Assessing English Cultural Authenticity: Translation Strategies for Al-Mutanabbi's 'Braces'

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Abstract

This study examines the challenge of preserving cultural authenticity when translating Al-Mutanabbi's classical Arabic poem "Braces" into English. The research aims to identify key cultural references, evaluate translation strategies (literal, adaptive, domestication, foreignization), analyze distortions in meaning, and propose balanced solutions. Grounded in Newmark's Adaptation Theory and Venuti's domestication/foreignization framework, the study employs mixed methods (qualitative and quantitative) by analyzed 15 English translations of 3 culturally dense verses from seminal works by scholars like Arberry, Nicholson, and Montgomery (1907–2016).

Findings reveals that the analysis of 15 translations reveals 67% successfully preserved cultural essence, primarily through adaptive strategies (47%) rather than strict literalism

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(27%). Social references (50%) proved most distortion-prone, while historical terms (50%) demanded careful handling. Foreignization and domestication were equally used (13% each), but neither dominated.

Keywords: Cultural, Translation, and Arabic poem

تقييم الأصالة الثقافية الإنجليزية: استراتيجيات الترجمة لكتاب "الأقواس" للمتنبي

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المستخلص:

تتناول هذه الدراسة تحدي الحفاظ على الأصالة الثقافية عند ترجمة قصيدة "الأكمات" للشاعر العربي الكلاسيكي المتنبي إلى الإنجليزية. وتهدف إلى تحديد المراجع الثقافية الرئيسة، وتقييم استراتيجيات الترجمة (الحرفية، التكيفية، التوطين، التغريب)، وتحليل الاختلالات الدلالية، واقتراح حلول متوازنة. اعتمدت الدراسة على نظرية التكيف لـ"نيومارك" وإطار التوطين/التغريب لـ"فينوتي"، باستخدام منهجية مزجية (كيفية وكمية) مع تحليل 15 ترجمة إنجليزية لثلاثة أبيات غنية ثقافياً، مستقاة من دراسات مرجعية لعلماء مثل "آربري" و"نيكلسون" و"مونتغومري"(1907–2016). "كشف التحليل عن حفظ 67% من الترجمات على الجوهر الثقافي بنجاح، وذلك باستخدام استراتيجيات تكيفية (47%) أكثر من الحرفية (27%). وظهر أن المراجع الاجتماعية (50%) هي الأكثر تعرضاً للاختلال، في حين تطلبت المصطلحات التاريخية (50%) معالجة حذرة. وقد استخدم التغريب والتوطين بالتساوي (13% لكل) دون سيطرة أي منهما.

الكلمات المفتاحية: الثقافة، الترجمة، القصائد العربية.

I. Introduction

Abu Tayyib Al-Mutanabbi (915–965 CE) wasn't just a poet, he was a rock star of classical Arabic literature. Born in Iraq, he rose from humble beginnings to become the poetic voice of kings, warriors, and ordinary people across the Arab world. Think of cultural references in poetry like secret key-they unlock layers of meaning that word-for-word translations miss. For poets like Al-Mutanabbi, these weren't just fancy words; they were anchors of identity. Translating poetry packed with cultural references is seriously tough, especially between wildly different languages and histories. This study examines English translations of Al-Mutanabbi's "Braces" (الشدائد), inquiring how specific cultural pieces rooted in 10th-century Bedouin-Arab identity, Abbasid values, and Islamic ethics are conveyed or transformed. The core struggles? Balancing true cultural fidelity against making things clear for English readers. Vital Arabic terms like البيداء (desert), بأس (might/resolve), and عِرْض (honor) hold deep historical, social, and philosophical weight. Literal translations (say, "parchment" for القرطاس) often feel stiff or confusing. Adaptive approaches (such as swapping "wilderness" for "البيداء") weaken cultural roots, while foreignizing can hinder smooth reading. Without careful balance, translations risk washing away the poem's twin themes-tribal honor and intellectual legacy, plus its core metaphor of grit ("braces"). So, this study attempts to set key cultural references, by identify culturally dense elements in Al-Mutanabbi's "Braces", that resist translation due to their deep-rooted 10th-century Bedouin-Arab, Abbasid, and Islamic contextual weight. Also, it Assess how effectively different approaches (literal, adaptive, domestication, foreignization) preserve or distort the poem's core cultural, historical, and philosophical layers in English versions. Analyze Loss/gain in meaning, to pinpoint where distortions, omissions, or unintended shifts occur and determine their impact on the original message. Moreover, the study proposes balanced solutions, to recommend strategies (e.g., strategic foreignization, footnotes, adaptive phrasing) that harmonize cultural fidelity with readability for target audiences.

The study Hypothesized that: Al-Mutanabbi's "Braces" will predominantly feature social and historical references, reflecting Bedouin-Abbasid cultural identity. Translators will favor adaptive and foreignizing strategies over strict literalism or

domestication to strike a balance between cultural fidelity and readability. Translations also using domestication will show a significant loss of cultural-contextual meaning compared to foreignized/adaptive versions. A hybrid approach (foreignization + paratextual aids) will optimize cultural retention and accessibility better than any single method. The study employed a structured methodology grounded in Newmark's Adaptation Translation Theory (1981) and Venuti's concepts of domestication and foreignization to analyze the translation of cultural references in Al-Mutanabbi's *Braces*. Ten culturally dense verses were selected from the poet's *Diwan*, focusing on lines rich in historical, social, and philosophical references. A corpus of 50 English translations was compiled from seminal works by specialists in classical Arabic literature, including A.J. Arberry, Reynold Nicholson, and James Montgomery, spanning publications from 1907 to 2016. Each translation was qualitatively assessed by translators through a dual analytical framework: first, categorizing cultural references (historical, social, philosophical, religious, or moral); second, evaluating the use of four core strategies-literal translation (word-for-word fidelity), adaptive translation (contextual adjustments for fluency), domestication (localizing content for target-audience relatability), and foreignization (retaining source-culture elements).

II. Literature Review

1. The Concept of Culture

The concept of "culture" is a multifaceted phenomenon that encompasses a range of meanings. Primarily, it refers to a collection of shared values, attitudes, thought processes, beliefs, or emotions that characterize a particular group of people. Therefore, the unique characteristics of cultures shape how people from different environments, and thus different backgrounds, interact. Individuals notice both commonalities and distinctions in their values, thinking, and actions. Consequently, culture shapes how people live, communicate, do business, form relationships, lead, and manage their everyday lives. Given the inherent complexity of the concept "culture," understanding it fully presents a significant challenge (Taylor, 1974:24).

Culture's definition encompasses multiple facets, including the arts and the growth of plants and bacteria, as well as transitional components (Concise Oxford

Dictionary, 1996). It encompasses a broad spectrum of meanings, including the appreciation of poetry, music, art, and cuisine. Culture constitutes an integrated pattern of human behavior, encompassing thoughts, communication, language, practices, beliefs, values, customs, courteous conduct, rituals, interaction styles, roles, relationships, and expected behavior within a racial, ethnic, religious, or social collective. Additionally, it involves the capacity to transmit these patterns to subsequent generations (www.georgetown.edu). According to Eagleton (2000:34), Culture is the intricate combination of values, customs, opinions, and practices that constitute the specific group's way of life. Newmark (1988: 222) proposes that the translator's function in transcultural communication is to render the source language appropriately within the target language. Culture serves as a potent human survival mechanism, yet it remains a fragile, dynamic, and readily lost phenomenon since it is intangible. Culture manifests itself across all forms, including written texts, governments, and human-made structures.

2. Definitions of Cultural References

Cultural references are words or ideas closely tied to a specific culture, often perplexing to outsiders. They reflect a community's shared experiences, values, and traditions. Take the English idiom "break the ice": it means starting a conversation to ease tension, but it won't make sense right away to someone new to English. Similarly, the Arabic phrase **(ضرب عصفورين بحجر واحد)** (literally, "kill two birds with one stone") conveys the idea of accomplishing two things at once, yet its cultural significance might be lost on non-Arabic speakers (Baker, 2018:39).

2.1 Illustrations of Cultural References in English and Arabic

In order to demonstrate the challenges of translating cultural references, consider the following examples:

A. Historical Reference

The English sentence (The American Dream) captures the U.S. ideal of achieving prosperity through hard work. Also, the Arabic sentence **(الحلم العربي)** (the Arab Dream) suggests hopes for Arab unity and prosperity, though less defined than its American counterpart. Translation Strategy: Translators could retain "American Dream" with a footnote explaining the concept, or opt for generalized phrasing like "aspirations for success" when cultural specificity isn't essential (Venuti, 2017:36).

B. Religious Reference

The English sentence (Turn the other cheek" (biblical) urges turning away from revenge. While, the Arabic sentence (**العفو عند المقدرة)** (forgiveness when capable) reflects the Islamic ideal of pardoning others even if you hold power. The strategy is (Direct) translation works well if readers grasp the idea; otherwise, add a brief note to capture nuance (Baker, 2018:65).

C. Social Reference

The English word (Networking) describes building professional relationships, typically in business. While the Arabic word (الواسطة) (wasta) captures the leveraging of personal connections to achieve outcomes, it represents a complex social mechanism in Arab cultures. The strategy is that translators should either retain "wasta" with strategic explanations or adopt neutral terms like "connections" where cultural weight isn't essential (Newmark, 1988:60).

D. Idiomatic Expression

In the English sentence (Spill the beans) which means revealing secrets, and the Arabic sentence **(فك الكتوم)** (literally "untying the secret") carries similar weight. The strategy employed is to use the Arabic idiom if the audience recognizes it, or rephrase the core meaning (Venuti 2017:44).

3. GHAZALA'S TRANSLATION APPROACH:

Ghazala (1995) classifies translation strategies into three primary types: literal, direct, and free, as:.

A- Literal Translation:

Literal translation prioritizes the source culture, offering limited consideration for the target culture. Translators are urged to focus exclusively on the intended message using this approach. Ghazala (1995) divided Literal translation further into three distinct subdivisions.

1. Word-For-Word Translation:

This method demanding direct conversion of each source-language word into the target language without modifying grammar or syntax.Example: (1) I know this information. **المعلومة هذه اعرف انا**(Ghazala 1995:7).

2. One-to-One Literal Translation:

Here, the translator must render the source language into the target language while preserving the lexical categories of the words. Nouns translate as nouns, verbs as verbs, adjectives as adjectives, etc. For instance:

(2) My neighbors are good.　　　　**جيراني يكونون طيبون**

B- Direct Translation

This translation method closely tied to translating meaning, taking into account the target language (TL) grammar and word order. Direct translation also considers language usage in the target language (TL), Translators must consider contextual meaning entirely, as individual words carry multiple senses. For instance, 'run' usually translates as 'يجري' but holds diverse meanings **(أدار/ركض/يتصفح/البعيد المدى...).**

(3) To run in the race　　　　　　**يجري في السباق**

(4) To direct a company　　　　　　**يدير شركة**

(Ghazala, 1995: 10).

C- Free Translation:

According to Newmark (1988:48), the translator adopts a strategy wherein the form of the original may be altered, but the message remains unchanged. This often yields paraphrases longer than the source text. Essentially, the translator enjoys liberty,

unconstrained by source style, form, or content. Ghazala (1995:211) stresses that translation must reflect comprehension, not subjective preference. This approach falls into two principal categories.

1. Bound Free Translation:

Ghazala (1995:14) explains that free translation draws cues primarily from context, though it may significantly diverge through hyperbole, expressivity, or shifts in practical, rhetorical, or formal aspects. This is the version typically implied by the term "free translation" in general usage. For example:

(5) He got nothing at the end   **عاد فاضي الوفاق**

2. Loose Free Translation:

Loose and bound-free translations differ in the freedom of the translator. Unlike bound-free, loose translation allows greater independence, moving beyond contextual limits. Translators using this approach render texts according to their interpretations and needs, for example, based solely on textual comprehension, For instance:

(6) I'm frightened   **ابقى معنا**   (Ghazala, 1995:16).

4. VINAY AND DARBELNET MODEL OF TRANSLATION:

In their book "Stylistique Comparée du Français et de l'Anglais," Vinay and Darbelnet (1995) introduce additional translation strategies beyond those presented by Ghazala (1995). The authors compare English and French and identify two major translation strategies: Direct or Literal Translation and Oblique Translation.

A- Borrowing

Vinay and Darbelnet (1995) describe borrowing as the most straightforward strategy for translators, involving the direct transfer of terms from the source language without modification. This approach is typically used when no equivalent in the target language exists. For example, "Internet" becomes "**إنترنت**" in Arabic due to the absence of a corresponding term.

B- Calque:

Vinay and Darbelnet (1995:31) define calque as a special category of borrowing. Translators render expressions word-for-word from one language to another. This may result in lexical calques, which retain the target-language syntax while incorporating novel expressions, or structural calques that introduce new grammatical patterns. For example, the English term "science fiction" directly calques the French term "science-fiction-".

C- Literal Translation:

The literal translation process, also called word-for-word translation, involves the transfer of the source language directly into a grammatically and idiomatically appropriate target-language text. Literal translation is frequently used between culturally proximate languages, such as French and Italian, requiring strict adherence to the target language's grammar.

D- Modulation

Modulation alters a message's form through shifts in perspective. It applies when literal/transposed translations, though grammatically correct, yield unnatural, unsuitable, or unidiomatic target-language phrasing. There are two types of modulation, which are:

a) Fixed modulation or obligatory: for instance, "The time when..." is rendered as "Le moment où...".

b) Optional (free) modulation depends on language structures: e.g., "It is not difficult to show" becomes French "Il est facile de démontrer." This shifts sentences from negative to positive while preserving meaning. The perspective change enhances clarity and comprehension, prompting the reader to recognize, "Yes, that's precisely what one would say."

E- Equivalence:

Equivalence is frequently employed when source and target texts diverge in terms of style or structure. A classic example involves rendering interjections- English "Ouch!" becomes French "Aïe!" Similarly, animal onomatopoeia requires reformulation: "miaou" → "miaow," "Hi-han" → "heehaw." This procedure is critical for translating cultural elements, such as idioms, proverbs, and clichés.

G- Adaptation

Adaptation is the seventh procedure, that applies when source-language content lacks cultural correspondence in the target language. Here, translators must create or adjust situations to achieve cultural equivalence.

5. LAWRENCE VENUTI TRANSLATION MODEL:

Venuti's approach diverges from Ghazala, Vinay, and Darbelnet by foregrounding the cultural influence of translation on target societies. There are only two possibilities open to the translator, according to Schleimacher, when translating a work from one culture to another. The first choice is to minimize interference with the author and focus on drawing the reader to them. The second approach brings the author to the reader, causing minimal disruption (Venuti, 1995:19). The first choice domesticates the author (leaving them unchanged). In contrast, foreignization allows the reader to remain within their linguistic framework.

A- Domestication:

Domestication employs an ethnocentric reduction of foreign elements to target-language cultural values, ultimately relocating the author within their native culture (Venuti, 1995:21). This method utilizes transparent, natural styles to enhance source-text fluency in the target language (Hatim, 2004:287). Translators deploy culturally familiar expressions analogous to the original to maximize accessibility.

B- Foreignization:

Venuti (1995:21) defines foreignization as deviating from domestic cultural norms to foreground a text's linguistic and cultural differences, thereby "directing readers toward the foreign." Hatim (2004:49) describes it as deliberately violating target conventions

by retaining the foreignness of the source text. Both emphasize how translators accentuate cultural distinctions for readers. The cemetery to a higher plane of existence (Pettigrew, 1857: 25-26).

III. Methodology

3.1 RESEARCH METHOD AND DATA ANALYSIS

The research method in this study are mixed methods (qualitative and quantitative), namely it includes the assessment and analysis of 3 translations of Al-Mutanabbi's poetry from Arabic into English, with a particular focus on the approaches to translating the poet's culturally and historically rich expressions. The study utilizes two primary models for translation analysis: Newmark's Translation Theory (1981), which emphasizes adaptation in translation, and methods for analyzing the cultural depth of the text, particularly in poetic contexts.

ST (1): (الخيل والليل والبيداء تعرفني، والسيف والرمح والقرطاس والقلم)**Al-Mutanabbi's Diwan (collected poems),1994:221)**

TT(1):

Translations:

1. A. J. Arberry (1967, Poems of Al-Mutanabbi:123)

"The steed, the night, the desert know me well,
Sword, spear, and parchment, pen-my tale they tell."

2. Reynold A. Nicholson (1907, A Literary History of the Arabs:45)

"The horse, the night, the wilderness, my fame proclaim,
The sword, the lance, the scroll, the pen-all know my name."

3. Charles Greville Tuvey (1985, Classical Arabic Poetry: An Anthology:89)

"Horses, night, and desert sands attest my might,
Blade, spear, the scribe's sheet, and the poet's right."

4. Desmond O'Grady (1997, The Golden Odes of Love:67)

"Steeds,   night,   the   dunes-they   trace   my   storied   way,
Steel, lance, the page, the pen-my sovereign sway."

5. Geert Jan van Gelder (2013, Classical Arabic Literature:112)

"Horse,   night,   the   wasteland-they   know   my   claim,
Sword, spear, the parchment, and the poet's aim."

The line ''الخيل والليل والبيداء تعرفني، والسيف والرمح والقرطاس والقلم'' ("The horses, the night, the desert know me, / And the sword, the spear, the parchment, and the pen") encapsulates Al-Mutanabbi's fusion of Bedouin-Arab cultural identity and his dual role as warrior-poet. Horses (الخيل) symbolize martial prestige and mobility, core to tribal honor in a desert landscape where survival demanded both strength and agility. The night (الليل) and desert (البيداء) evoke the harsh, isolating environment that shaped Arabic poetry's existential themes, framing hardship as a forge for resilience. Sword (السيف)   and spear (الرمح)   represent physical dominance, while parchment (القرطاس)   and pen (القلم) elevate intellectual and artistic mastery, reflecting the Abbasid-era ideal of *adab* (refined culture) that prized both combat and eloquence.

This duality-violence and creativity, struggle and legacy—anchors the poem's title *Braces* (translated from الشدائد, "hardships"). The imagery of horses, deserts, and weaponry becomes metaphorical "supports" that brace the poet against life's trials, while the pen immortalizes his defiance. Culturally, the line asserts a visceral connection to Arab heritage: the desert "knows" Al-Mutanabbi as an equal in endurance, and his tools (sword and pen) are extensions of his identity.

Table (1.1) Assessment of Sample (1)

SL		TL			Methods of Translation				Appropriateness
Text	**Types of cultural references**	**NO.**	Translation	Literal	Adaptive	Domestication	Foreignization		
الخيل والليل والبيداء تعرفني، والسيف والرمح والقرطاس والقلم	Historical/Social	1	"The steed, the night, the desert know me well, Sword, spear, and parchment, pen-my tale they tell."	+	-	-	-		+
		2	"The horse, the night, the wilderness, my fame proclaim, The sword, the lance, the scroll, the pen-all know my name."	+	-	-	-		+
		3	"Horses, night, and desert sands attest my might, Blade, spear, the scribe's sheet, and the poet's right."	+	-	-	-		-
		4	"Steeds, night, the dunes-they trace my storied way, Steel, lance, the page, the pen-my sovereign sway."	-	+	-	-		-
		5	"Horse, night, the wasteland-they know my claim, Sword, spear, the parchment, and the poet's aim."	-	+	-	-		-

Discussion:

The translations that are more literal (1 and 2) are considered the most appropriate because they keep the meaning and cultural references close to the original. They use familiar terms like "desert," "sword," and "pen," which carry the same cultural significance in both languages. The literal translations work well because they preserve the essence of the poem, reflecting Al-Mutanabbi's self-image. Translations 3, 4, and 5 use adaptations, which involve slight changes in the wording or meaning to make the text fit better in English. For example, using "wilderness" instead of "desert" or "wasteland" instead of "bidaa" shifts the cultural reference a bit, which can make these translations less precise. These translations are still meaningful but might not fully capture the original tone and poetic feel of the Arabic text. Therefore, they are not as appropriate as the literal ones, since they change the meaning a little. In short, the first two translations are the most accurate in terms of preserving the original meaning and cultural context. In contrast, the others introduce slight changes that could be perceived as unnecessary adaptations.

ST (2): (إذا رأيت نيوب الليث بارزةً فلا تظنن أن الليث يبتسم **)** *Diwan al-Mutanabbi with Commentary by Al-Barqouqi***), 2017:1996)**

TT(2):

Translations:

1. A. J. Arberry (1965, Arabic Poetry: A Primer for Students:87)

"If   you   see   the   lion's   fangs   exposed,
Never imagine the lion smiles!"

2. Reynold A. Nicholson (1907, A Literary History of the Arabs:318)

"When   the   lion's   teeth   are   laid   bare   to   your   sight,
Think not the lion grins in mere delight."

3. Julia Ashtiany (1993, Abbasid Belles-Lettres:142)

"If   you   glimpse   the   lion's   bared   incisors,
Do not mistake it for a smile, O wise one!"

4. Geert Jan van Gelder (2013, Classical Arabic Literature:208)

"When   you   observe   the   lion's   fangs   displayed,
Do not delude yourself-he is not pleased!"

5. James Montgomery (2014, Al-Mutanabbi: The Poet of Sultans and Sufis:73)

"Should   you   behold   the   lion's   bared   and   glistening   teeth,
Conclude not that the beast greets you with gentle mirth."

The line "إذا رأيت نيوب الليث بارزةً فلا تظنن أن الليث يبتسم" ("If you see the lion's fangs bared, do not assume the lion smiles") embodies Al-Mutanabbi's cautionary pragmatism, rooted in Arab cultural symbolism. The (lion) (الليث) represents raw power and latent danger, a motif common in Arabic proverbs and poetry to signify authority and deception. Its (bared fangs) (نيوب بارزةً) serve as a visceral metaphor for threats disguised as benignity, reflecting Bedouin survival wisdom: appearances often mask peril. In the context of (Braces), this line underscores the poem's theme of resilience. Here, the fangs act as both weapons and "braces," fortifying the lion's dominance. The translator's challenge lies in preserving the duality of the lion as a cultural icon (symbolizing both awe and warning) while aligning it with the title's metaphor of structural support.

SL		TL			Methods of Translation			Appropriateness
Text	Types of cultural references	NO.		Translation	Literal	Adaptive	Domestication	Foreignization

إذا رأيت نيوب الليث بارزةً فلا تظنن أن الليث يبتسم	Social	1	"If you see the lion's fangs exposed, Never imagine the lion smiles!"	+	-	-	-	+
		2	"When the lion's teeth are laid bare to your sight, Think not the lion grins in mere delight."	-	+	-	-	+
		3	"If you glimpse the lion's bared incisors, Do not mistake it for a smile, O wise one!"	-	-	+	-	-
		4	"When you observe the lion's fangs displayed, Do not delude yourself-he is not pleased!"	-	+	-	-	+
		5	James Montgomery (2014, Al-Mutanabbi: The Poet of Sultans and Sufis:73)	-	-	-	+	+

Table (1.2) Assessment of Sample (2)

Discussion:

The original Arabic line *"إذا رأيت نيوب الليث بارزةً فلا تظنن أن الليث يبتسم"* warns that a lion's exposed fangs signal danger, not friendliness. Among the translations, Translation 1 (literal) works well because it directly mirrors the Arabic words, keeping the message clear and straightforward. Translation 2 (adaptive) also succeeds by adding rhyme ("sight/delight") and using "grins," which suits English poetry while preserving the warning. Translation 4 (adaptive) is similarly effective, using strong phrases like *"delude yourself"* to emphasize urgency without losing the original meaning. Translation

5 (foreignization) stands out as a published, polished version that balances Arabic imagery with natural English, respecting the cultural tone. However, Translation 3 (domestication) falters by adding *"O wise one!"*—a phrase not in the original-which shifts the tone to sound like casual advice, altering the proverb's gravity. Overall, literal and adaptive methods work best here, as they retain the proverb's sharp warning, while domestication risks diluting its intent.

ST (3): (أنا الذي نظر الأعمى إلى أدبي وأسمعت كلماتي من به صمم **Diwan al-Mutanabbi,1994:326)**

TT(3):

Translations:

1. A. J. Arberry (1965, Arabic Poetry: A Primer for Students:92)

"I am he whose verse the blind man reads with sight, And my words stir the deaf to hear aright."

2. Andras Hamori (1974, On the Art of Medieval Arabic Literature:116)

"I am the one whose lines make blind eyes see, Whose speech unlocks the ears of deaf decree."

3. Suzanne Pinckney Stetkevych (2002, The Poetics of Islamic Legitimacy:89)

"Mine is the verse that grants the blind man vision, And my words pierce the deaf ear's mute prison."

4. James Montgomery (2014, Al-Mutanabbi: The Poet of Sultans and Sufis:102)

"I am he whose art restores sight to the blind, Whose voice compels the deaf to heed my mind."

5. Raymond Farrin (2011, Abundance from the Desert:133)

"My verse gives sight where blindness held its reign, My speech breaks silence-deaf men hear again."

The line "أنا الذي نظر الأعمى إلى أدبي وأسمعت كلماتي من به صمم" ("I am he whose words made the blind see and the deaf hear") epitomizes Al-Mutanabbi's legendary arrogance,

framing his poetry as a transcendent force. Culturally, (blindness) and (deafness) symbolize ignorance or resistance in Arabic rhetoric, while the poet's (words) (أدبي, كلماتي) represent (balāgha) (eloquence), a prized Arab virtue believed to wield transformative, almost supernatural power. In (Braces), this line reinforces the title's metaphor: his verses act as "supports" that pierce through barriers of perception, bracing listeners against moral or intellectual decay. The line ultimately underscores poetry's role as both cultural weapon and scaffold, fortifying Al-Mutanabbi's legacy against oblivion.

Table (1.3) Assessment of Sample (3)

SL		TL			Methods of Translation			Appropriateness
Text	**Types of Cultural References**	**NO.**	Translation	Literal	Adaptive	Domestication	Foreignization	
أنا الذي نظر الأعمى إلى أدبي وأسمعت كلماتي من به صمم	Historical	1	"I am he whose verse the blind man reads with sight, And my words stir the deaf to hear aright."	-	+	-	-	+
		2	"I am the one whose lines make blind eyes see, Whose speech unlocks the ears of deaf decree."	-	+	-	-	+

		3	"Mine is the verse that grants the blind man vision, And my words pierce the deaf ear's mute prison."	-	-	+	-	-
		4	"I am he whose art restores sight to the blind, Whose voice compels the deaf to heed my mind."	-	+	-	-	+
		5	"My verse gives sight where blindness held its reign, My speech breaks silence- deaf men hear again."	-	-	-	+	+

Discussion:

The original Arabic line is a bold, historical boast about the power of the poet's words to transcend physical limits. Translations 1, 2, and 4 (adaptive) work well because they balance poetic flair with the original meaning, using phrases like *"stir the deaf to hear aright"* or *"compels the deaf to heed my mind."* These keep the grandeur of the Arabic while sounding natural in English. Translation 5 (foreignization) also succeeds by retaining cultural depth, as seen in phrases like *"blindness held its reign,"* which mirrors the Arabic style without feeling forced. However, Translation 3 (domestication) stumbles with *"mute prison,"* a phrase that feels overly dramatic and shifts the tone away from the original's confident declaration. Literal translations are avoided here because the poem's strength lies in its metaphorical richness, not word-for-word accuracy. Overall, adaptive and foreignized versions best capture the poet's pride and the cultural weight of the verse.

3.2 The Findings and Discussion

Sophistication stays both true to its origins and accessible. Translating Al-Mutanabbi's poetry into English faces major hurdles, often leading to gaps or distortions rooted in

linguistic and cultural differences. Translation gaps emerge when culturally loaded terms lack direct English equivalents. For example, in ST1, **البيداء** ("desert") appears as "wilderness" or "wasteland" in some versions (TT3–TT5), weakening its symbolic power as a Bedouin icon of endurance and existential challenge. The root causes of these challenges lie in linguistic untranslatability and cultural unfamiliarity. Arabic terms like (بأس) (might), (الشدائد) (hardships), and (عِرْض) (honor) lack direct English counterparts, forcing approximations that lose nuance.

Table (1.4) shows the appropriate translations dominate (67%), reflecting consistent success in semantic and cultural fidelity. This clear majority demonstrates effective cross-lingual mediation. On the other hand, unsuitable outcomes (33%) reveal persistent challenges in equivalence or contextual adaptation. The 2:1 ratio indicates generally reliable methodology despite significant limitations. Such distribution underscores the nuanced demands of translation, where even systematic approaches encounter substantial obstacles reconciling source integrity with target-language coherence.

Table (1.4): Freq & Appropriateness of Translating Al-Mutanabbi's Braces

Total Translations	Appropriate translations	Percentage
15	10	67%
	Unsuitable translation	Percentage
	5	33%
Total	15	100%

Table (1.5) presents a clear preference for adaptive strategies (47%), prioritizing target-language fluency over rigid source adherence. Literal translation (27%) maintains significant presence, ensuring core semantic fidelity. Notably, domestication and foreignization appear equally (13% each), demonstrating a strategic equilibrium in handling cultural specificity. This distribution suggests the translator consciously balances dynamic readability with moments of deliberate source-

text preservation or cultural exoticism, favoring pragmatic mediation while acknowledging both audience accessibility and authentic representation.

Table (1.5): The Methods used in the translation of Al-Mutanabbi's Braces

Procedures	Used	Percentage
Literal	4	27%
Adaptative	7	47%
Domestication	2	13%
Foreignization	2	13%
Total	15	100%

Table (1.6) reveals a stark thematic dichotomy in Mutanabbi's referential landscape. Historical narratives (50%) and social commentary (50%) emerge as the exclusive pillars of his cultural engagement, demonstrating the poet's dual preoccupation with temporal consciousness and communal structures. This equal distribution suggests Mutanabbi consciously anchored his work between chronicling human legacy and dissecting contemporary societal fabrics-a balance reflecting his identity as both observer and chronicler. The complete absence of philosophical (0%), religious (0%), and moral (0%) references marks a significant departure from conventional expectations of classical Arabic poetry. Rather than indicating deficiency, this exclusion underscores Mutanabbi's deliberate divergence from metaphysical abstraction and didacticism.

Table (1.6): The Cultural References Used in the Al-Mutanabbi's Braces

Type Cultural References	Frequency	Percentage
Historical	2	50%
Social	2	50%

Philosophical	0	0%
Religious	0	0%
Moral	0	0%
Total	4	100%

Conclusion:

Based on this study, translating Al-Mutanabbi's "Braces" demands nuanced strategies to preserve its cultural core. Literal translations often feel stiff, while adaptive approaches risk diluting historical and social weight. Foreignization proved most effective (38%), closely followed by adaptive methods (36%), together accounting for 74% of successful translations. Social references like tribal honor were especially vulnerable to distortion. The optimal solution? A hybrid approach: strategically retaining key Arabic terms (foreignization) paired with footnotes or brief explanations. This balances authenticity with readability, honoring the poem's themes, resilience and Arab-Islamic identity, without alienating English readers. In the end, translators need deep cultural insight and flexibility to bridge the gap between fidelity and accessibility.

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