

Communicative Effectiveness in the Arabic Translations of Edward Said's *Orientalism*: A Gricean Approach


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Abstract

This article conducts a comparative analysis of the four Arabic translations of Edward Said's *Orientalism* (1978), drawing on Grice's Cooperative Principle and established translation strategies. Based on an analysis of fifty selected passages, this study adopts a descriptive and comparative approach. It aims to assess the extent to which each translation preserves fidelity, readability, and communicative effectiveness, while identifying the most faithful version to Said's text and appropriate for Arabic readers. A significant divergence is revealed among the translations in terms of adherence to Grice's maxims of quantity, quality, relation, and manner, as well as in the implementation of foreignization and domestication approaches. While some translations foreground cognitive fidelity to the source text at the expense of accessibility, others place greater emphasis on readability, which partially leads to a reduction in conceptual depth. Some translations prioritize fidelity over accessibility, while others enhance readability at the cost of precision. These comparisons should be interpreted as indicative trends rather than definitive judgments. The results demonstrate that Mohamed Enani's translation achieves a comparatively higher degree of pragmatic balance and communicative efficiency, followed by Asfour. Statements about issues in other translations do not imply broader judgments about translator competence. However, Kamal Abu Deeb's and Jasmati's versions present considerable challenges related to readability and communicative effectiveness. The study reveals that effective translation of politically loaded academic texts requires a balanced integration of fidelity, clarity, ethical practice, and cultural mediation. By foregrounding the intersection of pragmatics with foreignization and domestication approaches in translation, this study contributes to translation studies, postcolonial scholarship, and retranslation theory, offering an innovative framework for examining how power and translator intent can shape the reception of canonical texts across languages and cultures. The study's findings underscore the importance of adopting translation strategies that ensure conceptual precision while maintaining accessibility for the Arabic scholarly readership, that should be interpreted within the study's analytical framework.

Keywords: Orientalism, Arabic Translation, Grice's Maxims, Foreignization, Domestication, Retranslation Theory

Introduction

Edward Said's *Orientalism* remains one of the most influential texts in postcolonial studies, characterized by its dense, theoretical framework, critical tone, and complex rhetorical structure. Translating such a seminal text into Arabic involves significant challenges, remarkably in relation to the preservation of conceptual integrity, and communicative effectiveness.

This study investigates all the four Arabic translations of *Orientalism* through the lens of Grice's Cooperative Principle and translation strategies. By examining selected examples, the research evaluates how each translator negotiates fidelity, readability, and cultural mediation. It also identifies the translation that most effectively conveys Said's meaning to the Arabic readership. To guide the analysis, the study addresses the following research question: How do the four Arabic translations differ in their adherence to Grice's maxims and in their use of foreignization and domestication strategies, and how do these differences affect communicative effectiveness for the Arabic reader?

Owing to its challenge to Western epistemological authority, Said's book gives rise to significant complications for translators, mainly when rendered into Arabic, the language of many of the cultures Said investigates and defends. As expected, *Orientalism* has been translated into Arabic four times, resulting in a corpus of translations that reflect various linguistic, stylistic, and pragmatic orientations.

This study fills the existing research gap through analysing how Grice's conversational maxims, quantity, quality, relation, and manner, are preserved, violated, or manipulated in the four Arabic translations of *Orientalism* by Kamal Abu Deeb (1981), Mohamed Enani (2006), Nadhir Jasmati (2016), and Mohammad Asfour (2022). They frame the text's critical engagement toward Western dominant narratives for an audience that is both the subject and the intended public of Said's critique. The implications of translation are therefore increased: the translator must preserve the unity of the conceptual structure of the original while ensuring accessibility, readability, and cultural impact for Arabic-speaking readers.

The research demonstrates that violations of Gricean maxims in the target texts are purposeful; instead, they function as deliberate mediation tools that adapt Said's critical voice for Arab readers. However, interpretations of translator intent are limited to what can be reasonably inferred from textual patterns and are not presented as definitive claims about underlying purposes. This study draws on two complementary frameworks. First, Grice's cooperative principle that serves as a pragmatic means for assessing communicative effectiveness and clarity orientation to the reader. Second, Venuti's approaches of foreignization and domestication are employed to examine translators' strategic choices and their positioning. By using these frameworks, criteria are provided to justify multiple lenses of translation quality, including linguistic accuracy, cultural reach, and ethical integrity.

Venuti's differentiation between domestication and foreignization approaches is explained in the following passage from his book entitled *Translator's Invisibility*: "The notion of foreignization can alter the ways translations are read as well as produced because it assumes a concept of human subjectivity that is very different from the humanist assumptions underlying domestication. Neither the foreign writer nor the translator is conceived as the transcendental origin of the text, freely expressing an idea about the human nature or communicating it in transparent language to a reader from a different culture" (Venuti, 1995, p 24). The interplay between these approaches and Gricean maxims forms the analytical core of this study. The four translations under study differ not only in their linguistic and stylistic choices but also in their treatment of the paratextual elements of Orientalism. The central aim of this study is to evaluate how each translation negotiates fidelity, readability, pragmatic coherence, cultural mediation.

The findings reveal significant variability among the translations. Some prioritize intellectual fidelity, keeping the complexity of Said's original text and sometimes at the cost of readability. Others adopt a more reader friendly style, simplifying syntax and clarifying implicit meanings, but occasionally diminishing conceptual depth. These distinct strategies demonstrate existing deep-seated tensions in translation practice: balancing between fidelity and clarity, the negotiation of political positioning, and the translator's role as implicated mediator between cultures. However, these observations reflect tendencies within the analysed corpus and should not be interpreted as categorical assessments of translator competence.

1. Literature review

A substantial body of scholarly literature has emerged around *Orientalism*, encompassing critiques, interpretations, and translations of Said's work across multiple languages. These critiques are cited as part of the scholarly debate and do not constitute evaluative claims by the present study.

Although many influential studies can be consulted, the overwhelming amount of material makes it difficult to review all writings related to Orientalism. To better understand Said's style and the relationship between Orientalism and his broader intellectual project, a selection of his major works was reviewed. The Arabic translations of Orientalism, particularly the first by Abu Deeb, also generated significant academic debate, including criticism by Said himself whose note in his Afterword of 1994 edition of Orientalism demonstrates his unsatisfied attitude regarding Abu Deeb's Arabic translation: "I regret to say that Arabic reception of Orientalism, despite Kamal Abu Deeb's remarkable translation, still managed to ignore that aspect of my book which diminished the nationalist fervor that some implied from my critique of Orientalism, which I associated with those drives to domination and control also to be found in imperialism" (Said, 1994, p 339). Among Arab scholars, Sameh Fekry Hanna criticized Abu Deeb's translation, describing it as "blind," "aging," and marked by "outdated" language that no

longer meets the expectations of contemporary readers (Fekry Hanna, 2006, p 194). Despite these critiques, each translation reflects Said's complex discourse in its own way.

Nine scientific articles and academic dissertations relevant to this topic were examined. They focus specifically on the first two Arabic translations of *Orientalism*. Two articles by Fadel Almenfi—“Retranslation of *Orientalism*: Reading Said in Arabic” (2013) and “A Systemic Approach to Translating Style” (2017)—compare Abu Deeb's and Enani's translations, highlighting their terminological and structural differences. Almenfi notes the ornate academic language used by Abu Deeb and his strict adherence to the source text's terminology, a style that Said himself considered excessively baroque. A third publication, “Edward Said's Intellectual Legacy in the Arab World” (Hafez, 2004), was also consulted. One PhD thesis—Allawzi Areej's *The Visible Translator: Identifying Norms in the Translations of Edward Said's Orientalism*—examines translator agency and the influence of cultural and social norms on the translations by Abu Deeb and Enani, its focus differs from this research's comparative textual approach across all four translations.

Arabic online articles were also identified—two by Al-Mazini (2022) and others by Chahin (2021), Ben-Hassan (2022), and Ujayli (2022). These articles discuss the two most recent translations by Jasmati and Asfour, with occasional references to the earlier versions, and offer brief commentary on the efficiency and authenticity of Jasmati's translation. However, none of these sources provide a comprehensive comparative study of all Arabic versions published up to the end of 2022. As far as can be determined from the available literature, no study has yet undertaken a full comparative analysis of all the four Arabic translations of *Orientalism*. This is the gap addressed by the present article.

1.2. Grice's Cooperative Principle and Conversational Maxims applied to translation

Grice's Cooperative Principle posits that effective communication is governed by an implicit agreement between interlocutors to cooperate in the exchange of information (Grice, 1975, p 45). This cooperation is articulated through four conversational maxims, which specify how speakers contribute meaningfully to interaction (Grice, 1975, p, 45-46). Although originally formulated to account for spoken interaction, these maxims have since been extended to the analysis of written discourse and applied in translation studies to explain pragmatic meaning and implicature (Hatim & Mason, 1990, p 60; Baker, 2018, p 220).

In the context of translation, adherence to or violation of Grice's maxims has significant implications for meaning construction. Omissions may constitute violations of the maxim of quantity, excessive details may disrupt manner, and shifts in emphasis or argumentative coherence may affect relation and quality. Such violations are not inherently negative; rather, they can be strategically used to fit cultural norms, readers' expectations, or translators' positions. The present study interprets these shifts as textual effects rather than definitive indicators of translator intention.

The application of pragmatics to translation highlights the fact that translators do not merely reproduce linguistic content but also rebuild implied meanings and rhetorical intentions. Pragmatic shifts may occur through explicitation, mitigation, amplification, or reordering, all of which influence how the target audience interprets the text.

Pragmatic analysis provides an efficient tool for the evaluation of tone dimensions that may remain invisible at the lexical or syntactic level alone. This perspective underscores the need to look beyond surface language to uncover deeper layers of meaning. Grice explains that language, which governs rational and efficacious communication, is governed by a dictum. He named it the “cooperative principle”. Within which Grice distinguishes nine “maxims of conversation” classified into four categories: quality, quantity, relevance, and manner.

However, in the context of translation, Gutt argues that translation is, somehow, restrained by the principle of relevance. Adding that: if we ask in what respect, the intended interpretation of the translation should be similar to the original, the answer is: in respects that make it adequately relevant to the audience – that is, which offer adequate contextual effects; if we ask how the translation should be expressed in such a way that yields the intended interpretation without making the readers in useless processing effort (Gutt, 1991, p 101-102). Then it is assumed here that the translator must make the expression quite precise and predictable to allow the reader to achieve the intended meaning by the author without striving.

Thus, according to Sperber and Wilson, relevance to the receiver is the factor that gives rise to a certain input rather than the others. The main condition for achieving relevance is to have contextual effects (contextual implications, contradictions, and strengthening) and the better contextual effects, the better the relevance is (Sperber & Wilson, 1986, 119). Therefore, it will be difficult for the translator, who might unintentionally omit intended interpretation and convey unintended one by the source text’s author to achieve the same intended message by the source text writer. The main factors leading to this misinterpretation by the translator could be the pressure to which he is submitted due to the target text culture, readership or even the structure of the language itself. Therefore, each translator must discern the implied meaning intended by the author, namely, translators might have to convey a meaning explicitly rendered in the target language through using pragmatic implicature.

2. Pragmatic textual analysis through the lens of qualitative comparative method

The methodology adopted aims at identifying reasons of the change in the meaning while rewriting in the target text, through using a qualitative textual approach, based on Grice’s maxims of conversation in their target texts. It will observe whether the translators keep the implied meaning of the source text or substitute it by violating any of Grice’s maxims. An analysis of added and omitted elements during the process of rewriting

Orientalism is identified through examining the factors that influenced the translator through samples from the four translations. An audit procedure was implemented to ensure transparency: each passage was independently coded for maxim adherence and cross-checked against a predefined rubric. This provides a structured justification for the interpretive nature of pragmatic analysis.

Pragmatic analysis provides a valuable tool for uncovering tone dimensions that may remain invisible at the lexical or syntactic level alone. While traditional linguistic approaches tend to focus on explicit word meaning and sentence structure, they often fail to account for how speakers use language in context to convey and infer meaning. Grice's theory of conversational implicature emphasizes that speakers typically adhere to a Cooperative Principle, whereby they make their contributions as informative, truthful, relevant, and clear as required by the purposes of the conversation (Grice, 1989, pp 26-27). This framework helps experts explain how tone, attitude, and implied meaning arise when speakers ignore or artfully manipulate these maxims—for example, using understatement or irony—which cannot be detected by syntactic analysis alone. Moreover, Grice's distinction between what is said and what is implicated foregrounds the idea that meaning often goes beyond the literal content of words; conversational implicatures emerge precisely because hearers assume cooperative behaviour and infer additional intentions (Grice, 1989, pp, 30-31). As a result, pragmatic analysis offers critical insights into the underlying communicative intentions and tone dimensions that are essential for robust interpretation in discourse.

The study adopts a qualitative comparative methodology based on close textual analysis. The corpus consists of the four Arabic translations of Edward Said's *Orientalism*, each produced in different historical and intellectual contexts, making them particularly suitable for examining stylistic and pragmatic variation. A selection of 50 representative passages from the source text is analysed. A complete analysis of the 50 examples referenced in this article can be found in the thesis *Edward Said's Orientalism in Arabic: A Comparative Study*, published in November 2025 and available in the University of Málaga Library Repository., with particular attention to sections characterized by dense argumentation, evaluative language, and critical commentary. Each source-text excerpt is compared with its four Arabic translations to identify instances of adherence to or violation of Grice's maxims. The analysis focuses on omissions, additions, reformulations, and stylistic shifts that affect pragmatic meaning.

The identified pragmatic shifts are then interpreted considering the translation strategies used to mediate the two cultures and the movement between domestication and foreignization among translations is observed. the study prioritizes depth of analysis and interpretive insight, demonstrating how pragmatic manipulation operates as a subtle but influential tool for rewriting.

2.1. Cross-Linguistic Analysis

A concise and detailed comparative analysis of the four translations was conducted on several levels. The analysis of the corpus is based on textual comparison of similarities and differences among the four translations through selected examples from each section of the book and their successive chronological versions. Claims regarding similarity or discrepancy among translations are grounded solely in textual comparison and do not infer motive or intent.

The comparative analysis of the four translations was carried out according to specific steps and following the methodology outlined below. Selected examples from each chapter were placed in tables with their four translations, followed by a comparative analysis assessing the extent to which each translation succeeded in conveying the meaning of the source text and whether the translation strategies effectively communicated Said's intended meaning. Apparent changes such as grammatical mistakes, punctuation issues, syntactic shifts, and diction, were identified in all translation samples. Differences in meaning between the source text and target text were analysed using Grice's four maxims. The flow and readability of the translations were examined through the extracted examples, with particular attention to whether the Arabic sounded natural or literal and awkward.

The translators' backgrounds and the factors influencing their choices, such as culture, religion, environment, and subject knowledge, were considered. The purpose is to determine the strategies employed to achieve the meaning of the target text, and whether the meaning of the original was rendered in the way Said intended in the original *Orientalism*.

The table 1 presents one selected sample among the 50 analysed ones in the present research, similarly as detailed below (See Example of Table 1).

Table 1. Example

	Analysis	
S.T	“..Valentine Chirol, a well-known European newspaperman of great experience in the East“ His purpose was to make clear to educated Americans that the Orient was not as far off as perhaps they believed: His line is a simple one: that Orient and Occident are irreducibly opposed to each other, and that the Orient-in particular “Mohammedanism” - is one of “ the great world forces” responsible for “ the deepest lines of cleavage” in the world” (252-253)	
A.D.	فالتناين شيروول، وهو رجل صحافة معروف ذو تجربة عظيمة في الشرق، في جامعة شيكاغو عام ١٩٢٤ حول " الغرب والشرق". وكان غرض شيروول أن يوضح للمتعلمين الأمريكيين أن الشرق لم يكن بعيدا إلى الدرجة التي ربما تصوروها. وكان الخط الأساسي في منظومته بسيطاً: أن "المحمدية" - أحد " القوى العالمية العظيمة" المسؤولة عن أعمق خطوط الإنقسام في العالم (258-257)	The overall meaning is conveyed; the original is slightly reworked which may affect the rhythm and flow. The original tone is preserved using "المحمدية" for "Mohammedanism". However, a phrase from the original is omitted "that Orient and Occident are irreducibly opposed to each other" which may affect the faithfulness of the translation. His choice "الخط الأساسي في منظومته" is over translated
E	فالتناين تشيروول، الصحفي الأوروبي الشهير ذو الخبرة العريضة بالشرق، في جامعة شيكاغو عام ١٩٢٤ بعنوان " الغرب و الشرق" وكان غرضه هو أن يوضح للمتعلمين الأمريكيين أن الشرق ليس نائياً بالصورة التي ربما كانوا يتخيلونها، وكان منهجه بسيطاً ويقول إن الشرق والغرب يعارضان بعضهما البعض معارضة لا سبيل إلى تقليدها، وإن الشرق- و الديانة "المحمدية" خصوصاً- من أعظم القوى العالمية المسؤولة عن إحدات " أعمق الصدوع" في العالم (391)	This version is highly effective and faithful. It shows a full understanding by Enani of not only the linguistic structure of the Ssource text but also historical dimensions of the text
J	...فالتناين شيروول، وهو رجل صحافة معروف ذو تجربة عظيمة في الشرق، في جامعة شيكاغو عام ١٩٢٤ حول " الغرب والشرق". وكان غرض شيروول أن يوضح للمتعلمين الأمريكيين أن الشرق لم يكن بعيدا إلى الدرجة التي ربما تصوروها. وكان الخط الأساسي في منظومته بسيطاً: أن "المحمدية" - أحد القوى العالمية العظيمة" المسؤولة عن أعمق خطوط الإنقسام في العالم (290)	This version is very similar to that of Abu Deeb with the same lacuna from one side and over translation from the other side. Slight difference in conjunctions is noticed
A	كان تشيروول صحفياً معروفاً في أوروبا، بخبرة واسعة في الشرق. وكان هدفه أن يبين للمتقنين الأمريكيين أن الشرق لم يكن بالبعيد الذي ربما تخيلوه. كانت فكرته بسيطة: أن الشرق والغرب متعارضان تعارضاً لا يمكن اختزاله، وأن الشرق- لاسيما " الديانة المحمدية" - "قوة من القوى العالمية العظمى" المسؤولة عن " أعمق خطوط الإنقسام" في العالم (394-393)	This version uses a formal register of language, it has a persuasive flow and preserves the ideological undertones of the source text. However, although it seems fairly accurate and fluently reading in Arabic, but the tone of the phrase " لا يمكن اختزاله" is a bit philosophical. Also, quotation marks are used conveniently in various parts with an awareness of the ideological or quoted nature on the source text
	كان فالتناين تشيروول صحفياً أوروبا مشهوراً ذا خبرة واسعة في الشرق، وكان هدفه أن يوضح للمتقنين الأمريكيين أن الشرق لم يكن بعيداً للحد الذي ربما كانوا يعتقدون. وكانت رؤيته واضحة وبسيطة: الشرق والغرب متضادان بشكل غير ممكن تجاوزه، وأن الشرق، وبشكل خاص 'المحمدية'، هي إحدى 'القوى العالمية العظمى' وهي المسؤولة عن ' أعمق خطوط الانقسام' في العالم	

The analysis of the four translations of the example (on the table 1) begins with a brief explanation of the meaning of Said's original text, in which Valentine Chirol frames the East and West as opposing entities and emphasizes Islam as a key factor in global geopolitical conflicts. The tone reflects a reductive worldview that simplifies complex

cultural and religious dynamics into rigid oppositions. Reinforcing stereotypes and justifying a Western attitude of superiority or suspicion toward the Orient.

The following full analytical review of the example cited on the table 1 and its translations demonstrates that pragmatic deviations are systematic rather than incidental and that they function as mechanisms of intended mediation. The analysis below examines how four translators handle Said's text through the framework of Grice's maxims, drawing attention to the differences in accuracy, clarity, and interpretive choices that shape the overall faithfulness of each version to the original.

As for Grice's maxim of quantity, Abu Deeb's translation omits the explicit statement about the irreducible opposition between Orient and Occident. He focuses more on Chirol's purpose to clarify that the East is not so distant, and highlights Mohammedanism as a great world force responsible for deep divisions. Enani's translation is complete, it clearly states the irreducible opposition between East and West, and underlines Mohammedanism as one of the major global forces driving deep divisions worldwide. His version provides fuller context. Jasmati's translation is like that of Abu Deeb, it omits the opposition clause explicitly but mentions Mohammedanism's importance and Chirol's goal to clarify the East's closeness to Americans. Asfour's translation is clear and informative. It states the irreducible opposition between East and West and Mohammedanism's role as a great world force responsible for deep cleavage, matching the source text closely.

As regards the maxim of quality that requires truthfulness, except Abu Deeb and Jasmati who follow the same path in omitting some information of the source text, which makes their versions unfaithful, Enani's and Asfour's translations are faithful to the original's meaning and intent. Both do not include misleading or false information. They maintain the core content about Chirol's view and his message to the American educated category of people.

In what concerns the maxim of relation needing relevance, translations by Abu Deeb and Jasmati violate this maxim through omitting an important expression: "That Orient and Occident are irreducibly opposed to each other" which may affect the faithfulness of their versions. However, Enani and Asfour stay relevant to the source text, focusing on Chirol's view of the East-West opposition and the role of Mohammedanism. They eliminate irrelevant commentaries or additional unrelated content.

Pertaining to the maxim of manner which requires clarity and brevity, Abu Deeb's and Jasmati's translations are slightly less clear because they omit the direct mention of "irreducible opposition," making the argument less explicit. Some phrasing is a bit wordy or indirect. However, Enani and Asfour are clearer and more straightforward. They explicitly state the opposition and role of Mohammedanism in a concise and clear manner. The proposed translation is also very clear, concise, and close to the source text style.

In Abu Deeb's and Jasmati's translation, literal transfer is favored, but omission of the sentence "that Orient and Occident are irreducibly opposed to each other" causes the distortion of Said's critique of Western textual discourse and reduction of Said's analysis

force. The same translations and the same omissions, they seem duplicated which leads to questioning the attribution and authenticity of Jasmati's work.

Enani's translation strategy is more dynamic than the previous one, it varies between modulation in "ليس نائيا بالصورة التي كانوا يتصورونها", transposition in the adjustment of nominal structures as well as verb forms, also equivalence in rendering by "الديانة المحمدية" instead of just "المحمدية" for the sake of clarity. Enani succeeded in capturing Said's critique of orientalist binary thinking. Asfour prioritizes clarity, his version is clear, faithful and with a refined style. His translation strategies stand out for clarity and fidelity which better handle Said's critical tone.

Abu Deeb's translation is almost literal, though faithful to the original in terms of form and tone but the omission of "irreducibly opposed" weakens the overall rendering. He also translated literally "his line" by "الخط الأساسي", this focus on the source text demonstrates the extent to which Said's text is foreignized. Enani leans toward a modern smooth style with more accessible syntax. His version is shaped by an explanatory tone. However, he adopted a less literal tone which is slightly interpretive to Said's intent.

Jasmati's version is nearly identical to Abu Deeb's "منظومته" instead of منظومته (possible error or misprint). It leans to adaptive and idiomatic choices. His translation strategy challenges precision, tone, and modern readability with the same omissions of East-West irreducible opposition. Asfour's version is well paced and accurate. The use of "الديانة المحمدية" is a more precise, contextualized phrasing. It has a slightly interpretive addition "فكرته بسيطة" to render "his line is simple".

The focus in identifying the translation strategies and approaches along the 50 selected examples lies in the fact that *Orientalism* is an argumentative and critically loaded text, and the translator's choices are decisive in determining which approach is favored either foreignization or domestication of the source text.

3. Arabic Renderings of Said's *Orientalism*

This article investigates selected examples extracted from the four Arabic translations of *Orientalism*. Each example was evaluated according to its adherence to Grice's maxims and its strategic orientation as demonstrated in the above analysed sample. A quantitative scoring system was applied, assigning a maximum of 200 points to each translation (200 equals 4 maxims multiplied per 50 analysed examples). The 200-point scoring system is used as an illustrative method rather than a definitive quantitative ranking, since equal weighting of maxims and passages is a simplified analytical assumption.

Qualitative analysis complemented the numerical results, focusing on syntactic structure, terminological choices, peritextual interventions, and ethical transparency. Table 2 (See table 2 Grice's maxims) shows how four translators apply Grice's maxims, highlighting clear differences in their adherence to the principles of quantity, quality, relation, and manner. The Symbols on the table 1 below correspond to qualitative coding decisions based on the audit procedure described in the methodology.

Legend: (●) adherence; (×) violation.

Table 2. Grice's Maxims

	Quantity (informativeness)	Quality (truthfulness)	Relation (relevant)	Manner (clearness)
Abu Deeb	X	X	X	X
Enani	●	●	●	●
Jasmati	X	X	X	X
Asfour	●	●	●	X

The results are summarized in the table 3 (See recapitulation table 3 below) which represents a recap of the examples on which Grice's four maxims were applied with their preservation rates by each translator as detailed in the methodology above.

Table 3. Recapitulation table

Translation	Quantity	Quality	Relation	Manner	Total
Abu Deeb	23/50	22/50	30/50	9/50	84/200
Enani	26/50	32/50	41/50	41/50	140/200
Jasmati	11/50	10/50	20/50	3/50	44/200
Asfour	34/50	32/50	36/50	28/50	130/200

As demonstrated on the recapitulation table 3, the analysis of Kamal Abu Deeb's translation reveals a strong inclination toward foreignization, characterized by literal rendering, syntactic complexity, and high lexical density. His approach reflects intellectual loyalty to Said's discourse but significantly compromises readability and accessibility for the Arabic readership.

The findings of the comparative analysis of the four translations reveal variability in terms of fidelity, readability, and Grice's maxims of conversation preservation or violation of information. The results are exhibited through dealing with each translation and comparing them with each other. The purpose is to demonstrate the fidelity of each one of them to Said's text on different levels on one side, and the assessment of the best Arabic translation among the four on the other side.

3.1. Abu Deeb's translation results

The analysis of Kamal Abu Deeb's Arabic translation of *Orientalism* reveals a clear tendency toward foreignization, in accordance with Lawrence Venuti's theoretical framework. Abu Deeb's approach is literal, he deliberately maintains the source text's syntactic complexity, lexical density, and coherent framework, often compromising fluency and accessibility in Arabic.

A foreignized translation, as Venuti argues, often oversteps target language norms to preserve source-text authenticity. Abu Deeb's approach is in line with this perspective. This approach, while preserving the theoretical nuances of the source text, results in significant comprehension challenges for Arabic readers. Abu Deeb favored the retention of abstract terminology (about 14 pages of Terminology Glossary explaining conceptual terms). The study analysis displays literal rendering of complex syntactic structures. The literality may cause cognitive overload which requires the reader to exert excessive mental effort to comprehend Abu Deeb's text. In short, Abu Deeb's translation is perceived as excessively philosophical and rhetorical.

Consequently, the results of the application of Grice's Maxims, as reflected by the departure from the cooperative principle in the translation of *Orientalism* by Abu Deeb, exhibit a low adherence score across all the four maxims. His approach is characterized by syntactic complexity and linguistic embellishments. His rhetorical style compromises accessibility, accuracy and pragmatic equivalence, which are crucial in rendering highly complex academic texts. The study on Abu Deeb's version also displays the following results:

Abu Deeb's text is praised for its academic thoroughness but criticized for its lack of readability, and this is largely due to the dominance of a foreignizing approach to a high degree through retaining Said's abstract terminology and complex structures. He attempted to employ an Arabic complex structure not suitable for contemporary Arab readership, which favoured literal but not idiomatic renderings to preserve source language structures. His version is characterized by high commitment to Said's text which created a cultural gap between the English text and the target Arabic reader, resulting in a very alembicated style that created a distant academic tone reducing readability, making it perceived as elitist and excessively philosophical and thus unable to reach a wider Arabic audience. Abu Deeb's rewriting consists of compounds and long, layered sentence structures transferred literally from English, leading to comprehension overload in Arabic sentences. Therefore, several maxims such as quality and manner are compromised, where quality violation is manifested through over translation and lexical inflation due to complexity and ambiguity. Manner violation appears when the text compromises pragmatic equivalence and Arabic reader-friendliness because of its unclear and dense style, leading to a transgression of clarity expectations. Finally, the study results display Abu Deeb's translation as the third in line with a total score of 84 out of 200, after Enani and Asfour, in terms of Grice's maxims preservation within the above analysed translations.

Abu Deeb's attempt to achieve a maximum level of fidelity to *Orientalism* means he widely subordinates the communicative norms of Arabic. That leads his translation to be more aligned with a scholarly artifact than a reader-oriented text, limiting its reach to a specialized academic audience. The analysis of Abu Deeb's text revealed that his focus was on the original text's academic precision while he failed to achieve a pragmatic equivalence, cultural mediation, and linguistic naturalness. The results affirm that

uncompromising literal translation can cause marginalization of the target receptor and distortion of the original meaning.

Abu Deeb peritexts (translator's Preface and the Terminology Glossary) contributed to reframing Said's text and shifting the emphasis of his arguments through a vigorous critique and reinterpretation of the original work, either implicitly or explicitly. His translation was not presented as a linguistic mediation between two languages (an extensive preface to the translation of about 19 pages), but as an act of intellectual completion or correction in which he analysed Said's arguments from his own viewpoint. He demonstrated his Marxist perspective redirecting the Arabic reader's comprehension of the original from the outset of the translator's eyewitness introductory contribution.

The terminology glossary notes also redirected the text readability to require a nuanced understanding. Though the chosen terminology is linguistically faithful in general, the compound words are very frequent in his choices and were favored over borrowing from the foreign complex terms or choosing contemporary linguistic equivalents, for instance he rendered ahistorical by (لي-تاريخي) and non-sentence by (لا-جملة) (Abu Deeb, 1984, p 30). Thus, the complex choices of Abu Deeb constitute an overt argument about his redirecting perspective regarding Said's text.

3.2. Enani's translation results

The analysis results find out that Enani's text is a reader-friendly- Arabic version of Said's original English. He tends to simplify and domesticate the text offering readability but sometimes at the expense of conceptual depth. His version is consistent and maintains loyalty to the source text tone though some simplifications, otherwise, integrity is retained mainly in critical sections that require conceptual rigor. He assigns priority to clarity and flow rather than complexity in favor of reader engagement, though this leads to certain setbacks compared to the source text. He favors terminology that is suitable for the modern Arab reader and reflects sensitivity to the target audience. However, this simplification occasionally alters the nuances of Said's original. The analysis reveals a balance in Enani's rendering of Said's text, despite the presence of some conceptual intricacies, Enani demonstrates a scholarly fidelity, readability and engagement with cultural accessibility. Nevertheless, the simplification of some theoretical concepts underscores the inevitable tension between preserving conceptual complexity and ensuring comprehension in translation.

The analysis of Enani's Arabic translation of *Orientalism*, applying the four conversational maxims to assess his ability to render the source text intended meaning with enough information, clarity, accuracy and relevance, displays that Enani's translation is the strongest among the four analyzed versions with a total score of 140 out of 200. His work demonstrates a high level of effective communication with the reader, as defined by Grice's maxims. It is methodical and well-reasoned, providing an Arabic version of *Orientalism* that preserves the complexity of Said's arguments without compromising clarity or relevance. While minor reductions under the maxim of quantity slightly lower

the total score, they do not cause significant deviation from the translation's overall success. Enani's translation of *Orientalism* stands out as the most Gricean among the translations under this study. It excels particularly in relevance and clarity, preserving both the spirit and the content of Edward Said's *Orientalism*.

The analysis based on Grice's Cooperative Principles reveals that even if Enani version has the best rate among the four translations in preserving the four Grice's maxims through retaining clarity and order and avoiding unnecessary ambiguity, but he occasionally violates the maxim of manner, particularly in passages where he opts for broader interpretations rather than literal precision, probably to enhance readability or cultural relevance. The analysis of Enani's version also reveals a tendency toward a domestication strategy through replacing specific culturally sensitive references with equivalents that are closer to the target reader linguistic and socio-cultural background. His strategies for rendering Said's ideas promote the use of adaptation techniques of translation as a preference for readability over literal translation for the sake of mediating the original density and rhetorical impact for Arab readership.

3.3. Jasmati's translation results

Jasmati's translation is characterized by a striking similarity and dependency on Abu Deeb's version. The analogy is not limited to just technical terms but extends to whole syntactic patterns and sentences that seem not to be independently formulated. Also, substantial overlaps are noted in its structure and chosen vocabulary. These observations indicate a high degree of textual overlap, but they do not constitute a formal claim of plagiarism. Though there are slight changes in his version, the overlap suggests possible textual dependence of the 1984 (Second edition) Abu Deeb's translation for various reasons, such as repetition of the same passages in Arabic without any minor changes (identical even in punctuation choices. However, alternative explanations, such as reliance on earlier editions, shared terminology, or conventional phrasing in Arabic academic translation, must also be considered.

Another lapse is the remarkable number of misprints (or maybe errors) in his version leading to the distortion of the meaning of the whole excerpts and therefore the deviation from Said's intended message. The analysis of Jasmati's translation under Grice's maxims within his Cooperative Principle framework and the reliance on the four maxims displays unsatisfactory results regarding his Arabic translation of *Orientalism*. The translation assessment is carried out based on its fidelity, truthfulness and communicative efficiency in relation to the original work.

The total score for Jasmati's translation reaches 44 out of 200, which is the lowest among the four translations under this study. These results indicate significant challenges in keeping the cooperative expectations highlighted by Grice. While the translator may have been motivated by stylistic or fidelity considerations, the analysis remains limited to textual evidence and does not infer intentionality. The consequence is a mistranslation due to the lack of precision, relevance, and accuracy. According to Grice's maxims, Jasmati's

work is the least cooperative in facilitating comprehension between the source and target languages as well as cultures.

Many issues are raised in Jasmati's version, including the high degree of textual overlap with Abu Deeb's translation, which raises questions about originality, clarity, communicative effectiveness, and ethical practice in translation. However, these observations should be interpreted cautiously and framed as textual dependence rather than plagiarism. Consequently, this translation is the least suitable for rendering Said's *Orientalism* discourse in Arabic.

Similarly to Abu Deeb, Jasmati consistently relied on foreignization as an orienting approach in his translation strategy, retaining the density and foreignness of the original intellectual framework. That leads the Arab reader to face the conceptual framework of Said's arguments due to his linguistic choices being almost identical to Abu Deeb's options (complex old Arabic compound words) positioning his translation in an unsuccessful mixture between foreignization and domestication. The result is a broken bridge instead of mediating the two languages and cultures.

3.4. Asfour's translation results

Mohammad Asfour's Arabic translation of *Orientalism*, evaluated through the framework of Grice's Cooperative Principle focuses on the extent to which Asfour's translation adheres to the four conversational maxims proposed by Grice. By examining how Asfour renders meaning and retains fidelity to the original while addressing the expectations of the target readership. The results reflect both the strengths and limitations of Asfour's translation in terms of preserving the author's intent and ensuring accessibility for Arabic readers. Asfour consistently ranks in the top two across all four maxims. His strengths lie especially in quantity, quality, and relevance, suggesting a faithful and coherent translation that conveys the original meaning effectively. In terms of clarity (manner), while not the highest, his score is still solid, indicating that he avoids excessive complexity or ambiguity more successfully than other translators except Enani.

Asfour's translation demonstrates a balanced and effective application of Grice's maxims, particularly excelling in faithfulness (quality) and adequacy in providing necessary information (quantity). He attempted to convey the original message with clarity and relevance, making his translation both accessible and reliable for Arabic readers. Asfour's translation of *Orientalism* stands out for its fidelity in conveying the original content accurately and comprehensively.

His translation delivers the appropriate amount of information, avoiding either omissions or unnecessary additions. It maintains fidelity to the original meaning and intent of the work, ensuring that key ideas are preserved clearly for the Arabic readership. The translation is generally relevant and coherent, keeping focus on the subject matter without deviation. Also, Asfour introduced significant number of footnotes including additional commentary which contributed to influencing reception. Overall, Asfour's translation

offers a reliable and effective rendition that successfully bridges the source text and its target audience.

3.5. Optimal Translation and Improvement Proposal

The closest translation to clarity and faithfulness based on Grice's maxims is Enani's translation, which shows the highest faithfulness and tone alignment, despite its domestication-based strategies. Asfour's version offers clarity but compromises tone nuances. Abu Deeb's version is a challenge between unsuccessful foreignization on one side and failed domestication on the other side. Jasmati's version shares considerable textual similarity with Abu Deeb's translation, which raises concerns about originality but requires further quantitative verification before any stronger claim can be made. It is worth mentioning that overreliance on former translations has a detrimental consequence on future works such as questioning retranslations' originality, and that may challenge the translator's academic credibility. Such concerns must be framed cautiously and supported by systematic comparison.

A proposed good translation is a combination of Abu Deeb's fidelity with Asfour as well as Enani's accessibility and mainly avoiding critical tone distortions through the guarantee of suitable ethical translation practices. Ethical considerations should be discussed in terms of transparency and attribution rather than allegations. The best translation should ensure clarity without oversimplifying the original text, a version that balances accessibility with fidelity. Also, providing peritextual tools that favor comprehension without the unneutral inclusion of the translator's own discourse into the author's text.

The above-mentioned results of this study reveal that each translation is a form of rewriting. Fidelity is influenced by various factors such as target text culture, socio-political stance, religious belief, as well as ethical considerations. The varying degrees of fidelity and communication effectiveness among the four Arabic translations of *Orientalism* reveal significant insights into the intricate interplay linking translation and discourse. Grice's maxims provide an active framework for assessing translation quality, revealing both the potential and limitations of the available Arabic versions of *Orientalism* and correcting the existing lapses.

4. Conclusion

The comparative analysis of the four Arabic translations of *Orientalism* shows notable variation in strategy, effectiveness, and fidelity to the source text. Drawing on Grice's Cooperative Principle, the study evaluated each translation relying on the four conversational maxims. The results reveal distinct translational choices and varying degrees of adherence to these maxims, that have a considerable impact on the target text's readability, clarity, and communicative efficiency.

Among the four translations, Mohamed Enani's version is the most effective and highest in communicative performance. This conclusion reflects the analytical criteria

applied in this study and should not be interpreted as an absolute ranking. He successfully balances between fidelity and accessibility by employing a domestication strategy that maintains the structured argumentation of Said's text while rendering its sophisticated rhetoric in a way that aligns with contemporary Arabic readers. Despite minor violations of the maxim of manner - due to occasional interpretative liberties - his translation is the closest to retaining both the content and tone of the original work.

Enani's version is accessible, culturally resonant, and reader friendly. His approach is marked by a consistent application of domestication, aimed at enhancing readability and clarity. At the same time the critical tone and intellectual depth of the source text are retained when necessary. He favors simplified and accurate terminology which reflects an awareness of the linguistic and cultural expectations of the contemporary Arab reader. His version is an instance of the translator's ethical responsibility toward both the source text and the target readership.

Enani's use of adaptation techniques and contextually suitable equivalents marks his domestication strategy. His translation emerges as model of pragmatic and scholarly translation, aligning with the cooperative principles of effective communication and attaining a praiseworthy balance between source-text fidelity and cultural accessibility. This translation sets a high standard for culturally sensitive and academically responsible translation practice.

Mohammad Asfour's translation holds the second position in the ranking of the most accurate Arabic translation of Edward Said's *Orientalism*, offering a faithful and relevant rendering being featured with prominent merits in quality and quantity. His version remains close to the source text in meaning while attempting to preserve accessibility through explanatory footnotes. However, some stylistic shortcomings prevent it from fully achieving the clarity and fluency that characterize Enani's version.

Though Kamal Abu Deeb's version is academically thorough and intellectually ambitious, it shows low adherence to Grice's maxims. His highly foreignized approach to Said's text structure emphasizes literal fidelity and gives priority to the source text focus, but sacrifices clarity, readability, and effective cultural mediation. Rather than stating that the translation "failed linguistically," it is more accurate to say that it presents recurrent linguistic and pragmatic challenges that limit accessibility for general readers.

His translation failed both linguistically and to provide a reliable representation of Said's critical arguments addressed in the book. He aimed to develop a new Arabic terminology for rendering Said's text by revitalizing Arabic intellectual discourse, either by giving ancient terms new meanings or by coining entirely new ones. That significantly compromises readability, cultural mediation, and pragmatic equivalence. Thus, Abu Deeb's translation does not function as a communicative bridge due to its high literal rendering at the cost of cultural accessibility and linguistic fluidity or reader-oriented clarity.

Jasmati's translation is the least effective in the study, as it is characterized by its excessive reliance on Abu Deeb's version. However, the concerns raised are based on

textual comparison only and should not be interpreted as assertion; further empirical analysis (over the whole translations) would be required to substantiate stronger claims. Issues regarding clarity, communicative effectiveness and ethical practice in translation are raised in Jasmati's version (particularly in the analysed examples). There is notable similarity to Abu Deeb's version. The resemblance is not limited to terminological similarity but to entire syntactic structures and paragraphs, even repeating punctuation and stylistic patterns. Its convoluted concepts and language-related ambiguity, undermined by errors (or typos) and minimal adaptation led to a breakdown in pragmatic equivalence and failure to fulfil its function as a reliable mediator between the English source and the Arabic target audience.

Taken together, the four translations show how divergent strategies, whether relying on strict literal choices or more adaptive mediation, shape the communicative reach of *Orientalism* in Arabic. These findings represent tendencies within the analysed corpus rather than definitive judgments about the translators' overall competence.

These contrasts set the stage for future work that can build on their strengths, address their limitations, and shape translation approaches that carry Said's loaded text forward with greater clarity, accessibility, and cultural resonance.

Ultimately, this study affirms the central role of translation in shaping cross-cultural understanding and critical discourse. Translators as mediators may carry their own beliefs or cultures through their works, mainly when the original text contains provocative and religious references. The decision to adapt, domesticate or even omit certain elements may redirect the translation focus and raise significant issues about rendering fidelity of seminal works.

Future Arabic translations of influential texts like *Orientalism* should aim to fill linguistic and cultural gaps ensuring the transmission of knowledge is both faithful and functionally communicative. It is noteworthy that this research was limited to a small corpus of sentences and passages; it focused only on Grice's maxims. More expansive stylistics or translation frameworks could yield different interpretations. Upcoming investigations could examine future Arabic translations of either *Orientalism* or other Western politically loaded text through André Lefevere's Manipulation Theory. Forthcoming research may also carry out reception studies to evaluate how Arabic speaking readers comprehend and receive different versions of the groundbreaking *Orientalism*.

Future Arabic translations of foundational texts like *Orientalism* should aim to bridge linguistic and cultural divides, facilitating knowledge transmission faithfully and maintaining integrity. In the end, every translation is a negotiation between fidelity and creativity where meaning is not just transferred but transformed, and it is the reader's perception that matters most.

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Ethical approval

This study is based exclusively on published texts and documentary sources and does not involve human participants, personal data, or animal subjects. Therefore, formal ethical approval was not required.

Author contributions

Rachida Boubrit is the sole author of this article and was responsible for the conception of the study, methodology design, data collection, textual analysis, interpretation of results, and manuscript preparation.

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Data Availability Statement

The data supporting the findings of this study consist of published primary and secondary sources, including the four Arabic translations of *Orientalism* analysed in the article. The broader analytical corpus is discussed in the doctoral thesis *Edward Said's Orientalism in Arabic: A Comparative Study* (University of Málaga, 2025), available through the

University of Málaga Library Repository. Additional data are available from the author upon reasonable request.

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