The Impact of Translator's Gender and Culture on the Arabic Translations of Morrison's *The Bluest Eye*: A Qualitative Analysis

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Abstract: This paper examines the influence of the gender and culture of Arab male translators on the Arabic translations of Toni Morrison's *The Bluest Eye*. It compares the translations by Kamel Youssef Hessein and Fadel Soultani, and focuses on how gender biases and cultural contexts influence the translation and affect the portrayal of female characters. The study employs a qualitative method, integrating Fairclough's Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) and Toury's Translational Norms (TN) to assess the Arab male translators' linguistic choices and their impact on the target texts (TTs). Through a paratextual, descriptive, interpretative, and translational norms analysis, the research identifies cases of gender bias, cultural adaptation, and ideological influences in the translations. The findings reveal that male translators' interpretations lead to subtle erasures and alterations of female characters' voices, reflecting certain patriarchal and cultural biases. The study emphasizes the need of taking into account the gender and cultural background of the translator in literary translation.

Keywords: CDA, culture, gender, male translators, *The Bluest Eye*, translation analysis

1. Introduction

Studies have revealed fundamental differences in language usage between men and women (Cameron 1998). Both are influenced by a culture with prevalent gender biases, adopting specific vocabulary and speech patterns associated with their gender. Men tend to use more aggressive and confrontational language, while women employ more pleasant and collaborative speech (Wardhaugh 2006: 326). However, it is essential to note that there are not two distinct languages, but rather clear linguistic disparities between both sexes (Baron 1986: 59-63). The significance of this observation becomes clearer when examining translations of works by a female author two culturally distinct languages, English and Arabic, particularly when these translations are done by male translators. While sociolinguistic investigations have primarily focused on gender differences within a given language, certain linguistic characteristics remain universal across languages.

In relation to the paper at hand, Flotow (1997: 49) argues that certain female writings have been inadequately translated, a practice she labels as 'patriarchal translation'. English translations often omit sections highlighting women's historical achievements, particularly those discussing controversial topics and traditional gender roles (1997). Besides the translator's gender, ideology also

influences the translation process. Lefevere (1998) defines ideology as the beliefs and attitudes shaping how readers and translators approach texts. However, this definition overlooks the complexities of ideological mediation in translation (Munday 2007; Hamdan, Naser and Hamdan 2021). Every translation carries underlying ideologies, whether conscious or not, transferred from the source text (ST) to the target text (TT). These ideologies can belong to the author or their culture (Al-Mohannadi 2008). Understanding translation's role within cultural and ideological contexts is crucial for comprehending its significance. This means recognizing how translation is influenced by and reflects the cultural norms, values, and ideologies of both the source and target languages. It involves examining how translators navigate these influences to either preserve or alter the original message, and how this process impacts the way translated texts are received and understood by different audiences.

To a greater or lesser extent, every translation presents its own unique perspective of the original text. A translator is first and foremost a reader, attempting to make sense of a text through the lens of his or her own life and upbringing (Ury 1977). Because multiple factors complicate the procedure, the result is likely to be inaccurate or subjective. The influence of gender on translation practices is a topic directly pertinent to our current investigation. Translation, according to Yu, is best understood as a form of rewriting inside a certain historical, social, and cultural context, one that inextricably involves the translator's subjectivity (2015). This paper hence investigates the way in which Arab male translators, who are primarily readers and critics, approach literary works written by women.

2. Research aim

The purpose of this paper is to compare and contrast the results of the translations and the specific changes made in the portrayal of female characters in literary translations of Toni Morrison's novel *The Bluest Eye* by two Arab male translators, Kamel Youssef Hessein and Fadel Soultani. The choice to focus on male translators solely was deliberate and informed by a gap in the existing literature, where the emphasis has predominantly been on female translators of female-authored works. By concentrating on male translators, the study unveils whether and how gender might influence the translation process, specifically when the original work is imbued with intricate themes of gender and race. This will aid in exploring the specific ways in which a male translator's gender and culture might affect the interpretation of a female author's work. In the act of translation, it is crucial to acknowledge the implications of gender and textual interpretation, recognizing that gender markers can change based on cultural and linguistic contexts, and that each translation is unique and cannot be exactly replicated (Santaemilia 2015). The translation process involves various factors, including gender, culture, psychology, and others. To fully understand and account for these factors, it is necessary to employ CDA as devised by Fairclough and TN as proposed by Toury. By integrating these theoretical frameworks into the translation process, translators can effectively and consciously address the complexities of gender and culture in their

work. This study aims to explore these complexities through the following research questions:

1. In what ways do some Arab male translators affect the translations of a female author's work, particularly in terms of cultural and gender biases?
2. How do translations done by male translators potentially impact the portrayal of female characters in the translated text?

3. Literature review

3.1 Translator's gender and translation

Many analyses have proven that men and women use language differently (Holmes 2013). Hence, translating literature poses significant challenges, especially when the author is of a different gender, due to differing linguistic styles, perspectives, and cultural understandings. Trying to remain faithful to the ST necessitates that the translation conveys the same feelings, attitudes, and behaviours as the original work. In addition, when a male translator is tasked with translating a literary work by a female author, he must properly portray her sensibilities and ideas.

Translation poses a challenge with respect to gender indeterminacy, and scholars have suggested various approaches to tackle this issue. Hirschauer (2001) recommends the elimination or disregard of gender differences in the public domain through the process of de-gendering. Lanser (1982) argues that the gender of the narrator in literary works should not be equated with that of the author. Livia (2000) discusses linguistic techniques to eliminate gender elements from literary texts. *Bruised Fruit* (1999) and other works of fiction that feature gender-neutral characters allow readers to connect with characters whose gender is ambiguous and to explore contexts where gender differences are insignificant. Conversely, some Victorian-era authors, such as Dickens, Emily Brontë, and Hardy, assigned the voice of the narrator to their main characters, which subtly hinted at a gendered identity. Gorban' and Poberezhnaia (2004) observe that gender often influences the translator's choice of language. However, Lorber (1993) contends that the world should not be dichotomised based on gender, and suggests reorganizing it based on other criteria.

Diachuk (2017) explores the impact of translators' gender on translation accuracy. She examines whether the gender of the translator influences the quality of the final product when the same text is translated by multiple translators. Both male and female translators adopt an unbiased approach when working with female authors' styles. Male translators tend to utilise lexical and stylistic elements of the Ukrainian language and favour the domestication method. In contrast, female translators exhibit greater sensitivity to sexism in works by female authors, yet they risk distorting the story and characters' identities in their pursuit of gender authenticity (Diachuk, 2017).

The major constituent of a translated text reveals the translator's gender, which is reflected in the author's literary output. Also, when the same text is translated by translators of different gender, the translator's gender invariably affects their understanding of the author's literary perspective (Diachuk, 2017). Consequently, gender-aware translation is viewed as a purposeful and intentional

endeavour of the translator, who then portrays the gender identity of a literary text. This gender identity is determined by both the author's self-identification and the degree to which it is reflected in the text.

3.2 Translator's ideology and translation

Lefevere (1998) highlights the significance of 'translator's ideology,' referring to a framework of socially accepted beliefs and values that shape the translator's decisions during the translation process. This ideology plays a crucial role in determining the quality of the translated text. Munday (2007), however, suggests that this approach may oversimplify the complexities of translation and ideological involvement. Regardless of the translator's awareness, both overt and covert ideological elements inevitably impact the final translation. Thus, the translator's ideology emerges as a primary determinant of any translation. Identifying and evaluating the translator's ideology can be challenging due to the intricacies of translation, but it undeniably influences the interpretation of the ST, linguistic strategies, and the communication of meaning in the target language (TL). Ultimately, the translator's ideology significantly affects the accuracy, fidelity, and alignment with the original author's intentions in the final translated product.

Given the fundamental ideological component of gender, several scholars have examined the question of translator's ideology in relation to our prime concern here. In Brown's *The Dancing Girls of Lahore* (2005), for instance, Shaheen, Ali and Zahra (2021) analysed the translator's ideology in the Urdu version. Patriarchal manifestations are seen in the data, namely in the areas of grammatical and lexical selection. Another instance is seen in Woolf's *To the Lighthouse* (1927), a novel originally written in English that was translated into Chinese by both a male and female translator. Mingli (2021) compared the two translations and discovered that the male translator portrayed the female character as a perfect Victorian woman, which reflected the prevailing societal expectations and hierarchies of the period for Chinese women. This stresses the need for more research and awareness in the subject of translation studies, as it points out the likelihood of gender prejudices infiltrating into translations.

Similarly, the translation of *The Bluest Eye* by Morrison into various languages sparks debate. For instance, Chen (2022), in a study of the Chinese translation by Yang Xiangrong under the framework of Eco-translatology, highlights how cultural and ideological biases influence the portrayal of female characters and the overall storyline. Chen concludes that while Yang's translation maintains the ecological balance and harmony between the source language (SL) and the target language (TL), it still exhibits cultural biases in the depiction of female characters. Moreover, Rasul and Mohammed (2023) explore the translator's voice in the Kurdish rendition of the same novel. Their investigation reveals how the translator's interventions at both textual and paratextual levels impact the final translation. Their analysis indicates that the translator's voice is predominantly present, with additions and expansions that sometimes dramatize and elucidate certain aspects of the text. This, in turn, reflects the translator's cultural background and interpretive stance.

4. Methodology

This paper employs a predominantly qualitative methodology to examine the data, focusing on the Arabic translations of Toni Morrison's *The Bluest Eye* by two Arab male translators. An eclectic approach was adopted, combining Fairclough's critical discourse analysis and Toury's translational norms. The translations were analysed from feminist and cultural perspectives to identify potential gender, cultural, and stereotypical biases in the translation process or product; that is, the study adopts a feminist perspective to critically assess whether the male translators' translations uphold the integrity of the original's meanings or if these meanings are inadvertently diluted or reshaped by the translators' own perceptual, societal, or cultural biases. Concurrently, the cultural perspective examines how the translators navigate the complex interplay of translating a text steeped in African-American culture into a linguistic and societal framework rooted in Arabic norms and values. This involves a meticulous appraisal of cultural differences, idioms, and societal norms, assessing their preservation or transformation within the translational norms.

The study beings with a paratextual analysis, which involves studying various aspects such as book covers to gather first interpretive cues. Following this, the analysis of the text examines grammatical and syntactic structures, with particular attention given to elements such as grammatical gender, word manipulation, and transitivity. Subsequently, a comprehensive assessment of lexical and semantic features is conducted, wherein the register and lexical choices are subjected to evaluation. The research next progresses to a pragmatic phase, when it analyses linguistic complexities such as modality and implicatures in relation to their sociocultural context. Finally, the broader social and cultural context of the text was explored, considering social context and intended audience to understand language use in reinforcing gender stereotypes.

Toury's model serves as a supplementary tool, focusing on initial norms, which govern the translator's predominant decisions between adhering to source text norms or conforming to norms active within the target culture, and operational norms, which dictate the actual decisions made during the translation on a textual and linguistic level (Toury 2012). Cultural considerations were prioritised to determine appropriate translation strategies, while text-linguistic norms guided the selection of suitable content from the target texts. The application of Toury's norms to the Arabic translations aims to provide insights into how the translators tailored the text to suit Arab readers' preferences and sheds light on the translation’s effects.

5. Results and discussion

This section explores the different ways of analysing texts beyond their linguistic features. Beginning with an understanding of how external elements, such as book covers, influence a reader's comprehension, we delve into the significance of paratextual components and their profound impact on readers' engagements. Secondly, we undertake a detailed textual analysis based on Fairclough's model, emphasizing the importance of evaluating a text's formal aspects, and which examines how our language choices shape and reflect our message and the world

around us (Al-Khawaldeh et al. 2024). Thirdly, the interpretation analysis stage emphasises the link between text, context, and authorial intention. Last but not least, this exploration culminates in the examination of translational norms, which provide insights into the shared values guiding translators within a specific cultural context.

5.1 Preliminary paratextual analysis of the ST and TTs

External factors are so imperative in the analysis of the TTs, for they are a tool to understand what is beyond the linguistic features. For example, a book's cover is a crucial part of the book's overall strategy to connect with the reader (Gudinavičius and Šuminas 2018). Dixon et al. (2015), in turn, look into the possibility that book covers can indicate sub-genre material to discerning readers. The world of literature also extends well beyond the pages or covers of books. Instead, it includes a plethora of paratexts—supplementary elements that surround the main text. A reader's comprehension and interpretation of a work might be profoundly impacted by these external factors. For instance, paratextual components like prefaces, translator's notes, acknowledgements, or any other peripheral elements can significantly influence how a reader engages with and understands a piece of writing. Accordingly, this section tackles two major components, which are (1) the book covers of both the ST and TTs and (2) extralinguistic knowledge of the ST and TTs.

5.1.1 Book cover

Table 1

ST	
Author	Toni Morrison
Origin	African-American
Title	*The Bluest Eye*
Language	English
Publishing information	Holt, Rinehart, and Winston, New York, 1970

Table 2

TT1		TT2	
Translator1	كامل يوسف حسين (Kamel Youssef Hessein)	Translator2	فاضل السلطاني (Fadel Soultani)
Origin	Egyptian	Origin	Iraqi
Title	*أكثر العيون زرقة*	Title	*العين الأكثر زرقة*
Language	Arabic	Language	Arabic
Publishing information	دار الادب- بيروت،1995	Publishing information	دار الطليعة الجديدة- دمشق، 1996

Before delving into the linguistic elements of the book covers for the ST and the TTs, it is essential to analyse the implied meanings and themes of the three designs.

Book covers serve as marketing tools and protective containers for the stories they encase, and also offer readers insight into the contents and influence their expectations and emotional responses (Söderlund and Rosengren 2008). Readers also expect book covers to indicate the story's quality, impacting their perception of the work's artistic merit (Schmidt-Stölting et al. 2011; Horsky and Honea 2009).

Figure 1. Toni Morrison's original ST cover

Figure 2. The Arabic translation of *The Bluest Eye* by Kamel Youssef Hessein

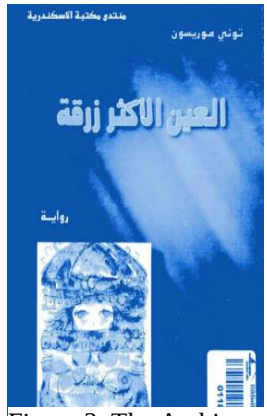

Figure 3. The Arabic translation of *The Bluest Eye* by Fadel Soultani

Toni Morrison's original ST cover (Figure 1) prominently features her youthful face, potentially leading to the misconception that the work is autobiographical. The author draws on her own experiences to develop the plot. Conversely, TT1 cover (Figure 2) exhibits a striking contrast between two dolls, one representing Eurocentric features and the other African characteristics. This visual representation may harbour prejudiced notions about the ST, potentially misrepresenting the author's intent. The cover design's emphasis on physical appearance suggests a limited understanding of the ST's themes. In TT2 cover (Figure 3), a dominant blue theme pervades the design, symbolising the central theme of internalised racism and the yearning for whiteness. The image of a young girl with blue eyes and rosy cheeks may unwittingly reinforce the white community's preference for European features, perpetuating damaging societal norms. This portrayal of a young girl yearning for acceptance based on her physical appearance could reinforce the notion that one's worth is determined by their looks.

5.1.2 Extralinguistic knowledge of the TTs

The extent to which the translator makes use of extralinguistic knowledge affects the final translation's quality. Specifically, it appears that extralinguistic knowledge contributes to translation more than linguistic knowledge does (Kim 2006). In our context, TT1's foreword (1995) for *The Bluest Eye* by Morrison provides a scholarly analysis of the novel's unique theme, intricate plot, and use of magical

realism. The translator notes the novel's charm, akin to a labyrinth with deadly traps, and observes that Morrison takes the reader on a journey through superfluous scenes after the tragic story's conclusion in a Greek mythological setting. The translator acknowledges the difficulties in understanding Morrison's use of magical realism, with only a vague reference to Latin American magical realism and glimpses of its origins through the protagonist's actions. However, he emphasises that the work's distinguishing feature is its depiction of harsh and moral poverty that weighs heavily on both the physical and spiritual aspects of life, transforming rape into a desire for madness. Overall, the translator's formal analysis provides valuable insight into the novel's themes, structure, and importance. The back cover of TT2 produced for the translated work is of a brief nature. The observation suggests that there might be some limitations in the translator's depth of understanding or engagement with Morrison's work, seen in his inclination to rely solely on the viewpoints expressed by other notable figures with regards to the author and her novel, *The Bluest Eye*. This, in turn, implies a certain degree of detachment on the part of the translator. This stance on TT2's part could contribute to a translation that is potentially fraught with stereotypical and biased interpretations of the text. Without a profound understanding of the author and her work, the translator might produce a poor translation, failing to capture the intended meaning. The absence of an acknowledgment or foreword in the translation could possibly indicate a less pronounced recognition of the ST and its author. We know that these introductory sections, typically composed by the translator or other notable individuals, serve as valuable contextualisation and provide readers with important insights into the translation process.

5.2 Descriptive analysis stage (textual analysis)

According to Fairclough, the initial stage of textual/linguistic analysis involves *description*, which heavily relies on text analysis. To describe a text, it is essential to examine its formal aspects, including grammatical, syntactic, lexical, and semantic features. These features represent, in our case, the translator's preferences in terms of language choices, which are drawn from the discourse types used in the text. To gain a comprehensive understanding of a text's actual features, it is crucial to analyse the range of available options within the discourse types from which these features are derived (Fairclough 2015).

Table 3. The range of available options

ST (*The Bluest Eye*)	
'We'll never let her go. We could never find anybody like Polly. She will not leave the kitchen until everything is in order. Really, she is the ideal servant' (p.128)	
TT1 (Kamel Youssef Hessein)	TT2 (Fadel Soultani)
"لن ندعها تذهب أبداً، فلن نجد أحدا مثل بولّلي، إنّها لا تغادر المطبخ إلاّ بعد ترتيب كل شيء، إنها حقّا الخادم المثالية" (1995، ص. 172)	"لن نسمح لها بتركنا أبداً. لن نستطيع أن نجد واحدة مثلها أبداً. إنها لاتترك المطبخ حتى يكون كل شيء في مكانه حقاً، إنها الخادمة المثالية" (1996، ص. 106)

In order to more properly communicate the intended meaning in the TL, *word manipulation* is the process of changing the SL, thus shaping the audience's perception of the text and their sense of reality (Sadeq Alaghbary 2022). This entails making deliberate adjustments to the wording, syntax, and grammar of the ST to create an equivalent version in the TL. In Table 3, an excerpt taken from *The Bluest Eye*, when translating the sentence 'We'll never *let her go*,' from English to Arabic, there are different ways to convey this message in Arabic. The translator must consider the subtleties of the language and the cultural context of the text to choose the most appropriate way to convey the intended meaning. In the case of TT1, word manipulation is not apparently realised in the translation of the sentence 'We'll never let her go.' However, Soultani, in TT2, chose to use a different Arabic phrase 'لن نسمح لها بتركنا أبداً' to translate the same English sentence. The words 'تذهب' (go) and 'ترك' (leave) are two different verbs that demonstrate the translators' own interpretations and subjectivity to the connotations of the words in the context of the ST. In simple terms, 'تذهب' conveys a positive, pleasant departure, whereas 'ترك' carries a negative sense of loss or abandonment. This distinction is crucial in Morrison's story, as it portrays the unfair and abusive relationship between the slave and the master. Therefore, in TT2 the translator's choice of using ' لن نسمح لها بتركنا أبداً' conveys the resistance to loss and departure in a more emotionally charged way, making the target reader understand the complex psychological state of the characters.

The omission of the name Polly in TT2 (Table 3) raises questions as regards the translator's motives and the significance of the character in the ST. The translator's intention behind the omission of Polly's name remains abstruse. However, regardless of the translator's intentions, the omission of Polly from TT2 might be interpreted as a subtle indication of her less central role in the translator's perspective. The significance of characters within a literary work is often manifested through the frequency and contextualisation of their presence (Vermeule 2010). The issue at hand pertains to the possibility that TT2's translator may have deliberately excluded the name of Polly, a character of minor significance and infrequent appearance in the ST, with the aim of preserving the emphasis on more prominent characters or to facilitate the translation process. Polly, nonetheless, holds an important position in the narrative, and omitting her name

may indicate a possible oversight or a failure to acknowledge her significance within the plot. In addition, this can also be interpreted as an instance of *erasure*, wherein the translator eradicates or diminishes the importance of a character during the process of translation. The act of erasure discussed in this context may have multiple underlying reasons, including the translator's subjective inclinations or the intention to conform to the expectations of a specific readership. This act may worsen the already dire situation of Polly, who lacks any means of emotional sustenance and is incapable of providing for her children. Here erasure can silence female characters' voices and experiences more by concealing or eliminating them entirely. This supports patriarchal narratives that diminish women's problems and strengths, and it also simplifies the character's complexity. It could be considered that the male translator's approach may unintentionally reflect certain gender biases. This might lead to a less comprehensive portrayal of the character's complexities and the deeper issues they encounter. However, it is crucial to acknowledge that these differences could also arise from the translator's stylistic preferences, with the intention of achieving a more cohesive storyline or emphasizing alternative characters. While acknowledging this potential does not lessen the possible influence of the translator's choices on the narrative and representation of characters, it does offer a more comprehensive understanding of the motivations behind these decisions.

Table 4

ST (*The Bluest Eye*)	
'Black e mo. Black e mo. Yadaddsleepsnekked. Black e mo black e mo ya dadd sleeps nekked. Black e mo…' (p.61)	
TT1 (Kamel Youssef Hessein)	TT2 (Fadel Soultani)
يا سوداء زلط، يا سوداء زلط، أبوك ' نومه ملط. يا سوداء زلط، يا سوداء زلط، أبوك نومه ملط، يا سوداء زلط.' (1995، ص. 94)	سوداء، يا سوداء أبوك ينام عاريا...يا' سوداء...' سوداء، يا سوداء أبوك ينام عاريا...يا (1996، ص.54)

Table 4 serves as an unequivocal exemplification of the abject misery and afflictive existence that Pecola endures. She is subjected to egregious forms of humiliation by minor characters. Of particular interest in the ST is the employment of a rhythmic verse which is incessantly reiterated throughout the diatribe. With regards to grammatical and syntactical aspects, TT2 is relatively faithful to the ST, despite the detection of certain omissions stemming from the ambiguity of the expression 'e mo'. As concerns the semantic level, it is notable that TT2's translator has maintained almost the same wording in spite of the change in register from casual to formal. It is evident that register, conceptualised by Halliday (1977) as a type of language variety that is determined by the situational context in which it is used, holds paramount significance in this novel, given that a majority of the characters are outcasts and misfits who reside in destitute environments and have never been exposed to any form of education. Nonetheless, it should be noted that

TT1 exhibits certain tendencies toward bias and prejudice, which are evident in his addition of the word ‘زلط,’ a term completely missing from the ST and commonly employed in his Egyptian colloquialism to connote the notion of ‘quick steps’ with the aim of acquiring money. His addition, perhaps, is an attempt to translate the unfathomable phrase ‘e mo’ which leads to multiple interpretations none of which can be right. This addition may reflect the translator's cultural background and possible economic context, illustrating how his cultural perspective influences the translation. The use of a colloquial term like 'زلط' demonstrates how the translator's familiarity with Egyptian slang and economic realities shapes his interpretation and adaptation of the text. It suggests a cultural lens that prioritizes local vernacular and economic realities, which might not be present in the ST but are brought into the translation to make it more relatable to the target audience. Furthermore, an equally noteworthy syntactic feature of the translation is the nominalization of the phrase ‘ya dadd sleeps necked’ into ‘أبوك نومه ملط,’ wherein in TT1, the translator replaces the verb phrase with a noun phrase, presumably to mitigate the severity of the image of Pecola's father, Cholly, sleeping in a state of complete nudity, while also attempting to uphold the masculine persona attributed to all fathers. This change may reflect the translator's gender perspective as he aims to soften the portrayal of male characters and maintain their dignity. By choosing to use a less explicit term, the translator might be attempting to preserve a certain level of respectability and decorum for male characters, which can be seen as an influence of his own cultural and gender biases. This modification impacts how the target audience perceives Cholly, potentially minimizing the negative aspects of his character and altering the reader's understanding of the narrative. It is noteworthy that TT1 is redeemed by the translator’s use of footnotes, in which he clarifies:

> The original text was written in the colloquial language used by Black Americans, and that is the closest translation to the original. Although some readers may find it somewhat ambiguous, I apologise to them. In the end, every translation is a choice of alternative that may not satisfy everyone (our translation). (Hessein 1995: 94)

5.3 Interpretation analysis stage

The principal objective of *interpretation* is to scrutinise the discursive practice, which demands a comprehensive evaluation of the interplay between the text and the discursive, interpretative, and producing procedures. Owing to its emphasis on contextual factors and the author's intention, this approach is well-suited for our study here. By adopting this pragmatic analysis, we can aptly consider the situational context within which a particular text is situated, thus enabling us to discern any modulations that may have been introduced by the translator. Here, we examine *modality* in further detail and see how it relates to *register* analysis throughout the interpretation stage. According to Fawcett (1997), there is a connection between *Gricean implicatures* and translation. Understanding the interpretive significance and, ultimately, the author's intentions of the source material is essential for any translator.

The pragmatic level of modality, for instance, is a linguistic feature that plays a vital role in expressing the degree of possibility or uncertainty associated with a statement. We can observe from Table 3 that the modal verb 'could' is typically used to indicate a slight or uncertain possibility. However, in this instance, the translator in TT1 has employed 'لن', as a modality of *usuality*, in a manner that breaks the uncertainty and emphasises the extreme implausibility of finding a servant like Polly. It is also worth noting that, in TT1, Hessein's choice of 'لن' to further emphasise the implausibility of finding a servant like Polly may also reflect a certain bias or belittlement towards Pecola's role as a girl and servant. The use of 'لن' in conjunction with the verb further underscores the difficulty of finding someone like her. In Arabic, 'لن' can be translated as '*won't*' and is used with a non-finite verb to express negation. Additionally, the accusative case assigns the object role to the noun or pronoun, while the negation particle negates the meaning of the verb. This combination of particles and verb can also transform the meaning from present to future tense. Therefore, by using 'لن' with the verb, TT1 is not only indicating what we have just mentioned above, but is also suggesting that this will remain a difficult task in the future. The combination of 'could' and 'لن' serves to emphasise the exceptionalism of Polly's qualities as a servant, and the extreme rarity of finding someone who can match her level of competence and dedication. This choice of modality in TT1 may be influenced by the translator's cultural perspective, which could reflect societal attitudes towards female roles and servitude. By using here a stronger negation, the translator might be imposing a cultural bias that diminishes Polly's role, indicating that she is irreplaceable in a way that subtly highlights her lower status.

Table 5

ST (*The Bluest Eye*)	
'Bay Boy and P. L. had at one time been his idols.' (p. 81)	
TT1 (Kamel Youssef Hessein)	TT2 (Fadel Soultani)
وكان باي بوي وب.ل. في وقت من ' الأوقات بمثابة معبودين بالنسبة إليه' (1995، ص. 123)	كان يعبد باي بوي و بي. أل في ' الوقت نفسه' (1996، ص. 73)

Table 5 presents a richer complexity than its surface appearance suggests. It is worth noting that both TTs contain distinct interpretations. In this context, the implementation of Grecian implicature could prove advantageous, given that both translations convey meanings and implications that differ from those intended by the author. The former, a theory developed by Grice, aims at explaining how individuals interpret implied meanings in speech, and this involves a General Cooperative Principle and four maxims (quantity, quality, relation, and manner) that define cooperative behaviour (Grice 1975). Baker states straightforwardly that the essence of his theory is how we acquire comprehension beyond what is explicitly stated (Baker 2018). With regards to our example, the primary element modified by both Arab translators is the term '*idols*' in the ST, which now suggests

subjective thoughts and ideologies. To clarify, according to the Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary, the word 'idol' has two definitions: (1) 'a person or thing that is greatly loved and admired,' and (2) 'a statue that is worshipped as a god' (Hornby 2018) The translators, nonetheless, have chosen the second definition as their preferred translation, which implies a variety of interpretations, one of which is resurrecting the issue of slavery. And maybe both the translators' implication of the idea that the relationship between blackness and slavery may have historical and cultural roots (Curran 2011; Gross-Wyrtzen 2022). The word 'idols' in the ST is not referring to the worship or adoration of Bay Boy and P.L. as gods. Instead, it is used as a metaphor to describe the strong feelings of admiration and respect that Junior has for them. In order to demonstrate a significant issue present in the translations listed in Table 5, we should consider utilizing back-translation method as a means of evaluating their accuracy. No doubt that back translations serve the purpose of enabling precise oversight of the quality of translations (Brislin 1986). Furthermore, the gaps identified between the primary text and its back translation may signify inadequacies in the original TT, necessitating a re-evaluation of the translation's accuracy (Behr 2016). For instance, a back translation for TT2 would be '*He worshiped Bay Boy and P.L. at the same time*'. The choice of both Arab translators to use a term that invokes the notion of "idols" in a religious or worshipful context instead of a more neutral or admiring sense speaks to the very possible cultural influences shaping their interpretation. Accordingly, the previous attempt looks unquestionably indistinct from what the actual ST conveys and demonstrates the ideological entrapment that TT2's translator has succumbed to. We can state that these very choices can unintentionally induce connotations of servitude or inferiority, if we take into consideration the historical contexts of blackness and slavery. The translation, thus, risks perpetuating problematic cultural narratives.

Table 6

ST (*The Bluest Eye*)	
'How come you got so many boyfriends, Miss Marie?' 'Boyfriends? Boyfriends? Chittlin', I ain't seen a boy since nineteen and twenty-seven.' 'You didn't see none then.' (p. 50)	
TT1 (Kamel Youssef Hessein)	TT2 (Fadel Soultani)
من أين لك بكلّ هؤلاء الفتية الأصدقاء يا آنسة ماري؟ فتية أصدقاء. إنني، يا سُجقة، لم أر فتى منذ العام ألف وتسعمائة وسبعة وعشرين لم تري أحداً منهم إذن. ص . (1995، ص. 77)	كيف استطعت أن تحصلى على ' كثير من الأصدقاء آنسة ماريا؟' أصدقاء؟ أصدقاء؟ لم أر ولدا منذ 1927' لم تر ولداً منذ ذلك الوقت' ص. ' (1996، ص. 44)

According to Fowler and Kress (1979), the modality of a writer (as author and/or translator) reveals their subjective perception on themselves, their target

audience, and the message being transmitted. This is particularly relevant in the context of translating *The Bluest Eye*, a novel rich with themes of race, gender, and identity. The use of modality by translators can significantly alter the portrayal of characters and their experiences

The first observation that one can draw from Table 6 is the addition of a *probability* modal verb 'استطعتِ' in the TT2. This alone conceals loads of ideologies and ulterior motives, which can be intentional or unintentional; that is, TT2's translator utilises the modal verb 'استطعتِ' (could) to convey the probability of achieving a specific objective, such as acquiring countless boyfriends with ease, which may not necessarily come to fruition. This denotes the expression of a conditional probability. The speaker is suggesting that the existence of those boyfriends is a potentiality, though not a certainty. Therefore, the individual is employing a hedging strategy to acknowledge the possibility of negative outcomes or dissatisfaction for Miss Marie. The ST elucidates that Miss Marie does have many boyfriends (a word that we discuss in the following section that deals with the analysis of TN and does have her own ways to lure those boyfriends (clients). Nevertheless, the translator in TT1 does indeed avoid adding modality, attempting to remain as faithful as possible. These differences in translation choices highlight how Arab male translators' cultural and gendered perspectives can influence the depiction of female characters. The addition of 'استطعتِ' in TT2 introduces an element of uncertainty and potential failure; the translation reflects the translator's cultural and gender biases regarding women's abilities and social roles. Conversely, TT1's straightforward translation maintains the original assertiveness of Miss Marie's character, demonstrating a different interpretative stance. These variations, as shown, affect the reader's perception of Miss Marie, for they illustrate how the translators' backgrounds shape their choices.

5.4 Investigating translational norms

According to Toury (2012), the process of becoming a translator necessitates acquiring the ability to perform a social function in accordance with a predetermined set of shared translational norms that are prevalent within a particular cultural milieu and are relevant to all forms of translation. He adds that norms are considered as 'the translation of general values or ideas shared by a community – as to what is right and wrong, adequate and inadequate – into performance instructions appropriate for and applicable to particular situations' (Toury 2012: 63).

A relevant instance in Table 6 can illustrate how norms generally work. The first observation we can make is the translation of the word 'boyfriends' to ' الفتية الأصدقاء' in TT1 and 'الأصدقاء' in TT2. The Arabic translations of the word 'boyfriends' in both TT1 and TT2 have been toned down for the Arab readers by removing any sexual connotations. As concerns TT1, we can observe the use of 'فتية' which can be defined as a young man in his youth, between adolescence and adulthood. The ST includes no age indication nor maturity phase of the boyfriends/clients, whom TT1 suggests to be young men. When it comes to TT2, the translator has chosen to *de-gender* the word 'boyfriend' to be 'الأصدقاء' that

literally means ‘friends’, both male and female friends. The latter is defined as individuals who share a bond of affection or respect with another person. No doubt that Miss Marie, a plain prostitute, invariably questions the norms that some of the characters have about what it means to be a beautiful woman. She has contempt for norms of decent conduct in public and does not care about society's standards for women's purity or virginity and, hence, is consistently exhibiting the behaviours of atypical food consumption, use of vulgarity, and expression of amusement. Societal norms and gender expectations often classify these behaviours as unsuitable for females (Bloom 2007). Nonetheless, TT2’s translator engages in a cordial and *bowdlerised* discourse that is somewhat restrained by refraining from utilizing a precise translation of the term ‘boyfriend’. The aforementioned circumstance, thus, has resulted in an unfitting alteration of the context and tone. This excerpt exemplifies the adherence to the norms of the target culture (TC), specifically in terms of *acceptability*.

Table 7

ST (*The Bluest Eye*)	
It was in this godlike state that he met Pauline William. (p.145)	
TT1 (Kamel Youssef Hessein)	TT2 (Fadel Soultani)
في هذه الوضعية الأثيرية التقى بولين وليامز. (1995، ص. 211)	في حالته الإلهية هذه، قابل بولين وليمز.(1996، ص. 134)

The excerpt in Table 7 discusses the moment Cholly, Pecola’s father, meets his wife Polly (Pauline William). Before trying to fathom out the alterations that occur at the level of translation, we have to put the word ‘godlike’ in a context that is germane to translational norms. The word describes Cholly who has been, at first, a young man full of spirit and exuberance; however, he is subjected to significant psychological trauma from both his biological father's disinterest in acknowledging him and a group of armed white males who taunt and intimidate him. He, hence, must navigate these challenges in order to persevere. The adversities sustained have inflicted permanent damage to Cholly's will to survive. After the arson that destroyed his home and resulted in the sexual assault of his daughter, he is ostracised even more than other marginalised characters in his society.

In relation to TN, we can make a few observations. On the one hand, Hessein in TT1 has translated the word ‘godlike’ to ‘الأثيرية’ which somehow weakens the potency of the ST word. There is no doubt that in TT1 the translator’s decision to refrain from translating ‘godlike’ as ‘كالإله’ or ‘إلهي’ can be attributed to the centrality of monotheism in the Islamic conception of God (Allah). The translational norms expressed in TT1 exhibit the potential to indicate adherence (*acceptability*) to the TC, which is primarily composed of Muslim Arab readers. The reason for this lies in the possibility of a negative reception that a translation which is objectively accurate, may generate, resulting in a reduced esteem for the novel. TT2, on the other hand, raises two main issues: the translation of the words ‘godlike’ and ‘met’.

Firstly, TT2 of the word 'godlike' into Arabic as 'الإلهية' is considered to be excessive. This is because the translation not only implies a state of resemblance to God, but also directly equates Cholly with God Himself. The aforementioned action is considered inappropriate within Arab-Muslim culture. As Mutahhari states, "God resembles nothing and nothing can be compared to God. God is the Absolute without needs; all need Him; He needs none" (1985: 69). Consequently, we can deduce that the TT2 exhibits inadequacy, thereby emphasizing Soultani's unwarranted conformity to the norms of the source culture (SC), which is a concept that Toury defines as *adequacy*. Secondly, the word 'قابَل' is subject to debate as it may alter the contextual meaning of the text. Specifically, Morrison employs the verb 'met' in a romantic context where two lovers meet each other for the first time (namely, Cholly and his presumed match, Polly). TT2's translator has inadvertently diminished the romantic aspects of Cholly and his wife by utilizing 'قابَل,' which may be more appropriate in alternative contexts where such themes are not being addressed. Notwithstanding, TT2 provides a context wherein 'قابَل' means '*he encountered*' (Malouf 1931), '*he met someone face to face*' (Al-Arabiyya 1990), and '*he faced something and met it*' (i.e., he confronted it face to face) (Ibn Mukarram 2010). All of this reveals that TT2 conforms to the discursive and linguistic norms of the TC and is deemed *acceptable* within the parameters of the TL.

6. Conclusion

This study provides an examination of the impact male translators have on the Arabic translations of Toni Morrison's *The Bluest Eye*. Through the application of Fairclough's Critical Discourse Analysis and Toury's Translational Norms, the research highlights significant biases that can arise in the translation process, especially when gender and cultural contexts intersect. The findings indicate that male translators, in their attempt to navigate the complex themes of gender and race in Morrison's work, often introduce alterations that may not align with the ST's intentions. These changes can range from subtle shifts in tone and meaning to more pronounced omissions and modifications that reflect the translators' cultural and ideological perspectives.

The analysis of paratextual elements, such as book covers and forewords, reveals how these components can influence readers' perceptions even before engaging with the text itself. The differing depictions on the book covers and the presence or absence of forewords underscore the varying degrees of engagement and interpretation by the translators. Additionally, the textual analysis demonstrates how the translators' choices in word manipulation, and modality can significantly impact the portrayal of characters and the overall narrative.

By focusing on the role of male translators, this study sheds light on the potential for gender biases to infiltrate translations, thereby affecting the representation of female authors and their characters. The use of CDA and TN frameworks has proven effective in uncovering these biases and providing a partial understanding of the translation process. The research also emphasizes the

importance of cultural sensitivity and awareness in translation practices, particularly when dealing with works that tackle sensitive themes.

Overall, this study calls for greater awareness and reflection among translators regarding the impact of their own gender and cultural backgrounds on their work. By fostering a more equitable approach to translation, particularly for works authored by women, male translators can contribute to a more accurate and respectful representation of diverse voices in literature.

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