

Formal & Dynamic Equivalence in Two English Translations of Nancy Ajram's "Fi Hagat" Song

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Article History	ABSTRACT
Received 22-10-2025	Background: Arabic songs have recently gained popularity among Indonesian audiences. Nancy Ajram, a Lebanese artist, is one of the most well-known singers whose songs are widely appreciated. The translation of Arabic song lyrics into English involves complex decisions regarding linguistic fidelity, emotional resonance, and cultural adaptation.
Accepted: 11-11-2025	Purpose: This research aims to identify the translation techniques used in each version and to analyze their implications, thereby providing a deeper understanding of how meaning, emotion, and cultural nuance are conveyed in song lyrics.
Published: 20-12-2025	Method: A qualitative descriptive approach with textual analysis was employed. Data were drawn from 17 representative verses from the original Arabic lyrics and their English counterparts on <i>genius.com</i> and <i>lyricstranslate.com</i> .
	Results and Discussion: To maintain naturalness and emotional impact in English, dynamic equivalence predominates, with the total usage rate 69% of both translations. Meanwhile, formal equivalence is applied selectively, accounting for 31% of both translations to preserve structural fidelity in specific phrases. The key differences between the two translations involve lexical shifts, syntactic restructuring, and cultural adaptations that alter connotations while still maintaining the overarching themes.
	Conclusions and Implications: This study reveals a marked preference for dynamic over formal equivalence, prioritizing emotional depth and cultural nuance over syntactic fidelity. This confirms that translating lyrics of romantic distress necessitates an interlingual approach to preserve the source text's affective impact. Although offering a novel comparative perspective, the research is limited by its single-song scope and the exclusion of musical dimensions and audience reception.
Keywords:	Formal Equivalence; Dynamic Equivalence; Arabic Song Translation; Nancy Ajram.
ABSTRAK	
Latar Belakang: Pada beberapa waktu terakhir, lagu-lagu berbahasa Arab semakin populer di Indonesia. Salah satu penyanyi asal Lebanon, Nancy Ajram, dikenal dan diapresiasi banyak orang karena karirnya yang tidak pernah padam. Penerjemahan lirik lagu Arab ke dalam bahasa Inggris melibatkan berbagai keputusan kompleks terkait kesetiaan linguistik, resonansi emosional, serta adaptasi budaya.	
Tujuan: Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk mengidentifikasi teknik penerjemahan yang digunakan dalam masing-masing versi serta menganalisis implikasinya, guna	

memberikan pemahaman yang lebih mendalam mengenai bagaimana makna, emosi, dan nuansa budaya disampaikan dalam lirik lagu.

Metode: Penelitian ini menggunakan pendekatan deskriptif kualitatif dengan analisis teksual. Data diperoleh dari 17 bait representatif yang diambil dari lirik asli berbahasa Arab beserta padanannya dalam bahasa Inggris yang tersedia di genius.com dan lyricstranslate.com.

Hasil dan Pembahasan: Untuk mempertahankan kelaziman dan efek emosional dalam bahasa Inggris, ekuivalensi dinamis mendominasi dengan total persentase penggunaan sebesar 69% dari kedua terjemahan, sedangkan ekuivalensi formal digunakan secara selektif dengan total persentase penggunaan sebesar 31% dari kedua terjemahan untuk menjaga kesetiaan struktural pada frasa-frasa tertentu. Perbedaan utama antara keduanya meliputi pergeseran leksikal, restrukturisasi sintaktis, dan adaptasi kultural yang mengubah konotasi sekaligus tetap mempertahankan tema-tema utamanya.

Kesimpulan dan Implikasi: Penelitian ini mengungkapkan preferensi yang jelas terhadap ekuivalensi dinamis dibandingkan formal, dengan memprioritaskan kedalaman emosional dan nuansa budaya di atas kesetiaan sintaksis. Hal ini menegaskan bahwa penerjemahan lirik bertema penderitaan romantis mengharuskan adanya pendekatan antarbahasa untuk menjaga dampak afektif teks sumber. Meskipun menawarkan perspektif komparatif baru, penelitian ini terbatas pada cakupan satu lagu serta pengecualian dimensi musical dan penerimaan audiens.

Kata Kunci

Ekuivalensi Formal; Ekuivalensi Dinamis; Terjemah Lagu Arab; Nancy Ajram.



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INTRODUCTION

With the advancement of globalization, society experiences a rapid exchange of information, culture, and language. One consequence of this phenomenon is the increasing public interest in Arabic songs, which, although not new, are now more widely appreciated. Prominent singers such as Nancy Ajram and Sherine have achieved widespread recognition, with Nancy Ajram's "Fi Hagat" (في حاجات) standing out as a particularly popular selection among audiences. [1]

In relation to the growing popularity of Arabic music, it is also important to position song lyrics within a broader literary context. Siswantoro (as cited in Rahmawati and Malik), categorizes song lyrics as a literary form, akin to poetry. [2] The present study selects "Fi Hagat" for its interpretive complexity and significance. The researcher identified two distinct English translations of this song, sourced from lyricstranslate.com and genius.com, respectively. [3], [4] Notable differences are evident between these versions in terms of sentence structure and diction. By investigating a work by a leading Middle Eastern artist, this research seeks to engage both enthusiasts of Arabic music and scholars interested in the translation of song lyrics.

To further justify the focus of the study, a theoretical and methodological rationale is required. The selection of this study's object and title aims to enhance understanding of emotional sensitivity in translation, specifically regarding how identical sentiments may be articulated via different linguistic means and stylistic choices. However, no prior study compares two English translations of the same Arabic song. This research examines both translations with reference to Nida and Taber's theories of formal and dynamic equivalence, addressing a gap, as previous investigations have not specifically analyzed this song nor compared two translations into the same language of a single piece. [5]

A clear understanding of translation principles is therefore essential to support the analysis. Translation reproduces a message from the source language in the target language using the most natural equivalent in meaning and style. Its purpose is not simply to transfer words one by one. Instead, it conveys the complete message, so the reader or listener of the target language clearly understands. Translators must make grammatical and lexical adjustments to keep the message natural and effective. Hatim and Mason define translation as a form of communication that bridges differences in culture, language, and readership purpose.^[6] Translation can be performed by anyone, anytime, and anywhere.^[7] To achieve an equivalent response in translation, translators must understand the uniqueness of each language. This includes structure, style, and typical ways of conveying messages.^[5]

Building on these foundational principles, literature further highlights the challenges and creative demands of translation. No translation can ever be absolutely perfect. Translators must continuously broaden their knowledge and refine their methods of message delivery.^[8] High-quality translations are typically produced by professional translators with sufficient qualifications and experience.^[9] Kussmaul emphasizes the importance of divergent thinking in text analysis.^[10] Wilss refers to translation as a form of creative thought.^[11]

These previous studies collectively underscore the need for research that goes beyond conventional objects and approaches. The aforementioned studies have made important contributions to translation studies, most of which focus on scientific texts, classical poetry, lexical terms, or song lyrics translated into two different languages. However, to date, no research has been found that specifically examines a comparison of two translations in the same target language of the same song, particularly through the lens of Nida and Taber's theory of formal and dynamic equivalence.^[5]

Accordingly, the present study proposes a distinct focus that aims to fill this research gap. By using "Fi Hagat" by Nancy Ajram as the object of study and comparing its two English translations based on Nida and Taber's theory of formal and dynamic equivalence, this research aims to identify the translation techniques used in each version and to analyze their implications, thereby providing a deeper understanding of how meaning, emotion, and cultural nuance are conveyed in song lyrics. The position of this study is both significant and distinctive, as it offers a perspective rarely addressed in previous translation research. Instead of comparing texts from two different languages as is commonly done in prior studies, this research specifically examines two English translations of the same Arabic song.

While prior studies have explored translation equivalence in various genres, none have systematically compared two English renditions of the same Arabic song through the lens of Nida and Taber's dual model. Such a focus on both the object and the approach remains uncommon in translation studies; therefore, this research makes a new contribution by expanding the understanding of how equivalence theory can be applied to song lyric translation. This research fills that gap by offering a side-by-side analysis of how different translators negotiate form, meaning, and emotion, thereby contributing to the discourse on cultural adaptation in musical translation. Furthermore, this study is expected to open new avenues for future research, particularly in the translation of literary and musical texts, and to contribute to the development of translation theory and practice in a more contextual and applicable manner.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Theoretical Foundations of Translation

Jakobson classifies translation into three types: (1) Intralingual translation, the transfer of meaning within the same language through paraphrasing; (2) Interlingual translation, the actual act of translation, which interprets verbal signs from one language into another while retaining

meaning; and (3) Intersemiotic translation, the transfer of a message from one system of symbols to another.[\[12\]](#)

Molina and Albir identify 18 translation techniques, including adaptation, amplification, borrowing, compensation, description, modulation, reduction, transposition, and variation.[\[13\]](#) Meanwhile, Newmark divides translation methods into two main orientations: source-language-based methods (e.g., word-for-word, literal, faithful, and semantic translation) and target-language-based methods (e.g., adaptation, free, idiomatic, and communicative translation).[\[8\]](#)

According to Nida and Taber, translation involves three stages. First, examine the structure of the source text. Second is transfer, conveying the content into the target language. Third is restructuring, which reformulates the material to ensure naturalness and acceptability in the target language.[\[5\]](#) The restructuring stage is where equivalence strategies are applied.

Sulistyo mentions four essential qualifications for translators: mastery of both the source and target languages, vocabulary comprehension, understanding of the text's substance, and comprehension of the material being translated. In the context of song lyrics, translators must select appropriate lexical equivalents to convey the original message effectively.[\[14\]](#)

Translation is not merely the transfer of words or sentences, as the conceptual systems of languages differ.[\[15\]](#), [\[16\]](#) The greater the difference between the source and target languages, the more difficult the translation process becomes. Cultural factors also influence translation outcomes.[\[17\]](#), [\[18\]](#)

Franzon proposes five approaches to song translation: (1) not translating the lyrics at all, (2) translating without adjusting to the music, (3) writing new lyrics for the original music, (4) adapting the music to fit the translation, and (5) adjusting the translation to synchronize with the music.[\[19\]](#)

Translation and Equivalence

Comparing two or more translations is common in translation studies.[\[20\]](#) Venuti distinguishes between two major strategies: foreignization and domestication. Foreignization preserves the source text's foreignness. Domestication adapts the text to the target culture.[\[21\]](#) Nida and Taber introduced the concepts of formal equivalence and dynamic equivalence.[\[5\]](#) Formal equivalence focuses on preserving the structure and word order of the source language.[\[22\]](#) Dynamic equivalence emphasizes conveying the message naturally, so the target audience responds similarly to the source audience.[\[5\]](#)

Koller (as cited in Munday) adds five types of equivalence: denotative, connotative, text-normative, pragmatic (dynamic equivalence), and formal (related to structure and aesthetics).[\[23\]](#) Venuti highlights the relationship between domestication and foreignization.[\[21\]](#), [\[24\]](#) Schleiermacher (as cited in Venuti), offers two approaches. The first is bringing the author to the reader (domestication). The second is bringing the reader to the author (foreignization).[\[21\]](#)

Equivalence serves as a guiding principle for translators in choosing linguistic strategies that align with the communicative goals and needs of the target audience.[\[25\]](#) Catford identifies the search for equivalent expressions in the target language as the core of translation practice, while Nord (as cited in Putra) defines equivalence as a relationship of identical communicative value between two texts.[\[26\]](#), [\[9\]](#)

Grammar appears to be the primary obstacle in achieving equivalence, where strict reliance on its rules often results in unnatural and meaningless translations.[\[27\]](#) In literary texts such as song lyrics, inaccurate application of equivalence techniques can lead to ambiguity and misinterpretation.[\[9\]](#) This shows that translators must possess linguistic proficiency. They must also have sensitivity to semantic nuances and cultural context.

In summary, formal equivalence primarily concerns maintaining the message in accordance with the source-language structure, whereas dynamic equivalence prioritizes conveying similar meaning and communicative impact for target readers. This methodological approach facilitates flexibility and systematic analysis but may introduce the potential for semantic distortion if not applied meticulously.

Table 1. A Comparative Analysis of Formal and Dynamic Equivalence with Example

Aspect	Formal Equivalence (FE)	Dynamic Equivalence (DE)
Focus	The structure of the source language; lexical and grammatical accuracy. E.g.: - قلبُهُ كَبِيرٌ - His heart is large (literal, form-focused)	Effective communication of meaning; reader or audience response. E.g.: - قلبُهُ كَبِيرٌ - He is generous (meaning-focused)
Priority	Precision in grammar, morphology, and wording. E.g.: إِنِي ذَاهِبٌ إِلَى السَّوقِ - Indeed, I am going to the market (retains intensifier)	Fluency, clarity, and naturalness for the target audience. E.g.: إِنِي ذَاهِبٌ إِلَى السَّوقِ - I'm going to the market (prioritizes naturalness)
Treatment of Culture	Preserves original cultural elements. E.g.: - السَّلَامُ عَلَيْكُمْ - Peace be upon you (keeps cultural expression)	Adapts content to the cultural context of the target audience. E.g.: - السَّلَامُ عَلَيْكُمْ - Hello (adapts to target culture norm)
Typical Use	Legal texts, academic works, religious scriptures. E.g.: وَأَقِيمُوا الصَّلَاةَ (Religious/Legal Term) - And establish the prayer	Literature, dialogues, song lyrics, and popular media. E.g.: وَأَقِيمُوا الصَّلَاةَ (Religious/Legal Term) - And be steadfast in your worship (communicative interpretation)
Translator Role	Minimal interpretation; more literal rendering. E.g.: - اللَّيْلُ سَاكِنٌ - The night is still (direct rendering)	More interpretive and adaptive to convey intended effect. E.g.: اللَّيْلُ سَاكِنٌ - The night feels calm and quiet (translator interprets atmosphere)
Strengths	High precision and fidelity to the original form. E.g.: - كِتَابٌ جَدِيدٌ - A new book (precise and unambiguous)	Conveys emotional tone and pragmatic meaning effectively. E.g.: فَتَحَ اللَّهُ عَلَيْكَ - I hope everything goes well for you (communicates intent)
Weaknesses	May sound rigid or foreign to readers. E.g.: - اشْتَقْتُ إِلَيْكَ - I longed for you (literal but unnatural/archaic)	May lose structural features or stylistic nuances of the source text. E.g.: - اشْتَقْتُ إِلَيْكَ - I miss you (natural but loses past-tense nuance)

Previous Studies and Research Gap

Previous studies have explored the concept of equivalence and translation strategies from various perspectives. Septarani in her study titled “Translation Procedures and Equivalence in Children Bilingual Short Story,” examined the translation procedures and types of equivalence used in bilingual children’s stories. The purpose of the study was to identify translation techniques based on Newmark’s theory and types of equivalence based on Nida’s framework. The findings show that out of 16 translation procedures, 13 were used, with literal translation being the most dominant. In terms of equivalence, the study found that dynamic equivalence appeared more frequently than formal equivalence because the translator adjusted the meaning to make the text more natural for child readers.[28]

Patmawati et al. in their study titled “Information Correspondence on Automatic Translation (Closed Caption) of Speeches on The White House YouTube Channel,” investigated informational

correspondence in the automatic translation (closed caption) of speeches on the official White House YouTube channel. The goal was to evaluate the accuracy of machine translation in the context of political speeches. The findings reveal that most translated outputs experienced distortion, omission, and misrecognition, resulting in translations that were far from accurate. Thus, the automatic translation system has not yet been able to capture the rhetorical context and pragmatic meaning inherent in political discourse.[29]

Meanwhile Hayuwardhani through her article “Equivalence in the Translation of Joko Pinurbo’s ‘Tuhan Datang Malam Ini’ into ‘God Came Tonight,’” focused on analyzing meaning equivalence in the English translation of Joko Pinurbo’s poem by Harry Aveling. The aim of this research was to identify the application of formal equivalence and dynamic equivalence in the translation of metaphors, poetic diction, and symbolism. The results indicate that Aveling relied more on dynamic equivalence to preserve the emotional nuance, imagery, and atmosphere of the poem, resulting in linguistic forms that were adapted without eliminating the poetic message.[30]

Unlike empirical studies, Farsia & Sarair in their article “Dynamic Equivalence: Translation Theory,” discuss the concept of dynamic equivalence theoretically and its application across various text types. Their study demonstrates that the theory of dynamic equivalence has become increasingly dominant in modern translation practices because it allows flexibility in conveying messages naturally and communicatively. The translation examples analyzed by the authors show that the dynamic approach is particularly effective for literary texts and dialogue.[31]

In the context of subtitling, Mukhoyyarah & Faridi through their study “Achievement of Dynamic Equivalence in the Translation of Enola Holmes Movie’s Subtitle,” examined the extent to which dynamic equivalence is achieved in the subtitles of the film Enola Holmes. The purpose of the study was to assess the accuracy of subtitle meaning and the application of Nida’s theory in an audiovisual context. The findings indicate that dynamic equivalence dominated 80.5% of the data, while formal equivalence appeared in only 14.6%. This suggests that the spatial and temporal constraints of subtitling require translators to produce condensed translations while still maintaining the intended meaning.[32]

Table 2. Previous Study Synthesis

Researcher(s)	Year	Research Focus	Main Findings	Relevance (Adjusted Format)
Eka Putri Septarani	2022	Translation procedures and equivalence in bilingual children’s stories	Literal procedures are common, but dynamic equivalence dominates to ensure readability for young readers	Shows the use of translation procedures and the dominance of dynamic equivalence in non-literary popular texts
Patmawati, Baharuddin, Lalu Jaswadi Putera, & Arifuddin	2024	Accuracy of automatic translations of political speeches	Significant distortions, mismatches, and recognition errors found	Highlights the limitations of machine translation and the need for human intervention in pragmatically rich texts
Aurelia Reza Hayuwardhani	2020	Formal–dynamic equivalence in poetry translation	A mix of formal and dynamic equivalence; metaphor adaptation used to	Supports the analysis of dynamic equivalence applications in literary/poetic texts

preserve poetic effect				
Lina Farsia & Sarair	2023	Theoretical discussion of dynamic equivalence	Dynamic equivalence is viewed as the most communicative and natural approach	Strengthens the theoretical foundation for applying Nida & Taber's dynamic equivalence
Ummi Mukhoyyaroh & Abdurrachman Faridi	2023	Achievement of dynamic equivalence in film subtitles	80.5% of data reflects dynamic equivalence; driven by spatial and time constraints of subtitles	Demonstrates the effectiveness of dynamic equivalence in audiovisual translation/subtitling

METHOD

Research Design

This study employs a descriptive, qualitative approach with a textual analysis design to examine and compare two English translations of the song “Fi Hagat” by Nancy Ajram, based on Nida and Taber’s theory of formal and dynamic equivalence. The purpose of this method is to provide a comprehensive understanding of the translation strategies applied in both versions and to analyze how these strategies reflect the principles of equivalence in song lyric translation.

Data Sources

The primary data in this study consist of two English translations of “Fi Hagat”, obtained from the online platforms *lyrictranslate.com* (Translation 1) and *genius.com* (Translation 2). These platforms were selected because they are widely used by translators and audiences and exhibit notable differences in diction, structure, and translation style. The secondary data comprise books, journal articles, and previous studies relevant to translation theory, the concept of equivalence, and song translation, which serve as theoretical foundations and analytical support.

Data Collection

Data were collected by transcribing both English translations and aligning them with the original Arabic lyrics. Subsequently, a comparison table was created to present each line of the Arabic lyrics alongside the two English translations. This organization facilitated a systematic analysis of the equivalence strategies employed in each translation.

The original song consists of 39 lines in the *lyrictranslate.com* version and 33 lines in the *genius.com* version. To ensure analytical consistency and comparability, the researcher reduced the dataset to 17 representative lines by eliminating structurally repetitive segments such as the chorus, refrain, and duplicated lyrical phrases. The selection of the 17 lines followed explicit criteria: (1) lines that exhibit non-redundant lexical choices, including idiomatic expressions or culturally embedded terms; (2) lines that present notable syntactic or grammatical features in Arabic, such as nominal sentences, metaphorical constructions, or marked word order; and (3) lines that demonstrate variation in semantic density or emotional nuance. These specific criteria enabled the researcher to identify segments that most clearly display the translation strategies applied in both English versions. By focusing exclusively on these non-repetitive and analytically rich units, the study strengthens the reliability and depth of the comparative analysis.

Data Analysis

Data analysis was conducted using the model proposed by Miles and Huberman, which consists of three stages: data condensation, data display, and conclusion drawing/verification.[\[33\]](#), [\[34\]](#)

- a. Data Condensation: The transcribed and aligned lyrics were reviewed to focus the analysis on relevant translation units. The researcher then simplified the data into 17 non-repetitive lines and identified instances of formal and dynamic equivalence.
- b. Data Display: The data were organized into comparative tables that included the source lyrics in Arabic, Translation 1, and Translation 2. This visual representation facilitated the identification of translation choices and enabled cross-case comparison.
- c. Conclusion Drawing and Verification: Each translation segment was analyzed based on explicit criteria derived from Nida and Taber's definitions:
 - Formal equivalence: maintaining the structure, syntax, and lexical meaning of the source text as closely as possible to achieve textual fidelity.
 - Dynamic equivalence: focusing on conveying equivalent meaning and emotional impact in the target language, even if structural adjustments or cultural adaptations are required.

Data Validation

To minimize subjectivity, the researcher adhered strictly to operational definitions of formal and dynamic equivalence derived from Nida and Taber, and employed predetermined indicators such as lexical fidelity, structural adherence, communicative naturalness, and receptor-oriented effect. In addition, the study implemented an audit trail to ensure transparency and traceability throughout the analytical process. The audit trail documented each stage of data handling—from initial transcription, line selection, coding decisions, and classification of translation units, to the development of analytic memos and interpretation of findings. This detailed record allowed external reviewers to systematically examine the methodological steps and verify that the conclusions were grounded in clearly traceable analytical procedures.

Data validation was further reinforced through theoretical triangulation. Complementary perspectives from Venuti, Jakobson, Catford, and Molina & Albir were integrated to cross-check analytical conclusions, especially in areas involving cultural transfer, semantic shifts, and procedural strategies. Analytical rigor was maintained through iterative reading, reflective memoing, and systematic comparison across both translations. This multi-layered validation process ensured consistent, theoretically grounded, and replicable findings.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Results

This section discusses the results of an analysis of 17 verses from Nancy Ajram's song "Fi Hagat", based on the theories of formal and dynamic equivalence formulated by Nida and Taber. The discussion aims to connect the empirical findings with the translation theories presented in the introduction and literature review sections, and to demonstrate how the two concepts of equivalence are applied in the practice of song lyric translation. Therefore, the following analysis discusses the translation strategies employed in each verse and their implications for translation theory and practice. To determine the types of equivalence found in each translated lyric, the researcher conducted a detailed analysis of every verse and its corresponding translations.

Table 3. Verse 1

Source Lyric (in Arabic)	Translation 1 (lyricstranslate.com)	Translation 2 (genius.com)
في حاجات تتحس وما تقالش	“There are some things that are felt but are not spoken about”	“Some feelings remain buried deep inside”

This verse can literally be translated as “There are things that are felt but not said”, which in Translation 1 appears as “There are some things that are felt but are not spoken about”. The only lexical changes here are the addition of *some* in *some things* and the substitution of *said* with *spoken about*. Since these differences are minimal and do not alter the core meaning, Translation 1 falls under formal equivalence, as it preserves the original structure and sentence form of the source text.

In Translation 2, the verse is rendered as “Some feelings remain buried deep inside”. Here, the phrase *There are things that are felt* becomes *some feelings*, while *not said* becomes *buried deep inside*. Compared to Translation 1, which closely follows the literal version, the difference is notable. The second translation uses more concise diction but successfully retains the original meaning. Therefore, Translation 2 can be classified as dynamic equivalence, demonstrating its advantage in brevity while maintaining the emotional intent of the source text.

Table 4. Verse 2

Source Lyric	Translation 1	Translation 2
وإن جئت أطلبها أنا ما أقدر	“There are things that I need, but can't ever ask of you”	“I can't reveal them to you”

The literal translation of this verse is “If I came to ask for it, I couldn't”. This literal rendering is not closely mirrored in either of the two translations provided in the table. Translation 1 conveys the same meaning as the literal version but uses clearer and more explicit wording, illustrating the dynamic equivalence advantage of clarity and precision in lexical selection.

In Translation 2, the verse is interpreted in relation to the preceding one, resulting in “Some feelings remain buried deep inside, I can't reveal them to you”. This rendering makes more sense when read as part of the preceding context, highlighting the importance of inter-verse cohesion. Hence, both translations can be categorized as dynamic equivalence, as they focus on contextual interpretation.

Table 5. Verse 3

Source Lyric	Translation 1	Translation 2
ولو إنت عملتها بعد ما أنا أطلبها يبقى ما ينفعش	“And if you gave them to me, just because I asked” “it won't be the same”	“For they would be worthless, when you do them under my command”

This verse (ولو إنت عملتها بعد ما أنا أطلبها يبقى ما ينفعش, Even if you did it after I asked you to, it wouldn't work), is almost directly mirrored in Translation 1, which reads “And if you gave them to me, just because I asked”. The difference in diction is minimal. However, the phrase (يبقى ما ينفعش) (it wouldn't work) is translated as “it won't be the same”, which conveys a slightly altered nuance.

Thus, Translation 1 combines formal equivalence in the first clause (And if you gave them to me, just because I asked) with dynamic equivalence in the second (it won't be the same), showing simplicity in diction as a formal strength.

Translation 2 inverts the sentence order: يبقي ما ينفععش is rendered first as “For they would be worthless”, followed by ولو إنت عملتها بعد ما أنا أطلبها as “when you do them under my command”. This inversion and restructuring classify it as dynamic equivalence, demonstrating natural fluency in the target language even when the structure diverges significantly.

Table 6. Verse 4

Source Lyric	Translation 1	Translation 2
تُوجَّعُ فِي الْقَلْبِ	“They hurt the heart”	“Hurting and burning inside the heart”
وَمَا بَتَبَانَشَ	“but you never let them show”	

The literal translation of تُوجَّعُ فِي الْقَلْبِ وَمَا بَتَبَانَشَ is “It hurts in the heart, and it doesn't show”. Translation 1 retains close similarity in the phrase تُوجَّعُ فِي الْقَلْبِ (it hurts in the heart), rendered as “They hurt the heart”. This demonstrates formal equivalence, maintaining the original lexical elements as faithfully as possible. However, وما بَتَبَانَشَ (it doesn't show) becomes “but you never let them show”, introducing the cause of hidden pain—the lover's actions. This semantic expansion shifts the meaning slightly, classifying the translation as both formal (for the first phrase) and dynamic (for the second).

Translation 2, “Hurting and burning inside the heart”, omits the “not showing” element but emphasizes emotional intensity through the repetition of hurting and burning. This use of imagery classifies it under dynamic equivalence, with the advantage of conveying deeper emotional resonance.

Table 7. Verse 5

Source Lyric	Translation 1	Translation 2
وَأَفْضَلُ عَلَى طَوْلِ تَعْبَانَةِ مَا بَيْنَ طَبْرَانِيْكَ وَلَا مَا أَقْوَلَكَشَ	“And it's hard, I can't make up mind”	“I live a conflict within my soul”
	“Between whether to tell you or not”	“Whether I should tell you or not”

This verse's literal translation is “I'd rather be tired all the time, whether I tell you or not”. The first clause, وَأَفْضَلُ عَلَى طَوْلِ تَعْبَانَةِ (I'd rather be tired all the time), appears as “And it's hard, I can't make up my mind” in Translation 1 and “I live a conflict within my soul” in Translation 2. Both diverge lexically from the literal version and from each other, making them examples of dynamic equivalence, where lexical creativity is used to intensify emotional meaning.

The second clause, ما بَيْنَ طَبْرَانِيْكَ وَلَا مَا أَقْوَلَكَشَ (whether I tell you or not), appears as between “whether to tell you or not” in Translation 1 and “whether I should tell you or not” in Translation 2. These two translations adhere closely to the literal meaning, reflecting formal equivalence, with the advantage of lexical faithfulness. Overall, this verse combines both formal and dynamic equivalence in a balanced manner.

Table 8. Verse 6

Source Lyric	Translation 1	Translation 2
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ما أقدرش أقولك غير كل طريقة حبك ليَا	“I can't ask you to change the way you love me”	“I can't ask you to change the way you love me”
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Both English translations of this verse are identical, though they reflect a shift in meaning from the literal meaning (I can't tell you anything but how much I love you). The literal version depicts a singer unable to express the depth of her love. In contrast, both translations imply the singer's inability to ask her lover to change how he loves her, as if his love is expressed in a way she does not desire. This semantic shift serves to align the meaning with the following verses, placing these renderings within dynamic equivalence, though with the limitation of potential meaning distortion when context is not fully grasped.

Table 9. Verse 7

Source Lyric	Translation 1	Translation 2
أو غير عليَا ولا فجأني في مرة وهاتلي هدية	“Or be more jealous, or surprise me once with a gift”	“Or even make a step to surprise me, fill me with joy”

The literal translation of this verse is “Or change my mind and surprise me once and bring me a gift”. In Translation 1, **أو غير عليَا** (or change my mind) is rendered as or be more jealous, suggesting the lover's emotional intensity as a desired expression of affection. This reveals a dynamic equivalence limitation—translator subjectivity, as interpretations can differ. The next phrase, **ولا فجأني في مرة وهاتلي هدية** (and surprise me once and bring me a gift), appears as or surprises me once with a gift, which retains the original lexical structure, reflecting formal equivalence. Thus, Translation 1 displays both dynamic (in the first clause) and formal (in the second clause) equivalence. Translation 2 diverges completely from both the literal meaning and Translation 1, except for the use of surprise. The phrase “fill me with joy” is used metaphorically to represent the *gift* or desired emotional fulfillment. Therefore, Translation 2 clearly exemplifies dynamic equivalence.

Table 10. Verse 8

Source Lyric	Translation 1	Translation 2
إِمْلَا عَيْنِيَا وَاعْمَلْ حَاجَةً أَنَا مُشَّ عَارِفَاهَا	“Or please me once by doing something unexpected”	“Fill me with joy and overwhelm me”

The literal translation of this verse is “Fill my eyes and do something I don't know”. The expression **عيّنيَا** (my eyes) in **إِمْلَا عَيْنِيَا** (fill my eyes) is culturally inappropriate when translated literally into English. In Translation 1, this phrase becomes please me once, clarifying the intended meaning of the lyrics. This demonstrates the strength of dynamic equivalence through cultural adaptation. Similarly, Translation 2 renders it as “fill me with joy”, which preserves the sense of emotional satisfaction while keeping closer lexical proximity.

The next phrase, **وَاعْمَلْ حَاجَةً** (and do something I don't know), appears as doing something unexpected in Translation 1—an interpretive yet deepened version of the literal meaning. Translation 2, however, uses overwhelm me, which may carry a slightly off nuance, as overwhelm often connotes unpleasant intensity. Despite this, since it follows fill me with joy, the phrase can still be understood positively. This again illustrates a dynamic equivalence limitation: the potential for meaning distortion due to subjective word choice. Thus, both translations can be categorized under dynamic equivalence.

Table 11. Verse 9

Source Lyric	Translation 1	Translation 2
ما أقدرش أقولك حلي الدنيا في عيني وغير فيها	“I can't ask you to make my world sweeter, to change how things are”	“I can't ask you to brighten my life”

Literal translation of this verse is “I can't tell you that you are the best in the world and that you are different from me”. Translation 1 renders **ما أقدرش أقولك حلي الدنيا في عيني** (I can't tell you that you are the best in the world) as “I can't ask you to make my world sweeter”, while **وغير فيها** (and that you are different from me) becomes “to change how things are”. Translation 2 condenses the entire line into “I can't ask you to brighten my life”, a shorter but semantically faithful rendering. Both translations thus fall under dynamic equivalence, with Translation 1 emphasizing depth of meaning and Translation 2 prioritizing conciseness without losing essence.

Table 12. Verse 10

Source Lyric	Translation 1	Translation 2
لو مهما كنت قريب مني و كنت قريب لي	“No matter how close you are to me”	“No matter how dear to my heart you are”

The literal translation of this verse is “No matter how close you are to me”. Translation 1 reproduces this with literal translation, thus it falls under formal equivalence, showing fidelity to the original form and meaning. Translation 2, however, substitutes *close* with *dear* and expands *to me* into *to my heart*, transforming the sense of mere physical or emotional proximity into something of deeper sentimental value. This rendering exemplifies dynamic equivalence, highlighting its strength in achieving greater emotional resonance. Although only two words are altered, the resulting meaning shifts, which classifies Translation 2 as dynamic equivalence.

Table 13. Verse 11

Source Lyric	Translation 1	Translation 2
ما أقدرش أقولك شكل حياتنا اللي أنا عايزة لها	“I can't tell you how I want our life to be”	“I can't describe the life I want for us”

This verse is translated literally as “I can't tell you what kind of life I want”. Both translation convey the same essential meaning, differing only slightly in lexical choices that do not affect comprehension. Compared with the literal translation, both versions differ in grammatical subject: while the original uses the first-person singular (I), the two English translations use a combined first- and second-person subject (our/us).

In the source, the meaning centers on the singer's inability to express her own desired life, whereas in both translations, the meaning subtly expands to include a shared life with her beloved. Since the difference does not distort the intended sense and the structure remains faithful, both translations are categorized under formal equivalence, reflecting their strength in preserving syntactic form and fidelity to the source text.

Table 14. Verse 12

Source Lyric	Translation 1	Translation 2
اعرف لوحدي شكل حياتنا اللي أنا عايزة لها	“Know, on your own, how I want our life to be”	“You should know yourself what suits us”

The phrase **إعرف لوحدك** in literal means find out for yourself. In Translation 1, it appears as “Know, on your own”. Meanwhile this phrase, **شكل حيّاتنا اللي أنا عايّزها** (translated literal as the way I want our life [to be]) becomes “how I want our life to be”. Since both renderings preserve meaning and syntactic parallelism, Translation 1 represents formal equivalence, characterized by structural and lexical fidelity.

In Translation 2, **إعرف لوحدك** is rendered “You should know yourself”, conveying a similar intent. However, **شكل حيّاتنا اللي أنا عايّزها** becomes “what suits us”, which shortens and slightly shifts meaning toward pragmatic suitability rather than personal desire. Therefore, Translation 2 is best categorized under dynamic equivalence for its adaptive lexical compression and contextual adjustment.

Table 15. Verse 13

Source Lyric	Translation 1	Translation 2
أوقات بيّان إني سكت وهديت ورضيت وأتعودت	“At times, it seems that I’m content”	“Sometimes I look silent”
	“That I’m calm, that I’ve accepted everything and got used to it”	“Calm, relaxed, and used”

The literal meaning is “There are times when it becomes clear that I have kept quiet, calmed down, accepted, and gotten used to it”. In Translation 1, the clause **أوقات بيّان إني سكت** (There are times when it becomes clear that I have kept quiet) becomes “At times, it seems that I’m content”. Here, the choice of content diverges from silence to quiet, offering a deeper sense of emotional acceptance rather than mere muteness. This demonstrates dynamic equivalence, emphasizing interpretive emotional nuance.

In Translation 2, the same clause appears as “Sometimes I look silent”, which shortens the phrase and replaces quiet with silent. The meaning remains essentially unchanged, qualifying it as formal equivalence. The subsequent clause, **وهديت ورضيت واتّعوّدت** (calmed down, accepted, and gotten used to it), remains close to the literal version in Translation 1, again exemplifying formal equivalence for its lexical fidelity. In Translation 2, *accepted* is replaced by *relaxed*, slightly altering tone and brevity; hence, this version exemplifies dynamic equivalence for concise yet meaningful adaptation. Overall, this verse combines both formal and dynamic equivalence, demonstrating how translators balance literal retention with expressive interpretation.

Table 16. Verse 14

Source Lyric	Translation 1	Translation 2
مش معنى كده إنك على طول تحسّبني إني إستسلّمت	“That doesn’t mean you can believe that I gave up”	“But don’t think that I have given up”

The literal translation of this verse is “This does not mean that you always think that I have given up”. Translation 1 mirrors this almost exactly, preserving both syntax and semantics; therefore, it fits formal equivalence, displaying fidelity of form and meaning.

Translation 2, however, renders **مش معنى كده** (This does not mean that you always think) as “But don’t think”, shifting from a declarative statement to an imperative expression. Although this modification is minor, it introduces a more forceful emotional tone, thus representing dynamic equivalence, with its strength in achieving naturalness and intensity in the target language.

Table 17. Verse 15

Source Lyric	Translation 1	Translation 2
وسائل بتحس إني زهقت	“Sometimes, you might feel that I don’t care anymore”	“Sometimes I look tired”

The literal translation of this verse, “Sometimes I feel bored”, differs lexically from both English versions. Translation 1 provides a longer, more descriptive sentence elaborating on the singer’s emotions, whereas Translation 2 is concise yet equally intelligible. Both are categorized as dynamic equivalence, reflecting interpretive freedom and emotional clarity. Translation 2 especially illustrates the advantage of dynamic equivalence; brevity without loss of meaning.

Table 18. Verse 16

Source Lyric	Translation 1	Translation 2
مع إني بخبي إني تعبت	“But I’m actually trying to hide that I’m tired of this”	“But in fact I am hiding the way I feel”

This verse literally translated as “Even though I hide that I’m tired”. Translation 1 reproduces it with only minor lexical differences, maintaining both wording and sentence structure; hence, it represents formal equivalence.

Translation 2, while similar in overall sense, adds the phrase “in fact ...the way I feel”, replacing *tired* with *feel*, thereby broadening the emotional scope. This makes it an example of dynamic equivalence, whose key strength lies in capturing the intended emotional tone rather than strict lexical parallelism.

Table 19. Verse 17

Source Lyric	Translation 1	Translation 2
ما توصلنيش يا حبيبي أقول ده يا ريتني، يا ريتني إتكلمت	“Don’t push me to the point where I regret not having said a thing”	“Don’t make me regret darling, remaining silent and still”

The literal translation of this verse is “Don’t let me tell you, my love. I wish I had spoken”. Both translations differ in diction not only from the literal version but also from each other. In Translation 1 (ما توصلنيش يا حبيبي أقول 1, (Don’t let me tell you, my love) becomes “Don’t push me to the point where ...”, while in Translation 2 it becomes “Don’t make me regret, darling”.

The next phrase, ده يا ريتني، يا ريتني إتكلمت (I wish I had spoken), is translated in Translation 1 as “where I regret not having said a thing”, and in Translation 2 as “remaining silent and still”. Both translations depart significantly from the literal version, focusing instead on emotional resonance; thus, both belong to dynamic equivalence, emphasizing depth of feeling and expressive impact.

Table 20. Percentage Comparison of Formal and Dynamic Equivalence

Verse	Translation 1		Translation 2	
	Formal Equivalence	Dynamic Equivalence	Formal Equivalence	Dynamic Equivalence
1	✓			✓
2		✓		✓
3	✓ (0,5)	✓ (0,5)		✓
4	✓ (0,5)	✓ (0,5)		✓
5	✓ (0,5)	✓ (0,5)	✓ (0,5)	✓ (0,5)

6		✓		✓
7	✓ (0,5)	✓ (0,5)		✓
8		✓		✓
9		✓		✓
10	✓			✓
11	✓		✓	
12	✓			✓
13	✓ (0,5)	✓ (0,5)	✓ (0,5)	✓ (0,5)
14	✓			✓
15		✓		✓
16	✓			✓
17		✓		✓
Total	8,5 (50%)	8,5 (50%)	2 (12%)	15 (88%)

Discussion

Based on empirical findings from 17 verses, it is evident that dynamic equivalence dominates with the total usage percentage of 69% of both translations, while formal equivalence contributes only 31%. These findings serve as the primary basis for the argument that in translating song lyrics, the delivery of emotional messages and cultural acceptability are prioritized far more than rigid fidelity to the source language structure. This section not only exposes the dominance of translation strategies based on statistical data but also dissects the creative process, cross-cultural challenges, and linguistic complexities, drawing on a broad spectrum of translation theories.

1. The Nature of Lyric Translation as Interlingual Communication and “Rewriting”

The translation of the lyrics of Fi Hagat is a tangible representation of what Jakobson classified as “interlingual translation”, which is the attempt to interpret verbal signs from one language into another.^[12] In the context of global cultural exchange, this phenomenon becomes crucial for rapid information transfer, as noted by Siswantoro in Rahmawati and Malik.^[2] However, this process transcends mere lexical transfer; Hatim and Mason define translation as an act of communication that bridges cultural differences.^[6] Analysis of the data indicates that the translator performs what Aixela calls complex “rewriting”.^[18] The translator does not merely move words; they reproduce the message to evoke an equivalent effect in the target reader. This aligns with Catford concept regarding the replacement of textual material with equivalents in the target language.^[26] This process demands high competence from the translator, not only to master the language but also to understand the nuances of the material being translated, as per the competency requirements proposed by Sulistyo.^[14]

As a concrete example in Verse 1, the original lyric في حاجات تتحس وما تتقالش literally means “There are things that are felt but not said.” Translation 1 still maintains the formal structure, whereas Translation 2 changes it to “Some feelings remain buried deep inside.” The change in diction to “buried deep inside” demonstrates the translator’s effort to restructure the message to achieve depth of meaning rather than mere formal equivalence.

2. Dominance of Dynamic Equivalence: Emotional Representation Through Divergent Thinking

The dominance of dynamic equivalence (88%) in these lyrics confirms the relevance of Nida and Taber’s theory, which states that translation must prioritize meaning first and style second, with the aim that the target audience’s response is similar to that of the original audience.^[5] These findings also support Farsia’s view that the dynamic equivalence approach is increasingly dominant in modern translation practices, especially in literary works, because it offers greater communicative flexibility.^[31] In the context of emotionally charged song lyrics, translators often have to apply a

creative mindset. This is clearly visible in the analysis of Verse 4, where the original lyric توجع في القلب وما بتباش (literal: It hurts in the heart) in Translation 2 is translated as “Hurting and burning inside the heart”. The addition of the word *burning*, which does not exist in the source text, is a manifestation of divergent thinking according to Kussmaul.^[10] The translator performs meaning expansion to accentuate the heartbreak experienced by the singer. This strategy can also be categorized as connotative equivalence—a term coined by Koller in Munday—in which lexical choices are focused on maintaining emotional effects and affective values.^[23]

These findings align with the research of Hayuwardhani on the poetry of Joko Pinurbo, which found that dynamic equivalence is used predominantly to preserve emotional nuances, imagery, and poetic atmosphere.^[30] Furthermore, this approach parallels the findings of Mukhoyyaroh in film subtitle translation, where dynamic equivalence dominates (80.5%) due to the need for readability and message naturalness within limited space.^[32] Although song lyrics are not constrained by screen space like subtitles, the need to convey emotions instantly within the song’s duration demands a similar strategy.

3. Cultural Adaptation and Domestication Strategies

One of the biggest challenges in translation, identified by Puspitasari et al., is the cultural factor, as every language represents different concepts.^[15] Language is not merely a matter of naming objects, as Culler asserts in *Ordudari*, so Arab cultural concepts often lack direct equivalents in English.^[16] The translator of the *Fi Hagat* lyrics overcomes this gap by applying Venuti’s domestication strategy, which brings the foreign text into conformity with the values and norms of the target culture, thereby reducing its foreignness.^[21]

A significant case of cultural adaptation is found in the analysis of Verse 8. The original lyric, وإنلا عينيا (literal: “Fill my eyes”), is an Arab cultural idiom meaning inner satisfaction or happiness. If translated literally (literal translation), the meaning would be obscure and sound foreign to Western listeners. To overcome this, the translator applies the technique of established equivalent adaptation, according to Molina and Albir, or dynamic equivalence, according to Nida & Taber. Translation 1 changes it to “Please me once”, while Translation 2 becomes “Fill me with joy”. The transformation from a physical metaphor (eyes) to an expression of emotion (joy/please) supports Zhang et al.’s view that translation is also a process of cultural dissemination adjusted for acceptability.^[17] These findings also support Septarani’s conclusion regarding the translation of children’s stories, in which cultural elements that are difficult to maintain often require non-literal strategies or cultural equivalents to be understood by target readers.^[28]

4. Creativity, Subjectivity, and Shift in Meaning

Translation is a complex creative thinking process. Wilss states that translation is a mental activity involving creativity, which sometimes demands sacrificing literal accuracy for the sake of contextual coherence.^[11] Newmark also emphasizes that no translation is absolutely perfect, and translators continuously strive to refine their delivery.^[8] However, this creativity opens space for subjectivity that can trigger a shift in meaning (discursive creation). Analysis of Verse 6 shows a quite radical shift in meaning. The original lyric ما أقدر أقولك غير كل طريقة حبك ليا literally means “I can’t tell you anything but how much I love you”. However, both translation versions change it to “I can’t ask you to change the way you love me”. The shift from *expressing the magnitude of love* to *the inability to ask for a change in the way of loving* indicates that the translator performed a reinterpretation based on the context of the song, which has a sad and complaining nuance.

The translator appears to prioritize what Koller (as cited in Munday) calls pragmatic equivalence, which is oriented toward the communicative message in a specific context.^[23] This confirms Venuti’s theory that translation often reduces the original meaning to replace it with a set of other differences so that the text can be accepted logically in the target language.^[35] Although

this intervention risks distorting the meaning, it is often necessary because machine translation or literal translation frequently fails to capture the rhetorical context and deep structure, as found by Patmawati et al.^[29] However, this subjectivity is also a weakness of dynamic equivalence, as seen in Verse 7, where the phrase أَوْ غَيْرُ عَلَيَا (or change my mind) is translated as “or be more jealous” in Translation 1. This interpretation of *jealousy* is highly subjective and indicates variations in the translator’s understanding.

5. The Role of Formal Equivalence and Musical Adjustment

Although dynamic equivalence is highly dominant, formal equivalence remains present (12%) as a counterbalancing strategy. Nida and Malenova define formal equivalence as a focus on preserving the structure, word order, and syntactic categories of the source language.^{[22], [36]} This strategy is effectively used when the source and target language structures bear similarities or parallelism. An example of successful formal equivalence is found in Verse 10, where the original lyric لو مهما كنت قريب مني is translated as “No matter how close you are to me” in Translation 1. Here, the translator maintains the original structure (faithful translation) because that form is already sufficiently natural and acceptable in English. These findings differ from the pattern found by Rahmawati and Malik in BTS lyrics (English-Indonesian version), where the literal technique (formal equivalence) dominated up to 47.20%.^[2] In the lyrics of Fi Hagat, formal equivalence functions only as a complement when the structure happens to be identical or very simple.

Besides linguistic factors, song translation is also influenced by musical constraints. Franzon mentions that in song translation, the translated text often must be adapted to the music (rhythm, syllable count).^[2] Indications of this adjustment are visible in the use of more concise sentences in Translation 2, for example, in Verse 5 (I live a conflict within my soul) or Verse 9 (I can’t ask you to brighten my life), which are far shorter than the original structures. The effort to condense this message is similar to technical constraints in subtitle translation investigated by Mukhoyyaroh.^[32]

6. Synthesis of Strategies: Between Art and Flexibility

The overall analysis shows that the translation of the Fi Hagat lyrics is a dynamic process where the translator is not rigidly fixated on a single method. They combine formal and dynamic equivalence according to the needs of the text, moving between the poles of faithful translation (faithful to form) and communicative translation (faithful to message), as classified by Newmark.^[8] This flexibility aligns with the findings of Putra on biographical texts and Septarani on children’s stories, where translators balance literal and free procedures to achieve communication effectiveness.^{[9], [28]} This interesting combination of strategies is seen in Verse 3 and Verse 13, where one part of the sentence is translated formally while the other is translated dynamically.

This in-depth analysis confirms that the translation of song lyrics stands at the intersection of art and science. The translators of Fi Hagat lyrics consistently apply the principle of dynamic equivalence to produce an equivalent emotional response, thereby succeeding in message restructuring and cultural domestication, resulting in a work that is communicative and touching to the emotions of English listeners. This approach proves that despite concerns about grammatical issues necessitating the sacrifice of literal accuracy, the primary focus of lyric translation remains on communicative value, as per the view of Nord (as cited in Putra).^{[27], [9]} Through a comparative approach, it is evident that although the two translators have different styles (Translation 1 is sometimes more descriptive, while Translation 2 is more poetic and concise, as in Verses 1 and 9), both converge on the same goal: message domestication. They are not rigidly bound to grammatical structures but focus on communication and aesthetic values. This strategy proves that for the genre of song lyrics, which prioritizes feelings, an approach oriented toward reader response and cultural acceptability is the most effective method to make the song touch and resonate in the hearts of readers, as if the work originated from their own language.^[5]

CONCLUSION AND IMPLICATION

Conclusion

This study has successfully achieved its primary objective of identifying translation techniques and analyzing their implications within the two English versions of Nancy Ajram's "Fi Hagat." The substantive findings reveal a significant dominance of dynamic equivalence (69%) over formal equivalence (31%) and across the analyzed verses. This distribution indicates that in translating the lyrics of "Fi Hagat," both translators prioritized the transfer of meaning, emotional depth, and cultural nuance over rigid adherence to the syntactic structures of the source text. The analysis demonstrates that dynamic equivalence serves as the primary mechanism for negotiating the cultural and emotional gaps between Arabic and English, allowing for the "rewriting" of sentiments—such as heartbreak and longing—into expressions that resonate naturally with the target audience. Formal equivalence, conversely, was employed strictly in limited contexts where structural fidelity did not compromise the lyrical flow or semantic clarity.

Formatively, the correlation between the chosen theme of the song—romantic distress—and the theoretical framework of Nida and Taber is evident. The research concludes that the variable of "emotional sensitivity" in song lyrics necessitates a translation approach that functions as interlingual communication rather than mere lexical transfer. The scientific rationale for this lies in the concept of divergent thinking and domestication; to preserve the song's 'soul', the translators were compelled to sacrifice grammatical precision for communicative impact. The theoretical application of equivalence here proves that language in a musical context operates not just as a system of signs, but as a vehicle for cultural and affective experience, where the effect on the listener is paramount.

The study presents distinct methodological strengths, primarily offering a novel contribution by juxtaposing two different English translations of the same Arabic source text. This comparative angle addresses a gap in the literature, which typically focuses on singular translation pairings (Source to Target) or utilizes non-lyrical objects such as novels, films, or news reports. However, the research is subject to certain limitations. The scope is restricted to a single song, with the dataset condensed to 17 representative verses to avoid redundancy, which limits the generalizability of the findings. Furthermore, the analysis is strictly textual, focusing on linguistic equivalence while largely excluding the performative and musical dimensions of the songs such as rhythm and melody—which are intrinsic to lyric translation. Additionally, the study did not empirically test the target audience's perception, relying instead on theoretical analysis to gauge naturalness.

Implications

The findings of this research have significant implications for the field of translation studies, particularly in the sub-genre of lyric translation. The study robustly supports the applicability of Nida and Taber's theory of equivalence beyond biblical or prose texts, validating its relevance in analyzing poetic and musical discourses. It demonstrates that dynamic equivalence is not merely an option but a necessity in song translation to prevent the loss of emotive power and cultural context. By highlighting how different translators navigate the same source text, the study enriches academic understanding of translator subjectivity and the creative necessity of semantic shifts (discursive creation) in achieving functional equivalence.

Based on these conclusions, several recommendations are proposed for future research. Scholars are encouraged to expand the scope of analysis by utilizing objects with more significant content differences, such as songs from diverse genres (e.g., hip-hop or traditional folk) to observe if translation strategies shift according to musical style. Future studies should also integrate multimodal analysis, examining how musical elements—such as rhythm, rhyme schemes, and intonation—constrain or liberate translation choices. Finally, it is recommended that future

research combine equivalence theory with other linguistic frameworks, such as functionalism or reception theory, and conduct deeper reviews of prior studies to further map the complex landscape of musical translation.

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