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INVESTIGATING THE AESTHETIC EFFECT IN THE ARABIC TRANSLATIONS OF GIBRAN'S *THE PROPHET*

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ABSTRACT

This study aims at investigating the extent to which the aesthetic effect (AE) in Gibran's The Prophet has been maintained among Arab recipients in four translations of this masterpiece, namely Okasha (2000), Nuaimy (2013), Al-ābid (2017), and Antonius (2017). To this end, the source text (ST) AE laden segments and their target text (TT) counterparts are compared in terms of lexical selection, sentence structure, and metaphors employed. Data of the study comprised typical illustrative examples randomly selected for analysis according to Yan Fu's (2012, cited in Zhang 2013) triple translation criteria of faithfulness, expressiveness, and elegance in combination with Nida's (1964) functional equivalence. Findings of the study revealed that the selected translations exhibit different levels of adequacy in terms of expressing the AE in the TT. Specifically, Okasha's translation seems more creatively adequate in producing in the TT the approximate AE of the ST, whereas the other translations are sometimes less adequate or even inadequate in this respect.

Keywords: Aesthetic effect, Gibran, literary translation, *The Prophet*

INTRODUCTION

The universality of the language and themes embodied in Gibran's literary works ensured his global reputation since he has discussed themes such as religion, justice, free will, science, love, happiness, the soul, the body, and death (Moreh 1988). For instance, in *The Prophet,* as opposed to orthodox religion, Gibran seems to offer a dogma-free universal spiritualism, i.e., the religion of love. Besides, Gibran's vision of spirituality is not moralistic since he often urged people to be non-judgmental (El Hajj 2019). More importantly, Gibran seems to have utilised a less idiomatic vocabulary than have often been used by modern poets who tend to pay much attention to modernism in language (Jayyusi 1977). Emphasising this point, El Hajj (2019: 396) states that:

> The undisclosed value of this work [*The Prophet*], which remains beyond genre classification, lies in its message; it is simple yet profound, transmitted in a poetic language imbued with imagery…we notice that *The Prophet* presents its author's thoughts in a limpid and accessible manner; thus, all readers are able to savour it and draw life lessons.

Besides, Gibran's language is rich with a strong "passionate belief in the healing power of universal love and the unity of being" (Bushrui 1987: 68). He is quite concerned with pairing words in a way that pleases the ear. His concern with meaning is less important than his concern with colouring and tone.

Gibran's *The Prophet* was first published in 1923 and it has never been out of print since this piece of work has a unique way of speaking to people everywhere and at any time (Chandler 2017). Hence, it has been translated into more than 108 languages, including French, Italian, Russian, German, and Chinese, to name a few (Nasr 2018; El Hajj 2019). As a result, the growing number of translations appears to have been an outcome of the enduring nature and global appeal of Gibran's writings, and the relevance of the message of peace today.

There is no doubt that the multiplicity of translations is due to the richness of the original work and its readability, as each translation invites multiple readings in the end. In any translation, the translator has the opportunity to be a second author of the original text for translation, by its linguistic nature, is an act of rewriting through which the qualified translator is able to reproduce the author's text in the translator's own language (Okasha 2000; Al-ābid 2017; Chandler 2017).

However, in the interlingual/intercultural transference of literary texts, in addition to all the problems that exist in translation in general, mainly at the lexical, grammatical, cultural, and semantic levels, literary translators have to deal also with the aesthetic aspects of the literary text, a task which requires special competence and skills (El Khatibi 2015: 145). In this regard, Kolawole and Adewuni (2008: 1) point out that the literary translator participates in the artistic task of the original author and then recreates the target structures by adapting the target language (TL) text to that of the source language (SL) as strictly as intelligibility permits. Namely, the literary translator's job is to remodel the literary piece under translation in the TL, so that it represents the original meaning along with form (Marabout 2010: 17). Furthermore, Jackson (2015) maintains that it is one of the central requirements of literary translation to afford a firm interpretation about both meaning and effect. Hence, literary translators are usually much more involved in determining a corresponding mood, tone, voice, and effect than in literal translation (Dastjerdi 2004: 2). Since literary texts are best known for the joy they create within the readership, they generate a further dimension in literary translation effects, i.e., the aesthetic effect (AE). In light of this, the problem addressed in this study is that the AE, created by Gibran's depicted themes and images, is less likely to be grasped by translators, as Nuaimy (2013) states.

As far as the translations of *The Prophet* into Arabic are concerned, there are nine different Arabic translations of this masterpiece to date (Nasr 2018; El Hajj, 2019). Al-Khāl (1968), Abdulahad (1992), Shakkour and Murr (1996), Qomeir (1997), Boulos (2008), Okasha (20000, Nuaimy (2013), Al-ābid (2017), and Antonius (2017). This study is concerned with the four available of these Arabic renditions: Okasha (2000), Nuaimy (2013), Al-ābid (2017), and Antonius (2017). Notably, three of them, namely Antonius', Nuaimy's, and Okasha's, though recently republished, are the earliest Arabic translations of *The Prophet*. Moreover, Antonius and Nuaimy are Gibran's close friends and countrymen so they are supposed to be quite familiar with Gibran's way of thinking and literary style and can communicate these aspects to the recipients. Okasha and Al-ābid on the other hand are men of letters and professional translators who seem to have been well-equipped with Gibran's sociocultural and literary background. Accordingly, these translations have offered Arab readers of Gibran enjoyment and delight that are approximately similar in their artistic effect to that of the original text (Nasr 2018; El Hajj 2019). Hence, the selected translations have had good reception and popularity in almost all the Arab-speaking countries. They have a considerable effect on the readers of *The Prophet* since they reflect

Gibran's view of life and man, seeing nothing but good in them, and as a result, he turned a blind eye to the problems arising from the presence of evil in man (Nuaimy 2013). These translations have helped communicate the themes and ideas addressed in *The Prophet* which give hope to souls in the Arab community disturbed by conflicts, contradictions, hatred, and bloody wars (World War I and World War II). The Arab recipients could find peace, comfort, and solace from reading the translations of *The Prophet* (Antonius 2017; Nuaimy 2013). On this basis, these translations have been reprinted several times and have become the reference of choice for most academics for pedagogical purposes (Nasr 2018; El Hajj 2019). However, the selected translations seem to contain many mistranslations in terms of concepts such as love and God, among others, the loss of the stylistic effect, the loss of emotiveness, and the addition of unnecessary emotiveness.

Hence this study addresses the following research question: To what extent have the selected Arab translators of Gibran's *The Prophet* maintained the AE of the source text (ST) for the Arab recipients in the target text (TT)?

AE IN LITERARY TRANSLATION

The AE is said to be one of the most remarkable characteristics of literary writing. As Stecker (2004: 27) argues, "literature is the body of works of art produced in linguistic media, and that this body is to be defined in terms of the possession of certain artistic values (. . .) a range of values for which works of literature have characteristically been appreciated". Artistic values are the reason behind the readers' admiration of literature. Hence, the global fame of literary masterpieces stems from their valuable and nicely framed themes which are given in entertaining and appealing forms. The special patterning of their lexical, structural, and stylistic choices creates the unique essence of joy that is lacking in other forms of writing. This latter feature is known as the "aesthetic effect" which Stecker (2004: 28) defines as "a sense of enjoyment experienced by the reader". Namely, every literary piece is distinct from ordinary writing and is capable of generating the AE on the readers.

Moreover, Fowler (1971) (cited in Cook 2003: 62) presents "three related aspects of literary language: its frequent deviation from the norms of more everyday language use; its patterning of linguistic units to create rhythms, rhymes, and parallel constructions; and the ways in which the form of the words chosen seems to augment

or intensify the meaning". This suggests that literary language is noticeably different from ordinary language in the way that it employs particular linguistic patterns in a multiplicity of distinctive variations to generate the literary character of the literary piece and to enhance its essence. To reiterate, literary language is exceptional in terms of lexical, musical, and sense arrangements.

On this basis, Xiaoshu and Cheng (2003: 3) argue that it is necessary for literary translation to reproduce the original artistic images in the transference process of literary texts into other languages so that the reader of the translation may be inspired, moved, and aesthetically entertained in the same way as the native reader is entertained by the original. In other words, literary translation should offer the target readers identical feelings of enjoyment to those experienced by the native readers. The sense of delight that literary texts create among readers is gained through the fine choice of words, the excellent arrangement of words to build sentences, and the wide range of figurative tools, mainly metaphors and similes that are employed by the author. These features create the AE of literature on the readers and thus must be given much consideration in the literary translation process and be reflected in the TL with a similar communicative force in order to provide the target readers with nearly the same AE experienced by the readers of the original (Marabout 2010: 30).

In an attempt to apply this description to the main focus of this study, it should be emphasised that since literary translation entails the rendition of the original meaning together with form, style, and effect into the TL, then, the AE should also be retained in order for the translation to be adequate and effective.

STYLE AND TRANSLATION

As previously stated, what distinguishes literary language from ordinary language is that literary language utilises images as well as the selection of eloquent words and figures of speech. However, every literary author has his/her own idiosyncratic way of utilising these devices which differentiate them from other authors. This is normally referred to as style, which according to Kane (2000: 11) encompasses "the complete range of all the choices that a literary author makes regarding words and their combinations in order to convey the message as elegantly as possible". Thus, style is significant in communicating ideas as intended by the author to influence their recipients.

This idea is further emphasised by Shi (2009: 61) who argues that elegant form communicates content in a more efficient and adequate manner, i.e., adequate style greatly facilitates the conveyance of meaning in an appealing manner. Moreover, Widdowson (1975: 116) asserts that the author's style arouses the receiver's feelings by using appellative expressions that make a precise description for literary meaning.

Accordingly, an adequate style entails that "good form transmits content in a more sufficient and adequate manner; that is to say good style significantly helps in appealingly conveying meaning... good style enhances meaning and offers a special delight" (Shi 2009: 61). Style is more concerned with the way through which a given writer shapes his/her experience in his/her literary work so that the reader can be granted a sense of joy together with meaning. This has long been the core of a creative style after which writers have always been running in pursuit of producing reader-friendly texts (Xiaoshu and Cheng 2003).

The previous account on the significance of style in communicating meaning entails that in the process of interlingual communication of literary texts, translators should do their best to maintain a similar style in the TT. To that end, Xiaoshu and Cheng (2003) present an account of the link between style and translation. For these authors, translators should make the utmost effort to make translations correspond to the original in style, so that a resemblance in spirit and form may be achieved. Furthermore, in his notion of equivalent effect, Nida (1984: 94) perceives translation as consisting in "reproducing in the receptor language the closest natural equivalent of the source language message, first in terms of meaning and secondly in terms of style".

In this light, Yan Fu (2012) (cited in Zhang 2013: 180) in the preface to his translation of Thomas Henry's *Evolution and Ethics and Other Essays* into Chinese proposes three criteria, namely "faithfulness, comprehensibility, and elegance" for the success of any translation activity. For him, translation is an aesthetic activity through which the translator transforms one "aesthetic objective element ST into another aesthetic objective element TT by the aesthetic medium (translator's aesthetic competence/sense)" (Lei 2016: 42). Put differently, translation as an aesthetic activity is a practical activity which should reproduce the ST aesthetical values in the TT. The objective of the translation aesthetics is that a translator can faithfully reproduce the content and aesthetic features of the ST. Achieving this objective by default would lead to achieving Nida's theory of equivalent response or effect.

GIBRAN'S PERSONALITY AND *THE PROPHET*

Gibran's life was full of hard times and many tragic events, including long years of poverty, a disappointing love affair in Lebanon, and the loss of his family. These tragic events had a great impact on the formulation of Gibran's conception of God, life, death, love, pain, etc. (Boushaba 1988; Marabout 2010). He became quite concerned with man's social problems, with nature as the most ideal and natural state of man, life, and its antithesis, and the spiritual world beyond (ibid.). Gibran severely criticised the society's man-made rules, especially rules made by priests who played God.

In addition, Gibran was profoundly influenced by European romanticism, liberalism, classicism, symbolism, and surrealism (Mohamed and Louiza 2016; Qrei 2017). He was also greatly inspired by the French Romantics, especially Victor Hugo and La Martine. Hence, he was very much concerned with love for nature and espoused a metaphysical view of the universe; he also had a strong faith in the spiritual world beyond (Boushaba 1988). Gibran's personal experiences and thinking reached the peak of optimistic pantheism as reflected in *The Prophet*. He became largely concerned with common questions such as God-man relationship, the mystery of life, and the destiny of man in this life. Influenced by great Sufi masters and William Blake, Gibran viewed man and nature as manifestations of a universal and omnipresent God. Gibran developed a belief that God is not only a universal truth that lives in all creatures and all things but as a "universal bond of love which unifies all men and all creatures of the universe and in which all men and all creatures of the universe melt and interpenetrate" (Boushaba 1988: 58).

These views are reflected in his masterpiece, *The Prophet*, which is a collection of poems largely concerned with the sayings of a prophetic, inspirational, and universal nature, and which deal with the universal themes of love, marriage, children, life, and many more. It was originally published in English in 1923 and has since been translated into more than 40 languages (El Khatibi 2015). It is divided into 28 chapters; each represents a complete life issue and reflects Gibran's views on various aspects of life. *The Prophet* introduces Al-Mustafa, who has lived in the city of Orphalese for 12 years while awaiting the ship that will bring him back to the isle of his birth. Al-Mustafa, which means "the chosen person" in Arabic, refers to the Prophet Muhammed (PBUH). Al-Mustafa is not the prophet of any of the major religions, i.e., Islam, Christianity, Judaism, Hinduism, Buddhism, etc. but a universal prophet who offers a universal religion of love. The

advice given by the prophet before leaving the imaginary city of Orphalese is meant to answer the fundamental questions of life. The teachings he gives provide guidance and support to people all over the world to reconsider the conception of God religiously and socially. Gibran believes in the prophet's role as a communicator of social wisdom, whereby other people ask him for the truth so that they can pass his teachings from generation to generation. In *The Prophet*, Gibran portrays the world as a harsh and corrupted place where individuals are misguided and enslaved by man-made rules. Gibran has "a passionate belief in the healing power of universal love and the unity of being" (Bushrui 1987: 68; see also Al-Khazraji et al. 2013; Mohamed and Louiza 2016).

RESEARCH APPROACH AND DATA OF THE STUDY

This study is fundamentally qualitative since it is mainly based on text analysis of the data in question. The data collected reflect the AE embodied in the ST and maintained in the TT. The data of this study comprise 30 examples extracted from Gibran's *The Prophet* along with their counterparts in four Arabic translations by Okasha (2000), Nuaimy (2013), Al-ābid (2017), and Antonius (2017). Six examples have been randomly selected for analysis on the basis that they are full of literary devices such as simile, metaphor, synecdoche, etc., that reflect the AE in the ST.

Data Selection

The rationale for selecting the ST is detailed below:

Gibran's literary language in his masterpiece, *The Prophet*, is quite rich with images, colours, tones, metaphors, unique selection of words, and sentence structures that make Gibran's language and style remarkably unique. Accordingly, typical illustrative examples which are thought to be representative of Gibran's style and might cause difficulty for translators have been randomly selected for analysis. All the literary devices (i.e., simile, metaphor, etc.) and images used in the ST have to be maintained in the TT since they reflect certain messages. Translating literary language in general and Gibran's language, in particular, is a challenging task. Examining the AE in the Arabic translations of Gibran's is meant to add to the repository of scholarly work carried out on Gibran's unique style because Gibran is an influential literary figure (see Boushaba 1988; Marabout 2010).

Rationale for the Selected Translations

Four Arabic translations of Gibran's *The Prophet* are selected to represent a parallel corpus whereby counterparts in the TT for the source text AE laden segments are selected as the data for analysis. These translations are by Okasha (2000), Nuaimy (2013), Al-ābid (2017), and Antonius (2017). These translations are selected according to the following criteria:

1. The selected translations enjoy immense popularity in the Arab World. All the selected translations have been reprinted several times and remained the reference of choice for most academics (El-Khatibi 2015; Qrei 2017).

2. Several published studies have revealed that the selected translations are replete with mistranslations due to the lack of understanding of some of the ST aspects (Boushaba 1988; Mohamed and Louiza, 2016; Qrei 2017).

3. The selected translations represent different periods of time, which may reflect the extent to which the recent translations may rely on the older ones.

Data Analysis

In this study, the data analysis was carried out in accordance to the research question stated earlier in the light of Yan Fu's (2012) model of faithfulness, expressiveness, and elegance and Nida's (1964) functional equivalence. Thus, the following subsections detail the procedures of data analysis in relation to the focus of this research question.

Analysis Procedure

In the analysis stage, each illustrative example in the ST was put parallel to its four translations in Arabic to allow the researchers to examine which of these translations had preserved the AE embodied in certain segments in the ST to the recipients. The AE laden segments in the ST and their TT counterparts have been written in bold and italicised since they represent the focus of analysis. The analysis began with a brief account of the situational context in which the AE laden segment was used to highlight its significance in the ST. This was followed by a discussion of the renditions of the AE laden word in Arabic with special focus on lexical selection, sentence structure, and metaphors used. Hence, each translation was examined against the three criteria within

Yan Fu's (2012) model of faithfulness, expressiveness, and elegance to check which of the selected translations had succeeded in preserving these elements for the Arab recipients and achieved Nida's (1964) functional equivalence. Accordingly, the TT counterpart of the AE laden segment in the ST is given in Arabic followed by a transliteration of this segment with its direct/literal (Lit.) translation in parentheses to familiarise the reader with its meaning.

Models Adopted in the Analysis

In light of the explanation provided above, an eclectic model was adopted to analyse the data in question. More specifically, Yan Fu's (cited in Zhang 2013) triple translation criteria of faithfulness, expressiveness, and elegance in combination with Nida's (1964) functional equivalence, namely his closest natural equivalent were utilised for the analysis and interpretation of the meanings and functions of the AE in Gibran's *The Prophet*.

According to Nida (1964: 94), translation is an activity that "consists in reproducing in the receptor language the closest natural equivalent of the source language message, first in terms of meaning and secondly in terms of style". In the light of Nida's definition, the translator is required to focus more on the ST meaning and spirit rather than adhere to the structure and form. Specifically, Nida states that functional equivalence is based on "the principle of equivalent effect [in which] the relationship between receptor and message should be substantially the same as that which existed between the original receptor and the message" (Nida 1964: 159). Nida places great significance on the AE through his use of notions as "equivalent effect" and "equivalent response" where he points out that the dynamic translator is more faithful to the SL than the literal translator, since the former may preserve similar effect of the ST in the TT and therefore achieve a successful translation (Nida 1964; Munday 2001). Within the same context, Nida (1984) considers style as the foremost value in literary language since every word in any literary work must be carefully considered. To be precise, all aspects of literary style, namely choice of words and figurative devices have to be seriously observed since they express the writer's own world, i.e., his/her way of thinking, the expression of feelings and conveyance of messages (Xiaoshu and Cheng 2003: 3).

Similarly, Yan Fu's triple translation criteria entails that translation involves three requirements: faithfulness, expressiveness, and elegance. Faithfulness requires that the meaning in the TT should be faithful to the meaning of ST. Admittedly, a total faithfulness to the ST seems quite difficult.

"However, even though you succeed in achieving that goal, if the translated one cannot be called coherent writing, it is of no significance. Therefore, expressiveness should be given priority too" (Tang 2019: 1047). This triple translation criterion sets the right course and guidelines for the translation of literature.

More specifically, Yan Fu states that faithfulness is all about the closeness between the meaning of the ST and the TT. In other words, the translated version should be faithful to both the ST and the target readers. Expressiveness, on the other hand, is concerned with how the TT should be coherent and clear to the target readers and to be of interest and admiration to them. This can be accomplished when translators highly prioritise expressiveness via considering the meaning and the style of the ST with no need to strictly "follow the exact order of words and sentence structure of the original language" (Tang 2019: 1048). In addition to faithfulness and expressiveness, Yan Fu stresses the importance of elegance not only to make translation "travel far" but also to better convey the ST producer's ideas (Tang 2019: 1047). Elegance is more specific to literary language, i.e., "refinement of language" since, as Yan Fu states, when language has no refinement, its effect will not extend far (ibid). In other words, elegance means that the TT should be as aesthetically pleasing as the ST. For the TT to be "elegant" it should be expressive in terms of catering for the taste of the target reader, to be widely read for its delightful and enjoyable AE. Hence, if the ST is highly elevated and elegant, the unexpressiveness and inelegance in the translated version would be undoubtedly a betrayal to the original (ibid).

In addition, a verification procedure to better verify which of the selected translations was successful in maintaining the source text AE in the TTs was also carried out. For this purpose, a verification sheet (a semi-structured questionnaire) was distributed to two native speakers of Arabic as raters of the validity of the sheet. The Arab raters are native speakers of Arabic and hold PhD degrees in English language and in translation. In addition, they both have good knowledge of literature, which is a necessary condition to better answer the questionnaire. The raters' knowledge of English and Arabic is mandatory so that they can grasp the significance of utilising the AE in the ST and decide whether this stylistic feature has been preserved in the translations or not. Accordingly, each of the raters was given a copy of the 4-page questionnaire containing the six illustrative examples of Gibran's *The Prophet*, along with their four Arabic translations. This represented a corpus whereby the source text AE laden segment was put parallel to its four translations in Arabic, and the raters were asked to determine which of the

translations could better maintain the source text AE. It is worth noting that the inter-raters reliability coefficient of the sheets was 75%. There was also an average level of agreement between the raters' answers to the verification sheet and the researchers' preliminary analysis concerning the retention of the AE of the ST in the TT. To reiterate, the researchers could arrive at similar results in the majority of the instances identified by the raters as maintaining the source text AE in the translations or not.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This section is concerned with the analysis of the sample examples in four Arabic translations of Gibran's *The Prophet*. The selected translations were examined according to Yan Fu's triple translation criteria of faithfulness, expressiveness, and elegance in combination with Nida's (1964) functional equivalence, as previously stated. Thus, the ST examples were analysed along with their TT counterparts while the selected translations were examined in terms of the Arabic equivalents used for the ST intended meanings focusing mainly on lexical selections, sentence structures, and metaphors employed. We begin with example number (1) as follows:

1. "Too many **fragments of the spirit** have I scattered in these streets…" (Gibran 1973: 2)

No. (1)	ST
	Too many **fragments of the spirit** have I scattered in these streets….
	TT
Okasha	كم من حباتٍ للروح نثرتُ في هذه الطرقات... (2000: 110)
Nuaimy	لكم بذرت نتفأ من روحي في هذه الشوارع!... (2013: 40)
Antonius	كثيرة هي أجزاء روحي التي فرقتها في هذه الشوارع... (2017: 7)
Al-ābid	عديدة شظايا الروح نثرتها على هذه الطرقات... (2017: 5)

In example (1), Gibran uses "fragments" to refer to how many parts (of his spirit) he has scattered in the streets of Orphalese (the imaginary city he created in *The Prophet*). The metaphor "fragments" implies that the writer's deep attachment to and powerful love for the city of Orphales and its people are limitless, i.e., everywhere in the said city, the writer has left parts of his spirit. Gibran utilised the metaphor of a farmer who scattered seeds in the

land since, like a farmer, the writer grows wisdom, beauty, and love among those he lives with (Okasha 2000; Nuaimy 2013).

In view of Yan Fu's (2012) and Nida's (1964) models, Antonius shows considerable faithfulness to the ST general meaning since he has used almost the same word selection, i.e., أجزاء روحي *ajzā' rūhi* (Lit. parts of my spirit), the verb فرقتُ *faraqtu* (Lit. scattered), and شوارع *shawari'a* (Lit. streets). Also, he utilises the same simple sentence structure which is quite parallel to the ST sentence structure. Likewise, Okasha, Nuaimy, and Al-ābid seem to have shown varying degrees of faithfulness to both the ST meaning and style since they have rendered "fragments" into حبات *ḥabbat* (Lit. fragments), نُتَف *nutaf* (Lit. small parts), and شظايا *shadhaya* (Lit. shrapnel), respectively. Also, Okasha and Al-ābid have used the verb نثرتُ *nathartu* (Lit. throw) for "scattered" and طرقات *turuqat* (Lit. roads) for "streets" whereas Nuaimy employs بذرتُ *bathartu* (Lit. grow) for "scattered" and شوار *shawari'a* for "street". All the selected translators have employed the same sentence structure, namely simple sentence types. All have also translated the ST metaphor "fragments of the spirit" into a metaphorical counterpart as mentioned above.

Taking the adopted model into account, the expressions used as counterparts for the expressive and elegant metaphor in the ST "fragments of the spirit" (Lit. fragments, شظايا الروح and حبَّات الروح , نتفاً من روحي, أجزاء روحي" small parts, parts, and shrapnel) are synonyms that convey different meanings and connotations. Specifically, أجزاء (Lit. parts) is too broad to convey the fine image which lies in the ST and it is unfamiliar to the target readers since this word does not harmonise with الروح *rūh* (Lit. spirit) in Arabic. Similarly, شظايا *shadhaya* (Lit. shrapnel) is far more unsuitable for it never indicates the ST artistic effect and never fits the TT sociocultural context. شظايا (Lit. shrapnel) has a negative connotation since it is more associated with violence and war context and it also does not harmonise with الروح (spirit) in Arabic. It seems quite an inadequate translation for it deforms the ST expressiveness and elegance. On a different scale, نُتف الروح *nutaf arrūh* (Lit. small parts of the spirit) seems somehow approximately close to the ST expression though نُتف (Lit. small parts) is less familiar to the TT readers for it never harmonises with الروح (spirit). حبات الروح *ḥabbat arrūh*, (Lit. fragments of the spirit) used by Okasha, looks the most fitting because this expression adequately indicates both the ST intention and AE for it reflects the whole context of farming where seeds are thrown to bring out life in the ground.

In the light of Yan Fu's (2012) and Nida's (1964) models, all the translators are faithful to the ST meaning since all of them have succeeded in transferring the ST meaning generally. However, they are at variance to maintain the AE of the ST in the TT. Okasha and Nuaimy have produced a natural and elegant TT version for they seem more adequate in expressing the ST pleasing style skilfully as the above analysis shows. They seem to have fully grasped the ST spirit in terms of meaning and style and, thus, achieved functional equivalence. The other translations are less adequate for the Arabic counterparts they utilised do not fit in terms of the ST intentionality and function.

2.   "Am I a harp that the hand of the mighty may touch me, or a **flute that His breath may pass through me**?" (Gibran 1973: 4)

No. (2)	ST
	Am I a harp that the hand of the mighty may touch me, or a **flute that His breath may pass through me**?
	TT
Okasha	ليتني قيثارة فتمسّني يد العليِّ القدير،أو مزماراً حتى تنساب من خلالي أنفاسه...
	(2000: 116)
Nuaimy	ألعلني قيثارٌ تلمس أوتارها يد القدير؟ أم لعلني مزمارٌ تمرُّ فيه أنفاسه؟
	(2013: 42)
Antonius	هل أنا قيثارة فتلامسني يد القدير، أم أنا مزمار فتمر بي أنفاسه؟
	(2017: 10)
Al-ābid	هل أنا قيثارة لتلمسني يد القدير، أم ناي لتعبرني أنفاسه؟...
	(2017: 9)

The key metaphor in example (2) is that of a "flute that His breath may pass through me" where the Prophet has imagined himself a flute through which God's breath passes. This sublimely vivid Sufi image is often attributed to Rumi as the flute has a significant symbolism for him (Rūmī 1925).

Formulated on Yan Fu's and Nida's models, the translators seem to vary in the way they have rendered the ST meaning. More specifically, they all, save Al-ābid, have translated "flute" into مزمار *mizmār* (Lit. reed pipe) which is too broad to express the peculiar musical instrument; on the other hand, Al-ābid seems to have grasped the ST meaning when he translates it into ناي *nāi* (flute). It is worth noting that the *nāi* is greatly symbolic in the writings and songs of the Sufi poets who largely influenced Gibran's mind and soul (Al-Khazraji et al. 2013). Accordingly, when applying Yan Fu's criteria, the translators, save Al-ābid, appear unfaithful to the meaning the author intends to convey. In addition, Nuaimy, Antonius, and Al-ābid have rendered the key metaphor, i.e., "[the almighty] breath passes through me",

into a relatively similar TT versions such as تعبرني أنفاسه /تمر بي *Tamurū bi/ ta'burūni anfāsuhu* (Lit. his breath passes through me), respectively. None of the Arabic equivalents used above are faithful to the ST expressiveness and elegance since they do not reflect the artistic flavour and force that lie in the ST, which Okasha seems to have adequately maintained in translating the said sentence into تنساب من خلالي أنفاسه *tansāb min khilali anfāsahu* (Lit. gliding through me). Remarkably, the verb *tansāb* (glide) does not only imply the meaning of "passing through" but it also indicates that such "passing through" moves so gently.

Thus, تعبر, تمر, and تنساب (Lit. pass through, glide) are synonyms with many linguistic differences which result in both communicative and aesthetic differences (Al-Askary 1997). The image portrayed by the verb تنساب (glide) where God's breath, like a water stream, is metaphorically compared to a spiritual soft music that passes through the flute. In Okasha's translation, the source text AE seems to be skilfully preserved in the TT while the other translations are less adequate in this respect. In addition, Okasha changed the ST interrogative sentence into a supplicate or request sentence in the TT to add more elegance to the context portrayed. This is more fitting in a divine context whereby a believer is beseeching his deity, whereby a more functional natural equivalent translation is provided.

3.   "A seeker **of silence** am I, and what treasure have I found in **silences** that I may dispense with confidence" (Gibran 1973: 4–5)

No. (3)	ST
	A seeker **of silence** am I, and what treasure have I found in **silences** that I may dispense with confidence?
	TT
Okasha	إنما أنا ساع الى السكيّنة. تُرى أي كنزٍ لقيّت في ظلَها فأنثره بثقة وأطمئنان؟ .. (2000: 116)
Nuaimy	إن أنا غير إنسان هام بالسكينة. فما هي الكنوز التي حظيت بها في السكينة والتياستطيع أن أفرّق منها على الآخرين بثقة وراحة ضمير؟ .. (2013: 42)
Antonius	أجل أنني هائمٌ أنشد السكينة، ولكن ما هو الكنز الذي وجدته في السكينة لكي أوزعه بطمأنينية؟ (2017: 10)
Al-ābid	ما أنا إلا باحث عن الصمت، فأي كنز وجدت في الأصداء أعطيه بإيمان (2017: 9)

In example (3), "silence(s)" is the key word in the ST which requires the translators to be quite attentive to the embedded meanings and connotations it implies. All Sufi poets place much importance on silence since they consider it the right state for spiritual meditation and experience. Thus, "silence" plays a key role in Gibran's life and writings (Mohamed and Louiza 2016).

In the light of Yan Fu's (2012) and Nida's (1964) models, all the selected translators, save Al-ābid, have generally rendered the ST intended meaning. Okasha, Nuaimy, and Antonius have transferred the ST meaning in varying degrees of faithfulness, expressiveness, and elegance. Specifically, they have translated "silence(s)" into سكينة *sakīna* (Lit. peacefulness) (Baalbaki and Baalbaki 2007), which adequately expresses both the intended meaning and the AE as well since *sakīna* entails the full peacefulness in the TT. However, they have employed unnecessarily long sentence structures that seem a bit tautological and thus harm the ST naturalness and elegance, i.e., its artistic fluency and flavour. Nauimy, for instance, have inserted many irrelevant words, namely, غيرإنسان *ghair insān*, (Lit. only a man), أستطيع *astaṭi'a* (Lit. can), الآخرين *alākharīn* (Lit. others) which are all not mentioned in the ST and are irrelevant in the TT. In addition, they, except Okasha, have also repeated السكينة *sakīna* (peacefulness) two times which is undesirable in Arabic in the given context.

On a different level, Al-ābid has translated "silence(s)" into صمت *samt* (Lit. silence) and "silences" into أصداء *asdā* (Lit. echoes). Based on Yan Fu's (2012) and Nida's (1964) models, صمت *samt* and أصداء *asdā* seem quite irrelevant to the ST sociocultural and situational context since the former is too broad and seems negative whereas the latter has nothing to do with "silence(s)" for silences and echoes entail two different meanings and connotations. Accordingly, Al-ābid seems unfaithful not only to the ST intentionality but also to its style and effect for he has produced a TT version which distorts the ST naturalness, expressiveness, and elegance. To be specific, the synonyms سكينة *sakīna* (peacefulness) and صمت *samt* (silence) signify different connotations where the former is largely connected with peacefulness whereas the latter is not (Al-Askary 1997).

In terms of the model adopted, Okasha seems to have fully grasped the ST meaning and artistic function. He has never mentioned any irrelevant words that may harm the TT natural fluency and elegance to the extent that he never repeated the word سكينة *sakīna* but referred to it through the pronoun in في ظلّها *fi dhiliha* (Lit. under its shadow). He has shown an adequate level of faithfulness to the ST in terms of word selection, sentence structure, and imagery as much as possible and achieved functional equivalence.

4. "They give as in yonder valley **the myrtle breathes its fragrance into space**. Through the hand of such as those God speaks, **and from behind their eyes He smiles upon the earth**." (Gibran 1973: 27)

No. (4)	ST
	They give as in yonder valley **the myrtle breathes its fragrance into space**. Through the hand of such as those God speaks, **and from behind their eyes He smiles upon the earth**.
	TT
Okasha	أولئك يعطون كأنهم ريحان الوادي يبثُ عطره في الفضاء. وعلى فيض أمثال هؤلاء تتجلى كلمة الله،ومن خلال ''عيونهم تُشرق بسماتُه على الأرض.... (2000: 144)
Nuaimy	أولئك يعطون كما تعطي تلك الريحانة عطرها للنسيم. بأيدي أولئك وأمثالهم يتكلم الله، ومن أحداقهم يرسل بسماته الى الأرض.... (2013: 54)
Antonius	هؤلاء يعطون مما عندهم كما يعطي الريحان عبيره العطر في ذلك الوادي ، بمثل أيدي هؤلاء يتكلم الله، ومن خلال عيونهم يبتسم على الأرض (2017: 24)
Al-ābid	هؤلاء يعطون كما بذينك الوادي يتضوّع الآس بالعبير. بأيديهم يتكلم الله، ومن خلف عيونهم يحنو على الأديم (2017: 33)

In example (4), Gibran portrays such a type of "givers" who find their happiness in giving not in taking. The key metaphor Gibran employs is that of "the myrtle breathes its fragrance into space" which indicates how generous and self-denied those people are. In the next sentence, Gibran has metaphorically described how great those givers are to the extent that God speaks through their hands (gifts) and "from behind their eyes He smiles upon the earth" (Gibran 1973: 27).

In the light of Yan Fu's (2012) and Nida's (1964) models, the translators appear at variance in translating the first part of the text. All the translators have rendered "fragrance" into عِطْر *eṭir* and عبير *abīr* (Lit. sweet smelling, aromatic) where both beautifully reflect the ST but the latter is more artistic than the former (Baalbaki and Baalbaki 2007: 749). For instance, Nuaimy has conveyed the ST meaning in the TT adequately though he unnecessarily used the verb يعطي *yu'aṭi* (Lit. to give) two times in the TT and has added the word تلك *tilka* (Lit. that) which is not found in the ST. As a result, the TT version seems less natural and elegant than the ST. Similarly, Al-ābid has adequately translated "myrtle breathes" into يتضَوَّع *yataḍawa* (Lit. spreading gently), (Baalbaki and Baalbaki 2007: 715). However, he has irrelevantly added ذينك *dhainak* (Lit. those) with the singular noun وادي *wadi* (Lit. valley) where *dhainak* is used to refer to dual not singular regardless of the fact that

it is not found in the ST. Accordingly, Al-ābid seems not quite faithful to the ST stylistic effect. On the other hand, Antonius seems faithful to the ST general meaning for he has transferred the intended meaning reasonably but at the cost of the sentence structure and the AE since he has forced many irrelevant words such as مما عندهم *mima indahum* (Lit. of what they have) and العَطِر *al-eṭir* (Lit. sweet smelling) (Baalbaki and Baalbaki 2007: 766). Adding the adjective العَطِر (Lit. sweet smelling) to the noun عبير (Lit. aromatic) is redundant since عبير is aromatic in itself. Resultantly, Antonius seems to have failed in maintaining the ST natural fluency and artistic enjoyable images in the TT version.

On a different scale, Okasha has skilfully and effectively used a more suitable word selection and brief sentence structure. He has transferred "breathes its fragrance" into يبُثُّ عطره *yabuthū eṭrahū* (Lit. spraying its fragrance freely). In addition, Okasha has added a fine artistic touch when he never ignored translating "space", while all the other translators did, into فضاء *faḍā* (space) to reflect that the metaphor implies that the said people's "giving" is limitless, i.e., their giving extends so far from the valley to the space. Thus, Okasha is very much in conformity with Yan Fu's (2012) and Nida's (1964) models since the TT he produced seems as natural, dynamic, and elegant as the ST.

As far as the second part of the text is concerned, all the translators, save Okasha, have rendered "through the hand of such as those" literally using أيدي *aidi* (Lit. hands) which never reflects the intended meaning since يد (hand) and أيادي *ayadi* (hands) not أيدي, refer to gifts and favours (Baalbaki and Baalbaki 2007: 1251). This fine image is grasped by Okasha who has translated the above expression into وعلى فيض أمثال هؤلاء *wa 'alā faiḍi Ha'aulā* (Lit. abundant gifts of such people) where فيض *faiḍ* (Lit. abundant gifts) is best fitting in this context for God seems to speak and smile through the abundant favours of the said people. Accordingly, faithfulness, expressiveness, and elegance have all been achieved yielding a functional natural equivalent translation.

5. "For that which is **boundless in you abides in the mansion of the sky**, whose door is the morning mist, and whose windows are **the songs and the silences of night**." (Gibran 1973: 41)

No. (5)	ST
	For that which is **boundless in you abides in the mansion of the sky,** whose door is the morning mist, and whose windows are **the songs and the silences of night**.
	TT
Okasha	فإنّ غير المحدود فيكم يقطُن ''مملكة السَّماء'' ، بابها ضَباب الصبَّاح، ونوافذها أناشيد الليل وسكينته. (2000: 176)

Nuaimy	لإنّ ما لا يحد فيكم يقطن قصر السماء الذي بابه ضَباب الصبَّاح ، ونوافذه أناشيد الليل وسكونه.
	(2013: 68)
Antonius	لأن غير المحدود فيكم يقطن في منزل السماء، الذي بوابته سحابة الصباح ونوافذه سكون الليل وأناشيده.
	(2017: 36)
Al-ābid	فالواسع اللانهائي فيك يسكن مرابع السماء التي ضباب الصبح الرقيق بابُها، وشبابيكها سكنات الليلوتراتيل المساء.
	(2017: 55)

Example (5) is full of images and metaphors written in such an elevated and sublime language, a Sufi language peculiar to Gibran. He states that the God inside every one of us tends to always be linked to the kingdom of heaven where the door of this kingdom is "the morning mist" and its windows are "the songs and the silences of night". In short, the spirit of God inside each of us is endless.

According to Yan Fu's (2012) and Nida's (1964) models, all the translators, except Al-ābid, have transferred "boundless in you" to غير المحدود فيكم *ghair almaḥdudi fikum* (Lit. limitless in you) which fairly expresses the ST intentionality but الواسع اللانهائي *alwasi'a allaniha'i* (Lit. splendid and limitless), employed by Al-ābid, is closer to the ST spirit. Thus, Al-ābid seems to be more faithful to the ST intention and style for the TT version he created is more expressive and natural in terms of the artistic flavour since it is quite familiar in Arabic as one of the attributes of God mentioned in the Qur'an (Chapter 2:115). Also, all the translators have used يقطن *yaqṭinu* and يسكن *yaskunu* (both literally mean 'to live in') as counterparts for "abides" (Lit. dwell). Both يقطن and يسكن (dwell) are undesirable to be attributed to God in Arabic. يستوي *yastawi* (Lit. to sit firmly on) (Baalbaki and Baalbaki 2007: 103) seems a good option when God is mentioned with reference to a given place. Accordingly, when applying Yan Fu's model, the translators seem to be unfaithful to the ST artistic spirit since they come up with TT versions that seem a bit unexpressive and inelegant.

Further, Nuaimy, Antonius, and Al-ābid have translated "the songs and the silences of night" into أناشيد / تراتيل *tarātīl / anāshīd* (Lit. hymns, songs) and سكنات / سكون *sakanāt / sakan* (Lit. silence(s), quiescence). Based on the model adopted, both أناشيد and تراتيل are synonyms but the former is more concerned with religious and Sufi contexts rather than the latter, which is broader (Al-Askary 1997). Thus, تراتيل *tarātīl* (hymns) is well-chosen to fit a Sufi language attributed to Gibran. Similarly, سكون / سكنات [silence(s), quiescence] seem not to be the right counterparts for "silences of night" used in the given context. Okasha has used سكينة *sakina* (Lit. full peacefulness) as a more natural functional equivalent to the ST expression for the whole context

is about ultimate peacefulness. Accordingly, Okasha's translation seems more faithful to the ST and more expressive in terms of meaning and style than the other translations.

6. "Forget not that modesty is for a shield against **the eye of the unclean. And when the unclean shall be no more**, what were modesty but a fetter and a fouling of the mind?" (Gibran 1973: 42)

No. (6)	ST
	Forget not that modesty is for a shield against **the eye of the unclean. And when the unclean shall be no more**, what were modesty but a fetter and a fouling of the mind?
	TT
Okasha	فلا تنسوا أن الإحتشام درعٌ يقيكم من نظرات أهل الدَّنس، فإذا زال الدَّنس فأيّ شيء يبقى من الإحتشام، سوى أنه كان قيداً ومفسَدَةً للعقل.. (2000:180)
Nuaimy	لا يغربن عن بالكم الحشمة درعٌ ضد عينٍ في قلب صاحبها رجاسة. وعندما لا يبقى هناك من رجاسة فهل الحشمة إذ ذاك غير غلٍّ في العنق وغير قذارة في الفكر؟.. (2013: 20)
Antonius	ولكن لا يغرب عن أذهانكم أنَّ الحشمة هي ترسٌ منيعٌ متينٌ للوقاية من عيون المدنسين. فإذا زال المدنسون من الوجود، أفلا تصير الحشمة قيداً للفكر وتلويثاً له في حمأة العبودية؟ (2017: 37)
Al-ābid	لاتنسوا أن الإحتشام درع لصد عين الفجر. وماذا يبقى الإحتشام إن ولى الفجر غير قيد وفساد فكر؟. (2017: 57)

In example (6), Al-Mustafa (Gibran) speaks briefly about "clothes" shedding light on many functions clothes have in our life and that though clothes "conceal much of our beauty, they hide not the unbeautiful part of ourselves". He remarks that wearing clothes never reflects modesty but they are just a "shield against the eye of the unclean" (Gibran 1973: 42). The key expressions in the ST are "modesty is for a shield" and "the eye of the unclean".

In consideration of Yan Fu's (2012) and Nida's (1964) models, all the translators have communicated the ST meaning faithfully but they vary a great deal in reflecting the AE at the level of word selection and imagery. All of them have translated "modesty" into حشمة *ḥishma* or its derivative إحتشام *iḥtisham* (Lit. decency) (Baalbaki and Baalbaki 2007: 46), which reflects the original adequately. However, Nuaimy seems not to consider the ST natural expressiveness and elegance since he has rendered "the eye of the unclean" into a quite undesirable verbose expression, namely عين في قلب صاحبها رجاسة *A'in fi qalbi saḥibiha rajasah* (Lit. an eye containing abomination in the heart of its beholder). The said expression does not indicate the elegance of the original artistic tone, which is skilfully reflected by نظرات أهل الدنس

natharat ahluldanas (Lit. sights of defilement people) and عيون المدنسين *A'yūn almudanasīn* (Lit. defilement eyes) utilised by Okasha and Antonius, respectively. It is worth noting that the Holy Qur'an uses الذين في قلوبهم مرض *alladhina fi qulubihim maraḍ* (Lit. those whose hearts are diseased) in reference to "the unclean" in a similar context (Chapter 2:10). Nuaimy also has used many long expressions such as لايغربن عن بالكم *layaghrubanna an balikum* (Lit. do not forget) for "forget not" instead of لاتنسوا *latansw* (forget not), which is smartly used by both Okasha and Al-ābid.

In addition, Nuaimy appears unfaithful to the ST artistic tone since he has not only rendered the second part of the ST literally but he has also forced many unnecessary words and expressions such as هناك *hunaka* (Lit. there), من *min* (Lit. any), إذ ذاك *'ith thaka* (Lit. at that time) and في العنق *filunuq* (Lit. in the neck). Based on the model adopted, inserting such words and expressions distorts the expressiveness and elegance of the original and results in making the TT counterpart quite monotonous. Similarly, Antonius has unjustifiably inserted many irrelevant words in the TT that are not found in the ST. For instance, he has used both منيع *mani'a* and متين *matīn* (Lit. fortified, strong) to modify ترس *turs* (Lit. shield), which is not modified in the original; the word "shield" itself implies being strong and unapproachable. Such a kind of redundancy deforms the artistic flavour of the ST. He has also forced في حمأة العبودية *fi ḥam'at al'aubudiya* (Lit. in the midst of slavery), which has no place in the ST.

Similarly, Al-ābid seems unfaithful to the ST meaning and style for he has come up with a vague translation of the expression "the unclean" whereby he has translated it into الفجر *alfajr* (Lit. dawn) two times. He might have meant الفجور *alfujur* (Lit. indecency) which is also unfitting in this context, and he has transferred "mind" عقل *a'ql* (mind) into فكر *fikr* (Lit. thought), which is also quite unsuitable. Notably, all the translators have translated "mind" عقل *a'ql* into فكر *fikr* (thought) save Okasha who has rightly used عقل (mind). It is worth noting that '*fikr*' (thought) and '*a'ql*' (mind) are synonyms but the former is more associated with an outcome of mental activity whereas the latter is the part of the person through which s/he can think (Al-Askary 1997). As a result, all the translators, except Okasha, seem not to convey the ST natural and dynamic expressiveness and elegance, as stated so far. Accordingly, Okasha seems to be adhering more to Yan Fu's criteria of faithfulness, expressiveness, and elegance to achieve Nida's functional equivalence.

CONCLUSION

This study has attempted a contextual analysis to examine the extent to which the AE in Gibran's *The Prophet* has been maintained in four Arabic translations of this masterpiece. For that end, typical illustrative examples comprising AE laden segments in the ST have been randomly selected and compared with their TT counterparts for analysis according to Yan Fu's (2012) (cited in Zhang 2013) triple translation criteria of faithfulness, expressiveness, and elegance in combination with Nida's (1964) functional equivalence.

The findings arrived at in this study reveal that almost all the selected translators have transferred the ST general meaning adequately. However, they vary a great deal in maintaining the AE embedded meanings and messages of the ST in the TT. Based on the data analysis and answers to the verification sheet, the examined translations have shown that three of the selected translators, namely Nuaimy, Al-ābid, and Antonius have sometimes captured the artistic flavour of the ST and reflected it in the TT but they have, at other times, been unable to succeed in this respect. Their occasionally inadequate translations seem to result from their inappropriate use of words, overly monotonous sentence structures and unfamiliar counterparts of the ST images. Also, they over and over again tend to employ the literal translation strategy, which distorts the sublimity of the ST spirit. By doing so, they deprive the TT recipients in terms of their enjoyment of Gibran's elegant style.

On a different scale, Okasha seems to have captured the ST intended meaning and pleasing style skilfully and often adequately maintained it in the TT. His mastery of suitable words, the fitting sentence structure and the desirable images have shown his adequate knowledge of not only the two languages but also the two cultures as well. He has been sensitive to the context in which stylistic features in the ST have been utilised to achieve certain aesthetic functions. Thus, he paid special attention to the sublime musical effects and/or shades of meaning words have conveyed to the ST recipients and succeeded in rendering such an awe-inspiring text into a sublime counterpart in the TT. Accordingly, Okasha's translation seems to be closer to achieving Yan Fu's criteria of faithfulness, expressiveness, and elegance, and Nida's functional equivalence.

NOTES

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