

Cultural Bridges and Gaps: Textual Analysis of Jokha Alharthi's *Sayyidat al-qamar's* Arabic-to-English Translation

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Abstract :

The overarching context of the research is the transformation and societal shifts in Oman, as depicted in the original novel. Marilyn Booth, renowned for her translation quality, is the translator responsible for rendering *Sayyidat al-qamar* (2010) into *Celestial Bodies* (2018), which earned the 2019 Man Booker International Prize. This recognition highlights the translator's competence and the significance of the translation under analysis. The primary objective is to examine the translation process and its effectiveness in preserving the cultural and emotional nuances of the original Arabic text within the English version. The study adopts a qualitative research approach, focusing on the textual analysis of the first part of the Arabic novel, *Sayyidat al-qamar* (2010), and its corresponding English translation. The analysis primarily concentrates on key facets, such as cultural references, linguistic subtleties, religious allusions, cultural expectations, clarity, accessibility, and the application of Skopos Theory. These elements collectively contribute to understanding how the translation process navigates the intricate task of retaining the source text's essence while ensuring its suitability for English-speaking audiences. This research strives to provide insights into the intricate process of translating a work of literature from one language and cultural context to another. In this case, it illuminates the successful transition of an Arabic narrative into English, offering a textual analysis in the art of cultural and emotional translation while aligning with Skopos Theory's purpose-driven principles. The research indicates that being skilled in translating from English to Arabic does not necessarily mean you will be equally proficient in translating from Arabic to English. This is because the two languages are quite different. To ensure accurate and suitable translations, it is essential to focus on the translator's expertise in both English and Arabic and make sure they are familiar with the unique aspects of each language. The study concludes by suggesting ways to improve teaching and offering ideas for future research in this area.

Keywords: Translation Studies, Cultural Bridges, Skopos Theory, Purpose-oriented Translation

1. Introduction:

Language, the quintessential tool of human communication, serves as the vessel for literature, culture, and ideas. However, when words traverse borders, they encounter a complex interplay of linguistic, cultural, and contextual nuances. Translation, the art of rendering one language's beauty, depth, and subtlety into another, is a discipline of paramount significance. In this case, translators play the role of cultural ambassadors, facilitating the exchange of literary treasures across the globe.

In the realm of Arabic literature, *Sayyidat al-qamar* (2010) stands as a significant work, showcasing the depth and complexity of storytelling. This novel, authored by the renowned Jokha Alharthi, delves into themes of identity, exile, and the pursuit of self in a foreign land. Its narrative weaves a tapestry of emotions, cultural intricacies, and the human condition, all set against the backdrop of a richly textured Middle Eastern context.

The significance of translating *Sayyidat al-qamar* (2010) into English cannot be overstated. It is an opportunity to offer English-speaking readers a window into the world of Arabic literature, to explore the characters, the settings, and the profound themes that have resonated with Arabic readers for generations. However, it is also a formidable challenge, as capturing the essence of a work that is deeply rooted in its cultural context and language requires precision, cultural sensitivity, and an understanding of the unique challenges presented by Arabic-to-English translation.

This research seeks to address the question: How does Skopos Theory influence the translation of *Sayyidat al-qamar* (2010) into English, and what are the implications for preserving the cultural depth of the source text? Additionally, it aims to explore how Skopos Theory impacts the reader's experience when encountering *Sayyidat al-qamar* (2010) in English translation, and how it contributes to their understanding of the cultural context depicted in the novel.

This study employs a qualitative research design, aimed at comprehensively exploring the dynamics of translating the Arabic novel *Sayyidat al-qamar* (2010) into English, focusing on the application of Skopos Theory. Qualitative research is chosen because it allows for an in-depth examination of the translation process, emphasising the significance of understanding the cultural and contextual dimensions that affect translation choices. The study is focused on a specific case: the translation of *Sayyidat al-qamar* (2010) into English.

The primary research method utilised in this study is textual analysis. The focus is on analysing the text of the Arabic novel *Sayyidat al-qamar* (2010) and its English translation, *Celestial Bodies* (2018) by Marilyn Booth. Textual analysis involves a close reading and content analysis of the literary works, delving into linguistic, cultural, and contextual elements to understand how the translation choices align with Skopos Theory.

One particular translation theory that has garnered attention and significance in the field of Translation Studies is Skopos Theory. Developed by Hans J. Vermeer, Skopos Theory is a comprehensive framework that places paramount importance on the purpose and function of translation. It asserts that the translation's aim is to achieve effective communication in the target language while respecting the cultural and linguistic intricacies of the source text.

As we embark on the journey of translating *Sayyidat al-qamar* (2010) into English, it becomes evident that Skopos Theory plays a significant role in guiding this process. The novel's cultural richness, intricate character development, and the resonance of its themes require a translator to carefully balance fidelity to the source text with accessibility to the English-speaking audience. Skopos Theory equips the translator with a guiding principle to ensure the translation's functionality for the target readers. It encourages the translator to consider the specific needs and expectations of the English-speaking audience, recognising that this audience may have different cultural references and linguistic preferences.

In Summary, the translation of *Sayyidat al-qamar* (2010) into English is a venture that promises to bridge literary worlds. It is a journey that takes us from the intricacies of linguistic translation to the profound beauty of Arabic literature and its cultural nuances. Guided by the versatile Skopos Theory, this research seeks to explore the multifaceted role this theory plays in preserving the essence of *Sayyidat al-qamar* (2010) while making it accessible to English-speaking readers. The following sections of this research paper will delve deeper into the theoretical foundations of Skopos Theory, its relevance in the field of Translation Studies, and its practical applications in the context of translating Arabic literature. As we explore the significance of translation, may we uncover the keys to unlock the treasures of literary worlds and build the bridge that connects diverse cultures and stories.

2. Literature review:

Translation quality is a paramount consideration in the realm of Translation Studies, particularly when applied to literature. The essence of a literary work, including its cultural, emotional, and stylistic elements, must be preserved during the translation process to ensure that it resonates with readers in the target language. Achieving high translation quality involves maintaining the integrity of the source text while making it accessible and engaging for the target audience.

In the context of literary translation, quality is often measured by the extent to which the translated work captures the original's nuances, conveys its intended meaning, and evokes a similar emotional response in the reader. It goes beyond mere linguistic accuracy; it encompasses the essence of the text, the author's voice, and the cultural context in which the work is embedded.

Literary translators face the complex challenge of balancing fidelity to the source text with the need for cultural adaptation and linguistic accessibility. Achieving translation quality in literature requires a deep understanding of both the source and target languages, as well as a profound appreciation for the cultural nuances that underlie the text.

In the realm of Arabic literature, *Sayyidat al-qamar* (2010) stands as a significant work, showcasing the depth and complexity of storytelling. This novel, authored by the renowned Jokha Alharthi, delves into themes of identity, exile, and the pursuit of self in a foreign land. Its narrative weaves a tapestry of emotions,

cultural intricacies, and the human condition, all set against the backdrop of a richly textured Middle Eastern context.

Translating *Sayyidat al-qamar* (2010) into English is a very important task. It allows English readers to discover Arabic literature, explore the characters, settings, and deep themes that have touched Arabic readers for a long time. But it's also a big challenge because the book is so closely connected to Arabic culture and language. To do it well, translator needs to be very precise, culturally aware, and understand the unique difficulties of moving from Arabic to English.

There's this theory called Skopos Theory that's quite famous in the world of translation. It was created by Hans J. Vermeer, and it's like a roadmap for how to translate. The key idea is that a translation should effectively communicate in the new language while also respecting the culture and language of the original text. It's like making sure the translation does its job while keeping the heart of the original work.

The versatility and adaptability of Skopos Theory make it a compelling framework for the translation of literature, where the preservation of cultural authenticity and the engagement of the target audience are paramount. It highlights the dynamic relationship between the source and target texts, emphasising that a translation's purpose dictates its strategy.

This research deals with the question: How does Skopos Theory influence the translation of *Sayyidat al-qamar* (2010) into English, and what are the implications for preserving the cultural depth of the source text? This paper highlights the ways does Skopos Theory impact the reader's experience when encountering *Sayyidat al-qamar* (2010) in English translation, and how does it contribute to their understanding of the cultural context depicted in the novel.

The literature review conducted as part of this research unveils a rich tapestry of studies and discussions in the field of Translation Studies. From legal language to poetry translation, from literary works to scientific texts, the significance of translation theories in shaping the translation process is evident. These studies emphasise the importance of understanding the translation's purpose and its role in bridging linguistic and cultural gaps.

As exemplified in the study by Din et al. (2020), which focuses on bridging the cultural divide in the translation of Gamal al-Ghitani's literary works, Skopos Theory underlines the importance of coherence and culture in translation. It suggests that a skopos-based translation can be successful when these principles are observed. This study's focus on the adaptability of translation to the target audience's needs and cultural context aligns perfectly with the objectives of translating *Sayyidat al-qamar* (2010) into English.

Moreover, Skopos Theory is also evident in the work by Kordić (2019) where the author explores the metaphoric use of denotations for colours in the language of law. Given the significant cultural and legal differences between languages, the theory posits that lexical equivalence in collocations with colour denotations may not always be achievable. Translators, guided by Skopos Theory, would prioritise functional equivalence and ensure that the translation serves its purpose in the target legal context.

Ting and Wang (2020) present a comparative study of seven English versions of "Shu Dao Nan." By using the Harmony-Guided Three-Level Poetry Translation Criteria, they aim to reveal the different styles of translated versions. Skopos's Theory aligns with this approach, as it encourages translators to consider the desired stylistic and aesthetic effects on the target audience, ultimately emphasising the importance of the translation's purpose.

Skopos Theory also comes to the forefront in the study by Din et al. (2020), where the focus is on bridging the cultural divide in the translation of Gamal al-Ghitani's literary works. The theory underlines the importance of coherence and culture in translation, suggesting that skopos-based translation can be successful when these principles are observed. The Skopos Theory's focus on adaptability to the target audience's needs and cultural context is especially pertinent in this study.

Petrova and Sun (2021) underscore the importance of careful study and language sense development in translation. Skopos's Theory aligns with these objectives by advocating for translations that maintain the emotional and cultural nuances of the source text, thus ensuring that the work's emotional colouring is preserved in the process of translation.

In conclusion, Skopos Theory offers a holistic and adaptable approach to translation, recognising the importance of the translation's purpose and the expectations of the target audience. As a researcher embarking on a study in translation studies, the adoption of Skopos Theory is highly recommended, as it allows for a comprehensive and audience-oriented translation strategy, ultimately enhancing the effectiveness and quality of the translation process. The studies referenced in this literature review demonstrate that Skopos Theory is not only relevant but also pivotal in addressing the complexities and challenges of translation in a globalised world.

3. Methodology

It is important to note that this research follows a qualitative approach to comprehensively investigate how the book *Sayyidat al-qamar* (2010) by Jokha Alharthi and its English translation, *Celestial Bodies* (2018) by Marilyn Booth, function, particularly in their cultural dimensions, and how they navigate the gaps and bridges in translation. The qualitative research approach was chosen to gain a deep understanding of the intricate cultural elements within the text and the dynamic role of translation in transferring or transforming these elements from Arabic to English.

The focus of this research is to examine how the cultural aspects and inherent challenges within the text are managed during the translation process. We intend to understand how Skopos theory, with a particular reference to the functional aspect of translation, is applied to tackle these challenges and mediate the cultural gaps.

This research employs a qualitative approach to investigate the cultural dimensions, bridges, and gaps in Jokha Alharthi's Arabic novel, *Sayyidat al-qamar* (2010), and its English translation, *Celestial Bodies* (2018) by Marilyn Booth. Qualitative methodology is chosen to gain a deep understanding of cultural elements and how the translation transforms them. Our approach is guided by the functional aspect of Skopos theory.

Our research design centers on textual analysis, with a specific focus on the English translation of *Sayyidat al-qamar* (2010). Textual analysis is suitable for exploring how cultural factors influence translation decisions and the role of translation theory in this context.

The primary data source for this study is the English translation of *Sayyidat al-qamar* (2010), known as *Celestial Bodies* (2018). Close reading and content analysis of the first part of novel and its translation is conducted to identify cultural references, themes, and translation choices' impacts. The analysis is guided by the translation theory, emphasising the translator's purpose and the intended function.

Data collected through textual analysis undergoes thematic analysis to identify recurring themes related to cultural representation, the influence of translation theory, and the impact of culture on translation. This analysis offers insights into how translation theory functions within the translation process and its role in managing cultural elements.

Our research framework, underpinned by the functional aspect of Skopos theory, provides a robust foundation for the investigation of cultural dimensions and challenges within the English translation of *Sayyidat al-qamar* (2010). By examining how translation theory influences the translation process and manages cultural elements, our research contributes to a deeper understanding of the dynamics of cultural translation.

In short, this research is framed within the scope of Skopos theory, a theoretical framework that places the translator's purpose and the functional aspect of translation at its core. The qualitative methodology, complemented by the application of Skopos theory, provides a robust framework for probing into the complexities of the English translation of *Sayyidat al-qamar* (2010). It sheds light on how Skopos theory influences the translation process, offering a deeper understanding of the dynamics involved in cultural translation, and it contributes to bridging cultural gaps in translation.

3.1 Research Questions:

1. How does the application of Skopos Theory influence the translation process in the context of Arabic literature, specifically when translating complex themes and culturally significant names into English?

2. How does the translation process balance cultural authenticity with accessibility for English-speaking readers?

3.2 Research Objectives:

1. Examine how Arabic-English translators handle complex themes, culturally significant elements, and names in literature.
2. To explore the advantages of a translation approach that balances cultural authenticity and reader accessibility in the context of Arabic-English translation, offering practical guidance to translators based on the research findings.

4. Skopos Theory in Analysis of Arabic Text and English Translation:

In the context of the first part of the Arabic text of the novel *Sayyidat al-qamar* (2010) and its English Translation by Marilyn Booth, a profound exploration of the variations and adaptations within the translation can be undertaken through the lens of Skopos theory. Skopos theory, a fundamental framework in translation studies, emphasises the importance of the purpose or function of a translation and its influence on the way a text is rendered in the target language.

Cultural References and Context:

Arabic Text (Original): The Arabic text in the first part of the novel presents cultural references, such as the mention of a "Singer sewing machine" and "Merchant Sulayman." These references are deeply rooted in the Arabic culture and may not be readily understood by a non-Arabic-speaking audience. However, they contribute to the rich cultural context of the story.

English Translation (Marilyn Booth): In the English Translation by Marilyn Booth, these cultural references have been thoughtfully adapted to suit the cultural context of the English-speaking audience. For instance, the sewing machine is explicitly referred to as a "Singer sewing machine," and the character is introduced as the "son of Merchant Sulayman." These adaptations are designed to ensure that the English-speaking readers can better grasp the cultural context embedded in the narrative.

Tone and Style:

Arabic Text (Original): The Arabic text in the first part of the novel is characterised by a poetic and emotional tone. It portrays the protagonist's emotions, longings, and prayers with vivid and expressive language.

English Translation (Marilyn Booth): Marilyn Booth's English translation makes a dedicated effort to capture the emotional essence of the original text. However, it may employ different words and expressions to convey the same sentiments effectively in English. For instance, the use of "I solemnly promise you, Lord" in the translation, while maintaining the emotional depth, carries a more formal tone compared to the Arabic text.

Linguistic Nuances:

Arabic Text (Original): The Arabic text uses specific Arabic terms and expressions, such as "سجودها في صلاة" (prostration in the dawn prayer) and "مزيد من الخيوط" (more thread).

English Translation (Marilyn Booth): In Marilyn Booth's English translation, these Arabic terms and expressions are thoughtfully adapted to their English equivalents, such as "dawn prayers" and "additional thread."

Religious References:

Arabic Text (Original): The Arabic text includes religious references and solemn oaths, such as "By the greatness of God" and "I made a sacred oath in Your name."

English Translation (Marilyn Booth): Marilyn Booth's English translation maintains the religious undertone while adjusting the phrasing to resonate with an English-speaking, potentially non-Muslim audience. For instance, "By the greatness of God" is used to express a solemn oath.

Cultural Expectations:

Arabic Text (Original): The Arabic text briefly touches upon cultural expectations related to marriage and the role of women, making a subtle reference to a Bedouin woman's advice to her daughter.

English Translation (Marilyn Booth): Marilyn Booth's English translation preserves this cultural context while ensuring that it is comprehensible to the target audience. Additional context or explanations may be provided to enhance the reader's understanding of the cultural nuances present in the text.

Additional Considerations:

Cultural References: The Arabic text may contain cultural references, idioms, or expressions that require adaptation in the English translation to ensure they are culturally relevant and meaningful to the target audience.

Pragmatic Adjustments: Depending on the target audience, pragmatic adjustments may be necessary, such as altering the way characters address each other to align with cultural norms and expectations.

Clarity and Explicitness: Skopos theory may dictate that specific elements in the Arabic text need to be made more explicit in the English translation to ensure the message is conveyed clearly to the target audience.

In conclusion, the examination of the first part of the Arabic text of *Sayyidat al-qamar* (2010) and its English Translation by Marilyn Booth illustrates how Skopos theory guides the adaptation of cultural references, tone, style, and linguistic nuances to make the text accessible and meaningful to English-speaking readers while preserving the emotional and cultural essence of the original.

Arabic Text: قالت ميا لولد التاجر سليمان حين أصبحت لا تستطيع النوم من تكور بطنها : «اسمع أنا لن ألد هنا على أيدي الدايات أريد أن «تأخذني لمسكد قاطعها : قلت لك ألف مرة اسمها مسقط

English Translation: Mayya said to the merchant's son, Sulayman, when she couldn't sleep due to her swollen belly, "Listen, I won't give birth here with the midwives. I want you to take me to a place far from Muscat. I've told you a thousand times; its name is Masqat."

- **Purpose of Translation:** The purpose of this translation is to convey Mayya's request to go to a place called "Masqat" for childbirth. The translation fulfills this purpose effectively by retaining the Arabic name "Masqat" while using the more familiar "Muscat" in English.

Arabic Text: «أكملت كأنها لم تسمعه : أريد أن ألد في مستشفى السعادة»، قال: هويسقط ولدي في أيدي النصرى؟

English Translation: She continued as if she hadn't heard him: "I want to give birth in the Felicity Hospital." He said, "Shall my son be born in the hands of the Christians?"

- **Purpose of Translation:** The purpose here is to convey Mayya's desire to give birth in the "Felicity Hospital" and the man's reaction to it. The translation successfully conveys the intended meaning while preserving the reference to the "Felicity Hospital" and highlighting the cultural contrast, as seen in the Arabic word "نصرى" (Christians).

Arabic Text: ما زلت مصرة على هذا الاسم الغريب للمولودة؟

English Translation: Are you still set on giving the baby such an odd name?

- **Purpose of Translation:** The translation's purpose is to capture the idea that the name "London" is perceived as unusual. The translation successfully conveys the sense of an unconventional name and the reaction to it.

Arabic Text: قالت زوجة العم بنفاد صبر : تعرفين أنّ هذا ليس اسمها. هذا مجرد لقب لقبها الناس به لشدة بياضها.

English Translation: The uncle's wife was running out of patience. You know very well that's not really her name! It's just a nickname, something people call her because her skin is so pale.

- **Purpose of Translation:** The translation effectively conveys the explanation of the nickname "London" based on the character's pale skin. It maintains the original concept while ensuring comprehension for the target audience.

In all these examples, the English translation adheres to Skopos theory by successfully conveying the purpose of the Arabic text, adapting cultural elements, and maintaining the intended effect on the target audience. The focus is on preserving the essence of the original text while ensuring it is accessible and meaningful to the English-speaking readers.

Discussion: Translating *Sayyidat al-qamar* - A Cultural and Linguistic Exploration:

In our analysis of the English translation of Jokha Alharthi's Arabic novel, *Sayyidat al-qamar* (2010), and Marilyn Booth's rendition of it as *Celestial Bodies* (2018), we have explored various sides of the translation process. This discussion aims to provide a deeper understanding of the cultural and linguistic challenges and

adaptations within the translation and how Skopos theory plays a crucial role in maintaining cultural authenticity while making the text accessible to English-speaking readers.

Cultural Adaptations: Bridging the Gap

One of the primary concerns when translating a work from one language and culture to another is the preservation of cultural authenticity. It's essential to ensure that the readers of the translation can understand and relate to the cultural context of the original work. Throughout our analysis, we have encountered instances where cultural references are thoughtfully adapted to bridge the gap between Arabic and English-speaking audiences.

For example, the Arabic text mentions a "Singer sewing machine" and "Merchant Sulayman," references deeply rooted in Arabic culture. These references contribute to the rich cultural context of the story. However, they might not be readily understood by non-Arabic speakers. Marilyn Booth's translation makes these references accessible by explicitly referring to the "Singer sewing machine" and introducing the character as the "son of Merchant Sulayman." These adaptations not only make the text comprehensible but also preserve the cultural depth embedded in the narrative.

This aligns with the functional aspect of translation. The purpose of the translation is not merely to provide a word-for-word conversion but to ensure the text serves its intended function for the target audience. In this case, the function is to convey the cultural context to English-speaking readers.

Maintaining the Emotional Essence

Another critical aspect of translation is preserving the emotional essence of the original work. In the case of *Sayyidat al-qamar* (2010), the Arabic text is characterised by a poetic and emotional tone, portraying the protagonist's emotions, longings, and prayers with vivid and expressive language. Marilyn Booth's English translation makes a dedicated effort to capture this emotional essence, although it might employ different words and expressions to convey the same sentiments effectively in English.

For instance, in the Arabic text, the protagonist makes a solemn promise in a deeply emotional context. Marilyn Booth's translation maintains the emotional depth but employs a more formal tone. The use of "I solemnly promise you, Lord" in the translation captures the emotional weight while ensuring that English-speaking readers can grasp the intensity of the moment.

Here, Skopos theory plays a vital role in guiding the translator to adapt the tone and style of the text according to the purpose of the translation. It emphasises that the function of the translation is not only to convey the meaning but to create the intended effect on the target audience.

Linguistic Nuances: Navigating Language Differences

Language is not just a system of communication; it's a carrier of culture and history. When translating a work, particularly one as culturally rich as *Sayyidat al-qamar* (2010), linguistic nuances must be delicately navigated. The Arabic text uses specific Arabic terms and expressions, such as "سجودها في صلاة الفجر" (prostration in the dawn prayer) and "مزيد من الخيوط" (more thread). In Marilyn Booth's English translation, these Arabic terms and expressions are thoughtfully adapted to their English equivalents, such as "dawn prayers" and "additional thread."

This adaptation ensures that the translation serves its function effectively for English-speaking readers. The purpose here is not to provide a glossary of Arabic terms but to convey the intended meaning within the linguistic and cultural framework of the target language. Skopos theory suggests that a translation must be functional, and this means adjusting linguistic nuances as necessary to achieve that function.

Religious References: Bridging the Spiritual Gap

Religious references in literature are particularly sensitive to translate. They carry deep cultural and spiritual connotations that must be conveyed accurately. In the Arabic text of *Sayyidat al-qamar* (2010), we encounter religious references and solemn oaths, such as "By the greatness of God" and "I made a sacred oath in Your name." Marilyn Booth's English translation maintains the religious undertone while adjusting the phrasing to resonate with an English-speaking, potentially non-Muslim audience. For instance, "By the greatness of God" is used to express a solemn oath.

Here, Skopos theory's function-oriented approach becomes evident. The purpose of the translation is to ensure that the religious and spiritual elements of the original text are preserved while making them

culturally appropriate for the target audience. The translation functions as a bridge between the Arabic Islamic context and the cultural and religious diversity of English-speaking readers.

Cultural Expectations: Enhancing Understanding

Cultural expectations play a significant role in the nuances of a text. In the Arabic text, subtle references are made to cultural expectations related to marriage and the role of women. For instance, there's a reference to a Bedouin woman's advice to her daughter. Marilyn Booth's English translation preserves this cultural context while ensuring that it is comprehensible to the target audience. Additional context or explanations may be provided to enhance the reader's understanding of the cultural nuances present in the text.

The adaptation of cultural expectations in translation follows the principles of Skopos theory, which underscore that the translation should meet the expectations and needs of the target audience. Here, the function of the translation is not just to convert words but to ensure that the cultural nuances are not lost in the process, making it a bridge that allows English-speaking readers to understand and appreciate the cultural intricacies of the original work.

5. Conclusion:

The exploration of the English translation of the first part of Jokha Alharthi's *Sayyidat al-qamar* (2010), thoroughly analysed through the lens of Skopos theory and informed by a comprehensive literature review, offers valuable insights into the art and challenges of cultural translation. As the translation process unfolds, the interplay between preserving the cultural richness of the source text and ensuring its resonance with the target audience's cultural context becomes evident. This journey of bridging cultural gaps and fostering cross-cultural understanding is both challenging and fascinating.

The foundation of our analysis lies in Skopos theory, which firmly advocates that the purpose of a translation is central to the decisions made in representing the text. Skopos theory encourages a dynamic and purpose-driven approach to translation, allowing translators to navigate the complexity of cultural adaptation. Our analysis unveils how Skopos theory provides a guiding light for the translator, influencing choices regarding cultural references, tone, style, linguistic nuances, and clarity within the translation process.

One of the significant findings in our analysis is the adaptation of cultural references. The original Arabic text generously weaves cultural allusions into its narrative fabric, such as the "Singer sewing machine" and "Merchant Sulayman." In the English translation, these references are thoughtfully adapted to resonate with the target audience. This adaptation is likely to open a window for English-speaking readers to glimpse into the cultural nuances embedded in the story, while ensuring that they do not feel separated from the narrative. The nuanced variations in tone, style, and linguistic expressions between the Arabic text and its English translation are fascinating. The Arabic text carries a poetic and emotional weight, which the English translation, in the capable hands of Marilyn Booth, endeavours to replicate. However, the translator faces the delicate task of using different words and expressions while preserving the essence of the emotions. This process mirrors the intricacies of translating the vivid and expressive Arabic language into a language with its unique linguistic characteristics.

Religious references and cultural expectations in the text present additional challenges. The English translation strives to maintain the religious tone while ensuring it remains accessible to a diverse readership. Furthermore, subtle references to cultural expectations related to marriage and women's roles are retained, but supplementary context may be provided for a clearer understanding.

In summary, our analysis underscores the dynamic nature of adaptation in guiding the translator's path through the jumble of cultural translation. It serves as a beacon that empowers translators to adapt, clarify, and convey the essence of the source text, keeping in mind the unique cultural sensitivities of the target audience.

In the ever-evolving landscape of translation studies, the case study of *Sayyidat al-qamar* (2010) exemplifies the importance of cultural bridges. The translator acts as a bridge between two worlds, enhancing cross-cultural communication and fostering a greater appreciation of the rich tapestry of our global literary heritage.

As we conclude this analysis, we recognise that translation is not merely a linguistic exercise but a profound intercultural dialogue. The power of words transcends borders and languages, uniting cultures and enriching the human experience. In embracing the complexity of cultural translation through the lens of Skopos theory, we embark on a journey that transcends words on a page, ultimately leading to a deeper understanding and celebration of our shared global narratives.

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