the distortion of the author's intended meaning.

The translation challenges go beyond cultural implantation in the original text. Haig's *The Midnight Library* often includes specific elements of contemporary English culture, such as names of locations, social habits, and idiomatic linguistic expressions. The translator must decide whether to preserve these kinds of elements to retain authenticity or adapt them to ensure their relevance to the target audience.

According to Venuti (1995), "The translator's invisibility can now be seen as a mystification of troubling proportions, an amazingly successful concealment of the multiple determinants and effects of English-language translation, the multiple hierarchies and exclusions in which it is implicated. (pp. 16-17). This is a kind of dual approach that helps in reflecting the cultural richness of the source text and simplifying the reader's access to the different essence of the original text.

The novel includes different types of challenges for the translator, particularly in such complicated text like Haigh's *The Midnight Library*, which requires accuracy regarding language, culture, and a deep understanding of the emotional and philosophical themes of the source text. Consequently, the translator has to dissolve the differences between what the author wants and the reader's interpreted experience. This should be highlighted to confirm the deep essence of the story as well as the cultural and linguistic differences.

This paper adapted Relevance Theory as a cognitive pragmatic framework that offers a valuable lens for investigating the translation of such intricate texts. Relevance theory was developed by Sperber and Wilson (1986); it postulates that communication depends on the balance between cognitive effort and contextual reward. According to Nord (2001), 'a communicative action carried out by an expert in intercultural communication (the translator), playing the role of a text producer and aiming at some communicative purpose' (Nord, 200. p. 151). Optimal contextual relevance is emphasized in this approach with minimal processing effort, which is specifically valuable to translate texts that combine universal themes with culturally specific elements.

Finally, by applying relevance theory, this study will enable an organized and systematic analysis to reveal how the translation of *The Midnight Library* reflects the adaptation of the cultural and linguistic context of the target reader to the essence of the source work. This theory proposes a pragmatic approach to evaluate the efficiency of literary translations by focusing on interpretive resemblance to ensure an evocation of similar interpretive experience for a new target reader. This theoretical framework in this study evaluates the strategies used by the translator to contribute to the growing effect of the connection between cognitive pragmatics and literary translation. According to Xu (2015), "According to this theory, the translator should try to adjust the degree of relevance in source language and target language by equalizing the pragmatic stratum of the translated text, through which relevance is obtained, with that of the source text. Then

the translator should ensure that the target text yields enough contextual effects and does not require the target reader to do any unnecessary processing effort" (p. 102).

Research Questions

- How does the translator maintain philosophical and emotional profundity for the target audiences in *The Midnight Library*?
- What translation strategies are used by the translator to adapt a similarity between linguistic faithfulness and cultural difference in the target text?
- How does the adaptation of relevance theory help the translator in assessing the translation efficiency in maintaining the importance of the relationship between interpretation and contextual implication?

Research Objectives

- To identify how the translator maintains the philosophical and emotional profundity for the target audiences in *The Midnight Library*.
- To recognize the translation strategies used by the translator to adapt a similarity between linguistic faithfulness and cultural difference in the target text.
- To examine how the adaptation of relevance theory helps the translator in assessing the translation efficiency in maintaining the importance of the relationship between interpretation and contextual implication.

Literature Review

Theoretical Background of Relevance Theory in Translation Studies

Sperber and Wilson (1986) developed relevance theory based on a cognitive process that is considered a vigorous framework to evaluate the importance of understanding relationships and communications. It assumes that the success in communication relies on the achievement of optimal relevance, which is recognized as the similarities between cognitive efforts and contextual achievements. This has created reflective roles of translation studies, which implies the translators' role in mediating and anticipating the interpretive requirements of the target readers. In this regard, Sperber and Wilson believe that communication depends upon the accuracy of language and the listener's ability to capture the speaker's intended meanings in a particular context, a notion that aligns clearly with the difficulties of translation.

Similarly, for Gutt (1991), relevance theory reproduces translation as an important act of communication, which requires a profound understanding of the relationship between the original and target texts and contexts as well. He states that translation must maintain the cognitive influence of the source text while facilitating the cognitive efforts demanded by the target readers to communicate and interpret the intended message.

According to Gutt, relevance theory is a substantial framework for literary translation studies. Within this approach, interpretive resemblance is important in translation as a similar response is evoked for the target readers. Gutt's ideas implied the role of the translator in balancing between the implicit meaning of the original work and the target reader's expectations.

Relevance theory is a powerful approach in literary translation fields because of its strong attachment in bonding the noteworthy interplay between the semantic content and the stylistic and emotional subtleties of the original text. According to Xu (2015), relevance theory dissolves the gaps between linguistic accuracies and subjective reception of literary text, considering it an extremely useful tool for examining the translation of complex works. Xu adds that the adaptation of relevance theory enables it to investigate different cultural mismatching issues and variables in narrative contexts, permitting translators to create faithful texts regarding both the source text and the target readers.

Existing Literature: Literary Translation Techniques

A literary translation is an interdisciplinary practice that involves much more than finding the equivalent words in another language, as it seeks to adapt the culture and, at the same time, retain the artistic value of a text. Translating the spirit of the text is important, according to Baker (1992). A literary translation must convey meaning, emotion, and cultural context. Baker's review underscored the translator's dual status as one who is proficient in language and serves as a cultural liaison, whose duty is to capture the appropriate register, style, and intention of the source text.

Venuti (1995) has defined the concepts of domestication and foreignization as translation strategies that include adopting movement, which one could say is loss of the original culture. Venuti believed that in the case of domestication, it might sometimes convey cultural markers in a source text, but with foreignization it may bother a reader but intensify the experience by providing different culture to them. A point that Venuti was keen to stress was the quest that a translator is able to undertake through these strategies so that somewhat the sociocultural context of the original text is retained, although it is still comprehensible to the target audience. This sort of tension is most salient in the translation of *The Midnight Library*, where the particulars of the cultural context are woven with concepts that are relevant to humanity in general.

This kind of investigation insists on faithful translations, like those that treat or translate texts that are philosophically or emotionally revealing. Regarding this, Jones (2020) investigates the translation of some existential literature and notes that "the translator needs to be informed of all the philosophical aspects that the text describes so as not to distort some of the ideas expressed in it." Jones insisted on the challenges posed when

dealing with translations that deal with abstract concepts or questions of existence, stating that the translator has to be accurate but also interpret the text sufficiently in general so that it would not deviate from the author's intended meaning.

Similarly, Smith (2021) investigated sensitive issues concerning translation with emotionally loaded narratives, drawing "attention to the sensitivity of cultural and psychological dimensions of the text." Smith's work also indicated that emotional resonance can be embedded in culturally circumscribed expressions and contexts; to that end, translators should defy convention so the target audience can identify with the translated text. These studies will be very helpful in gaining insight into the strategies that translators employ while dealing with such peculiar demands of works like *The Midnight Library*, which intermingles philosophical reflections with deeply personal narratives.

Identifying Gaps in the Literature

While much valuable research has been conducted into the literary translation techniques and the application of relevance theory, there is a noticeable lack of research with regard to translating Matt Haig's *The Midnight Library*. Many of the studies above have engaged in translating texts that are both philosophically and emotionally enriching. The present work does not have a great deal to show in the translation of contemporary writings that engage in universal themes while also being culturally specific. This novel has infinite possible lives imposed on a completely personal exploration of regret and hope, which creates an interesting ground for investigating the mediations translation may offer between universality and specificity.

The fact that Haig's *The Midnight Library* has received little academic attention represents an opportunity to establish how relevance theory could be applied in the translation assessment of such a novel whose message crosses different cultural borders. Translation is a communicative process that involves three parties: the writer of the source text, the translator, and the reader of the target text. As these parties are exposed to distinct cultural and physical environments, their cognitive environments or assumptions about the world are diverse (Zixia, 2009). The present study takes up this challenge and explores what strategies have been used in the single translation of this novel, how much philosophical depth and emotional impact have been conveyed from the original, and how much this translation has adapted to the cultural and linguistic background of the target audience. This paper contributes to the current debate involving cognitive pragmatics and literary translation, bringing new light to the problems and possibilities of the translation of contemporary literature.

Theoretical Framework

Relevance theory, formulated by Sperber and Wilson (1986), provides a cognitive pragmatic framework in which communication is understood as a process balancing contextual effects against processing effort. The latter balance forms the basis for successful communication, wherein the translator aims to achieve maximum understanding on the part of the audience with the least amount of cognitive strain. In translation, these roles function as principles for the translator's job, especially in the multifaceted field of literary translation.

Contextual effects and processing effort effects are the ways new information influences the cognitive environment of an individual. In this case, it may reinforce prior assumptions, oppose and modify them, or give a completely novel insight. In translation, the contextual effects should be the same as in the original one for the integrity of the message to be maintained. The translator should make sure that the implications and insights that might have been derived from the source audience are derived also by the target audience.

Yet this has to be balanced with processing effort, the mental resources used to interpret and integrate the new information. According to Sperber and Wilson (1986), communication should not be localized, but rather "linguistic communication is the strongest possible form of communication, which introduces an element of explicitness where nonverbal communication can never be more than implicit" (p. 175).

This balance is particularly tricky in literary translation. So much of the meaning in a literary text is bound up in stylistic devices, cultural references, and complex emotions that depend on high levels of cognitive effort to decode. Idiomatic expressions, or culturally bound metaphors, for example, may present little cognitive load for the source audience but require more from the target audience. The translator's job, then, is to reduce this processing load without sacrificing richness or depth. Tanka stated that any deliberate increase in the effort required to process the information must be balanced by extra contextual effects if the resulting interpretation is to be consistent with the principle of relevance." (p. 93)

Cognitive Environment and Interpretive Resemblance

The concept of the cognitive environment is the primary idea in relevance theory. It designates the sum of all information an individual has access to—from personal experiences through cultural knowledge to immediate contextual clues. In translation, a translator should take into consideration the cognitive environment of the target audience, which, as a rule, drastically differs from that of the source audience.

Regarding literary translation, this becomes quite difficult. This type of literary work employs several stylistic devices that portray certain cultural and intricate emotional

elements that require enormous intellectual transformation. For example, idiomatic expressions or culture-specific metaphors are often easily understood by the source audience but demand more from the target audience. The task of a translator is thus to reduce such processing effort without compromising the richness or depth of the text. As per Gutt (2000), "a translation is supposed to achieve similar contextual effects for the target audience as the original text has for the source audience, and that should happen while minimizing unnecessary processing effort" (pp. 102–126).

In literary translation, interpretive resemblance presupposes such refined decisions as how to word an idea or an emotion. A metaphor that stirs the deepest feelings within the source culture may be changed or substituted to evoke the same emotional response in the target culture. Neglecting the cognitive environment and interpretive needs of the target audience can result in an alien translation or one lacking in emotional depth.

Application to Literary Translation. Contextual effects, processing efforts, cognitive environments, and interpretive resemblance are all principles that speak quite a lot to the problems of literary translation. For instance, the text is instilled with philosophical reflections and emotional depth, synonymous with culturally connected language and images. Indeed, translating a work means considering the very subtle balancing act between fidelity to the text and contextual adaptation for an audience.

For example, the translation of such themes as regret, hope, and meaning, which need to be universalized, would again have to resonate with the audience for whom the translation is made and not be an oversimplification or distortion of the original message. According to Xu (2015), "Relevance theory provides practical tools for tackling the dual requirements of faithfulness and accessibility in literary translation, allowing translators to produce texts that are both faithful and engaging" (p. 21). The translator will bridge many cultural and linguistic gaps to ensure comparative contextual effects with less effort on the part of the reader.

In a nutshell, relevance theory offers a broad framework from which to both understand and address the challenges of literary translation. By emphasizing contextual effects, processing effort, cognitive environment, and interpretive resemblance, it arms the translator with the wherewithal to construct a translation that is at once faithful to the source text and meaningful to the target audience. The above theoretical approach provides a foundation for the present study of the translation of *The Midnight Library* by giving insights into the strategy adopted for preserving the depths of this highly philosophical and emotional novel across linguistic and cultural boundaries.

Research Methodology

This is a descriptive qualitative research approach aimed at examining the translation techniques that are utilized in the only translation of Matt Haig's *The Midnight Library*. This research employs comparative textual analysis, considering both the source text and

the target text to understand how key themes and elements were maintained or changed. This approach allows a better description of how the translation reflects faithfulness to the original text and also seeks contextual relevance for the intended readership. Qualitative by nature, this research effort should be helpful in discussing such challenges and strategies that involve translating a work steeply tinged with philosophical and emotional dimensions.

The selection of passages for analyses is guided by the novel's central themes and stylistic features. Specific criteria would include:

1. **Existential Philosophy:** Passages dealing with the infinite issues of life, regrets in life, and the search for meaning are prioritized. In this way, these segments are essential to the thematic and philosophical core of the text and present special translational difficulties due to the abstractness and introspective weight of their contents.
2. **Emotional Scenes:** Segments that elicit strong emotional responses, where there is a sense of despair, hope, or personal epiphany, are chosen in an effort to analyze how this translation has captured and transmitted the emotional intensity of the original text.
3. **Cultural References:** Passages with culturally specific references, idiomatic expressions, or metaphors are analyzed to assess how efficiently the translation bridges cultural differences while maintaining the text's original intent and impact.

In order to assess the translation techniques resorted to in the target text, the following criteria are considered:

1. **Fidelity to the Source:** The study examines how much the translation reflects semantic content, stylistic nuances, and philosophical depth from the source text. Special attention is paid to preserving the author's tone, his style of narration, and thematic coherence.
2. **Effectiveness in Maintaining Contextual Relevance:** The research gauges how well the translation adheres to the principles of relevance theory, which involves the balance between contextual effects and processing effort. It is also the proving of whether or not the translation enables the target audience to receive similar cognitive and emotional realizations with the source audience with the least interpretive difficulties.
3. **Comparison with Specific Examples:** Specific examples are cross-examined through both source and target text. The metaphorical and philosophical depths are followed in quotes such as, "Between life and death there is a library, and within that library the shelves go on forever," to show how the translator has balanced moves from the source language and source culture into other culture and language. Moreover, sad excerpts such as, "It is not the lives we regret not living that are the problem. It's the regret itself," are unraveled for the purpose of studying how well it incites identical emotions in the target audience.

4. Synthesis of Findings: This study, therefore, aims to unravel how the findings reach the research stage in different analyses, hence shedding light on the approach of the translator, definitely emphasizing the points where the translation achieves equivalences in terms of emotion with their philosophy and what compromises are required through cultural adaptation.

Fundamentally, this would be the methodology by which to gain an in-depth understanding of how Mohammed Al-Dabaa's translation of *The Midnight Library* can be identified with the theoretical framework of relevance theory and present broader implications in research on literary translation.

Analysis and discussion

Overview of the Translation

The translation of Matt Haig's *The Midnight Library* is a laudable attempt at making a philosophically multilayered and rich novel accessible to a new linguistic and cultural audience. The translator is fully aware of the depth of theme and emotion in this novel and thus resorts to various techniques to bridge the linguistic and cultural gap without losing the essence of the original. However, the translation process inevitably entails interpretive decisions that reflect the translator's perception of the target audience's cognitive environment and cultural context. The translator's credentials and expertise in literary translation play a significant role in shaping the approach taken.

Their familiarity with the source culture and the nuances of the language and culture of the target audience also influences their capture of the philosophical and emotional undertones of the work by Haig. Well adopted into and appreciated among the audience in whose culture the translation was made, they are proclaimed by critics and read by many to have induced the same experience of self-examination and upliftment as in the original. Translation is a delicate rendition that reverberates with the readers, bridges the linguistic gaps, and preserves the universality of the themes of the literary work: the themes of hope and self-discovery.

Haig then writes, "Between life and death, there is a library; within that library, the shelves go on forever." Every book provides a chance to try another life you could have lived." The passage epitomizes the essential philosophical premise of the novel. In the target text, the metaphor is transferred with linguistic precision, although the translator's choice of wording subtly shifts the tone. It thereby sustains the contextual effects of the original but adjusts to the cognitive frame of the audience by employing terms that ring closer to the target culture's understanding of liminality and possibility.

Even stronger instances will include the translation of Nora's telling realization about the choices in life: "It is not the lives we regret not living that are the problem. It's the regret itself." This would bring out and resonate quite clearly in the existential tone that reverberates through the message of this novel. The target text does retain the

philosophical essence of the statement but uses slightly different syntax to fit into the linguistic rhythm and stylistic convention of the target language. This choice presents the source-target language fidelity-polyphonic reading style that the translators or readers prefer.

In addition, the translation successfully works out the cultural references that may be unfamiliar to the target audience. For example, the use of some British idioms and cultural markers by Haig, like references to British geography and social norms, challenges the translator in terms of making those accessible. The translator often chooses to use neutral or universally relatable expressions, thereby minimizing potential barriers to comprehension while preserving the original's intent. But this approach sometimes results in a loss of cultural specifics that enrich the source text and raises questions regarding trade-offs inherent in the process of translation.

This research examines the Arabic translation of Matt Haig's *The Midnight Library* by Mohammed Al-Dabaa and the interplay among linguistic fidelity, cultural remodeling, and philosophical depth in each case. Using relevance theory as the framework, the researcher tries to show in what way and how the translation balances between contextual effects of the original text and minimization of processing effort for the intended audience:

Key findings highlight the translator's success in preserving the emotional resonance and philosophical reflections of the source text, as was the case with the metaphor of the "Midnight Library" and Nora's existential insights.

Moreover, he manages to maintain the text through a specific competence that seems to be aimed at cultural and language nuances. Examples of these are the ways abstract philosophical concepts are treated with the emotionally colored passages, like in the philosophical reflections such as "Every life contains a capacity for infinite change," which have been skillfully adapted to fit the cognitive and cultural climate of the target audience, while emotionally touching but quite melancholic, such as "You are good enough as you are," resound loudly among everyone, putting to rest much as regards how good one's translator weighs literal fidelity against emotional truth.

The study underlines the difficulty and strategy of a translator in transcending a text so rich in the abstract and highly emotive nuanced meaning concerning sample textual comparisons. Thus, it affirms that without understanding the cognitive and cultural environment of the audience for which the translation is intended, good linguistic skill is not enough to achieve a very successful literary translation of such a multi-layered work as *The Midnight Library*.

This research goes further to look at different ways of translating literature and how Relevance Theory can be used to analyze texts that are full of deep thoughts and emotions. It helps improve the practice and understanding of literary translation by

tackling its difficulties and suggesting ways to handle them. Furthermore, it advocates for further exploration of the fundamental intricate concepts underpinning this domain, encouraging additional research in this crucial area.

Examples for analysis based on the Translation theory

Philosophical Reflections

1. *The Midnight Library Metaphor*

- Original:

"Between life and death there is a library, and within that library, the shelves go on forever. Every book provides a chance to try another life you could have lived." (38)

- Arabic Translation (Al-Dabaa):

"بين الحياة والموت هنالك مكتبة"، وفي هذه المكتبة، تمتد الرفوف إلى الأبد. كل كتابه هو فرصة لتجربة حياة أخرى يمكنك اختيارها لتتريين كيف ستتغير حياتك باختلاف قراراتك" (45)

- Analysis:

Contextual Effects:

- The metaphorical depth:

The translation reflects the philosophical profundity of the metaphor of the source text. The translator uses "تمتد الرفوف إلى الأبد" to transfer the infinity of possibilities, efficiently maintaining the original's essential symbolism.

- Processing Effort:

It makes all the syntactic and lexical choices clear enough so as to ensure minimum cognitive effort by the target audience.

- Cognitive Environment:

The library as a space of possibility: this is a metaphor which transcends cultures and will resonate accordingly. The translator has taken care to render the concept without losing any of its power.

2. *On Regret*

- Original:

"But it is not the lives we regret not living that are the real problem. It is the regret itself. It's the regret that makes us shrivel and wither and feel like our own and other people's worst enemy." (260)

- Arabic Translation (Al-Dabaa):

"ولكن المشكلة الحقيقية لا تكمن في الحيوانات التي ندمنا على عدم عيشها. بل في الندم نفسه. الندم

هو ما يجعلنا نذبل ونشعر اننا العدو واللذود لأنفسنا وللمن حولنا." (348)

- Analysis:
- Contextual Effects:
The translation of the phrase " the regret itself " into "الندم نفسه" is very simple and its simplicity recalls the original's philosophical tone and echoes its starkness.
- Processing Effort:
The translation remains direct, hence accessible to the readers without over-complicating the syntax.
- Cognitive Environment:
The universality of regret ensures that the concept is easily comprehended and appreciated in both cultures.

3. *On Living Authentically*

- Original:
"You don't have to understand life. You just have to live it." (206)
- Arabic Translation (Al-Dabaa):
" (278) ليس عليك أن تفهم الحياة، عليك فقط عيشها."
- Analysis:
- Contextual Effects:
The Arabic translation succinctly communicates the philosophy of acceptance found in the original. The cadence of "عليك فقط عيشها" reflects the imperative structure of the English, maintaining the uplifting tone.
- Processing Effort:
The brief translation reduces the potential for interpretation issues, resulting in a statement that is simple yet significant.
- Cognitive Environment:
Within this text, the reader will discover a universal truth that resonates universally through its simplicity in relation to various existential concepts.

Emotional Moments

4. *On Small Things*

- Original:
"Never underestimate the big importance of small things." (185)
- Arabic Translation (Al-Dabaa):
"لا تقلل أبداً من الأهمية الكبيرة للأشياء الصغيرة" (251) .
- Analysis:
- Contextual Effects:
The translation keeps the original's intriguing charm, highlighting the excessive significance of minor actions.

- Processing Effort:
The Arabic phrase is straightforward and reflects the original's structure, promoting clarity.
- Cognitive Environment:
The concept of valuing small things is widely relatable; thus, this excerpt is bound to resonate with Arabic readers.

5. *All good things are wild and free*

- Original: All good things are wild and free. (156)
Arabic Translation (Al-Dabaa): كل الأشياء الجيدة جامحة وحررة (209) •
- Analysis:
 - Contextual Effects:
The phrase "جامحة وحررة" effectively conveys the metaphorical meaning of "All good things," aligning with the target audience's cognitive understanding.
 - Processing Effort:
The typical tone in Arabic promotes a fluid reading experience, minimizing mental effort.
 - Cognitive Environment:
Universal encouragement toward accepting spontaneity translates beautifully, appealing to readers.

6. *On Learning through Living*

- Original:
"The Only Way to Learn Is to Live" (88)
Arabic Translation (Al-Dabaa) •
الطريق الوحيدة للتعلم يمر عبر الحياة. (69) •
- Analysis:
 - Contextual Effects:
The Arabic translation retains the straightforward and inspiring nature of the original message.
 - Processing Effort:
Its concise and clear format enhances accessibility, demonstrating the efficiency of the English version.
 - Cognitive Environment:
The universal nature of the message highlights its significance in Arabic-speaking communities, strengthening the concept of experiential learning

Moments of Hope and Realization

7. *On Self-Worth*

- Original:
'Because you already know the whole book. Because it's inside you. Just as . . . just as I am.' (207)
- Arabic Translation (Al-Dabaa):
لأنك تعرفين الكتاب عن ظهر قلب. لأنه في داخلك. مثلي ... تماما. " (278)
- Analysis:
 - Contextual Effects:
The Arabic interpretation passes on this empowering message utilizing clear dialect, keeping up the positive substance of the source text.
 - Processing Effort:
Using this phrasing here is compact and reflects the effortlessness of the initial, making it effortlessly reasonable.
 - Cognitive Environment:
The thought of self-acceptance is of all-inclusive centrality and emphatically interfaces with Arabic social settings, especially in celebrating singularity.

8. *On Human Complexity*

- Original:
"A person was like a city. You couldn't let a few less desirable parts put you off the whole. There may be bits you don't like, a few dodgy side streets and suburbs, but the good stuff makes it worthwhile." (55)
- Arabic Translation (Al-Dabaa):
"البشر اشبه بالمدن. يجب الا تدع أحياءها السيئة تفسد عليك تجريرة زيارتها. قد تجد بعض المناطق المريعة فيها، عدة شوارع جانبية ومناطق ريفية معزولة، ولكن حسناتها الرائعة تشفع لها في النهاية" (68)
- Analysis:
 - Contextual Effects:
The metaphorical comparison is in Arabic very effectively brought out. The translation retains the layered meaning of human complexity and time.
 - Processing Effort:
The clear structure in Arabic ensures minimal interpretive difficulty.
 - Cognitive Environment:
The urban metaphor resonates across cultures, making it a powerful tool for illustrating human depth.

Final Remarks:

Mohammed Al-Dabaa's translations exhibit relevance theory's principles:

- Contextual Effects: The equation maintains the emotional and philosophical depth of Haig's prose work.
- Processing Effort: The balance in between the faithfulness and clarity is kept throughout so the Arabic reader can become accustomed to it.
- Cognitive Environment: Universal themes and ideas fitted into the cultural and linguistic norm make them resonate without significant loss of meaning.

Techniques Aligned with Relevance Theory in Translating The Midnight Library

The Arabic translation of Matt Haig's *The Midnight Library*, done by Mohammed Al-Dabaa, provides a number of techniques relevant to relevance theory and contextual adjustment, explicitness-implicitness balance, and cultural-philosophical nuances. A certain number of these techniques are going to be discussed in detail within the framework of the provided examples' analysis.

Contextual Adaptation

Contextual adaptation is one of the most important techniques in literary translation, which guarantees that the target audience achieves the intended cognitive effects without excessive processing effort. In Al-Dabaa's translation, this principle is manifested in the rendering of quotes like:

- Original: "*Never underestimate the big importance of small things.*" (185)
- Arabic Translation (Al-Dabaa): (251) "لا تقلل أبداً من الأهمية الكبيرة للأشياء الصغيرة"

The linguistic center is on the interpreter, but the transition somewhat morphs the state structure to sound acceptable by Arabic colloquial standards, adapted to fit in with the cultural and linguistic norms, enhancing the resonance without a big loss of meaning and clarity.

In more abstract lines, such as:

- Original: "Every life contains a capacity for infinite change. Every life is capable of being anything."
- Translation: "كل حياة تحمل إمكانية للتغيير اللانهائي. كل حياة قادرة على أن تكون أي شيء."

The translation maintains the universality and depth in philosophy through simple yet evocative

Arabic phrasing, keeping the contextual resonance of the original intact.

Balancing Explicitness and Implicitness

A key challenge in translation is deciding whether to retain implicit ideas or make them explicit for the target audience. Al-Dabaa demonstrates skillful handling of this balance:

- Original: "You don't have to understand life. You just have to live it." (206)
- Translation: (278) "ليس عليك أن تفهم الحياة، عليك فقط عيشها."

The Arabic version stands loyal to the simplicity and clarity of the source text. The translator gives way to the resistance from over-explanation; this is respect for the implicit philosophical message, so readers can deal with its several meanings.

In contrast, in culturally specific metaphors such as:

- Original: "The game is never over until it's over."
- Translation: "اللعبة لا تنتهي أبداً حتى تنتهي."

The literal translation is maintained herein, since the metaphor is universal and does not need any explicit cultural adjustment. This choice minimizes processing effort, trusting the target audience to infer from context.

Handling Cultural and Philosophical Nuances

Translating the nuances of culture and philosophy is a challenging task, especially in texts like *The Midnight Library*, where universal themes interplay with culturally specific expressions.

For example:

- Original: "You are enough just as you are."
- Translation: "أنت كافٍ كما أنت."

The Arabic rendition catches this empowering tone of the original; the translator opted for simple phrasing in order to make this philosophical affirmation accessible and thus not devoid of its emotional impact.

In rich passages of philosophical introspection such as:

- Original: "A meaningful life isn't always the same as a successful one."
- Translation: "الحياة ذات المعنى ليست دائماً الحياة الناجحة."

The translator chooses linguistic equivalence while maintaining the reflective tone. This choice is in line with relevance theory because it ensures that the contextual effects of the message-questioning societal values-are maintained without burdening the target audience with cultural reinterpretations.

Additionally, in culturally abstract ideas like:

- Original: "Hope is the thing that can turn impossibility into possibility."
- Translation: "الأمل هو الشيء الذي يمكنه أن يحول المستحيل إلى ممكن."

This translation retains the universality carried by the original simple phrasing in Arabic; it should keep the philosophical nuance clear and emotionally resonating. The translation maintains the universal message contained within the original. In their simplicity, the phrasing in Arabic retains the nuance of the philosophy accessible yet emotional.

In the light of the above analysis, contextual adjustment, explicitness-implicitness balance, and handling cultural and philosophical untranslatability in Mohammed Al-Dabaa's translation of *The Midnight Library* perfectly follow the ideas of Relevance Theory, which enables the target audience to extract the novel's emotional depth, philosophical reflections, and universality with minimal processing effort and maximal contextual relevance. This approach indicates the translator's subtle comprehension of the source text and the cognitive environment of the Arabic-speaking audience.

Conclusion

This research explored the application of relevance theory in analyzing the Arabic translation of Matt Haig's *The Midnight Library* by Mohammed Al-Dabaa. The research elaborated on how the translator negotiated the interplay of linguistic fidelity, cultural adaptation, and philosophical depth required by such a richly abstract, emotionally resonant text with strong cultural overtones.

This paper used a qualitative descriptive approach by selecting some passages from the novel *The Midnight Library* by Haig and were compared with their Arabic translation through an existential, emotionally richly charged, and culturally tinged perspective. The research findings indicated that the translation attained a remarkable balance between the contextual effect of the source text and the reduction of processing effort for Arabic readership. Such an achievement accordingly fulfills the requirement imposed by relevance theory: this will indeed provide target readers with cognitive and emotional insights intended by the original.

Key translation strategies were observed:

- **Contextual Adaptation:** The idiomatic expression, as adopted by the translator, and the cultural references were to make sure that the translation would remain accessible and be in tune with the Arabic-speaking target audience while retaining the integrity of the original text.
- **Explicit and Implicit Balance:** The translator balanced with great skill the level of philosophical depth and emotional undertones between implicit and explicit, allowing the audience to interact with this multilayered meaning without losing interpretive clarity.
- **Handling Cultural and Philosophical Nuances:** Through linguistic equivalence and careful selection of phrasing, the translator preserved the novel's universal themes and emotional impact while bridging cultural and philosophical gaps.

The research underlined the significance of relevance theory in assessing literary translations. And it really establishes the idea that translating literature does not merely mean replacing one word by another, but arriving rather than ensuring shared mental environment among the readers that could spawn some similar meanings and emotional experiences.

In this way, the paper will add to the larger debates on methods of literary translation, focusing on texts that are loaded with philosophical and emotional issues through the study of the complex interaction of language, culture, and cognition. It would argue from here that to translate such works require not just linguistic competence but an acute sensitivity to the cognitive and cultural realities of the audience's target. Therefore, this study opens up future possibilities. Further research work based on the applicability of Relevance Theory to other genres and languages would enrich the discipline of translation studies.

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