

Exploring Reader Reception and Response: A Critical Analysis through Al-Jahiz's Translation Theory

مكانة التلقي في نظرية الجاحظ للترجمة؛ دراسة نقدية

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Abstract:)

The aim of this study is to highlight the role of reception in achieving translation and to argue that the recipient is an essential element for completing the translation process, alongside the translator and the text. This is achieved through the analysis of a rare text by Al-Jahiz that discusses translation in his book "Kitab al-Hayawan" (The Book of Animals), along with a brief historical overview of the contextual background of the text and the contribution of the Arab-Islamic civilization to advancing the field of translation. The study concludes that Al-Jahiz has laid down foundational principles in translation that continue to resonate in modern translation theories. The text by Al-Jahiz emphasizes the significance of reception and the role of the recipient in the translation process.

Keywords: Translation; Reception; Al-Jahiz; Kitab al-Hayawan (The Book of Animals); translation theories; Translation process.

ملخص:

تهدف هذه الدراسة إلى تسليط الضوء على دور التلقي في عملية الترجمة، وإظهار أهمية المتلقي لاكمال عملية الترجمة بجانب النص الأصلي والمترجم. وذلك من خلال تحليل نص نادر للجاحظ يتناول موضوع الترجمة في كتابه "الحيوان"، مع تقديم نظرة تاريخية موجزة للسياق الزمني للنص ودور الحضارة العربية الإسلامية في تعزيز عملية الترجمة. تشير هذه الدراسة إلى أن التلقي يلعب دورًا حاسمًا في تحقيق أهداف عملية الترجمة وتسليط الضوء على أهمية المتلقي بوصفه جزءًا عضويًا من هذه العملية، إلى جانب المترجم والنص الأصلي، وتؤكد على أن فهم المعنى ونقله بدقة إلى المتلقي شرط حاسم لنجاح عملية الترجمة. خلصت الدراسة إلى أن الجاحظ قد وضع أسسًا نظرية في مجال الترجمة ما تزال تأثيراتها قائمة في النظريات الحديثة للترجمة. يبرز نص الجاحظ النادر أهمية التلقي ودور المتلقي في عملية الترجمة، إذ يمكن اعتبار التلقي معيارًا أساسيًا لتقييم نجاح عملية الترجمة أو فشلها. فعملية الترجمة لا تكتمل إذا لم تنقل المعنى والرسالة بدقة وأمانة إلى المتلقي المقصود.

1. INTRODUCTION

It is hardly surprising that numerous historians and reputable scholars have duly acknowledged the Arabs as one of the most proactive nations when it comes to the art of translation. The annals of knowledge bear witness to this fact. Even a cohort of Western intellectuals has conceded that Europe's pivotal 'Age of Enlightenment,' often referred to as the 'Age of Lights,' or 'Renaissance' owes a debt of gratitude to the Arabs. This acknowledgment stems from Europe's absorption of the scientific and intellectual wealth that the Arabs meticulously transferred from diverse nations and languages, with a notable emphasis on Greek scientific works. The Arab Renaissance cast such a profound influence that certain Western luminaries not only acknowledged it but also assimilated elements of Arabic knowledge and methodologies into their own endeavors.

The Arabs maintained consistent interactions with neighboring nations and civilizations, whether during periods of peace or conflict. For instance, in Iraq, they engaged with the Sassanid Persians, and in the Levant, they interacted with the Byzantines through the Ghassanite tribe. These relationships remained unbroken. Clearly, socio-political ties and trade transactions necessitated a shared language for effective management of interests. Translation, given the limitations of the time, emerged as the most viable method for fostering communication and mutual comprehension.

Historical records affirm that during the inception of Islam, the Prophet - peace be upon him - encouraged some of his companions to acquire proficiency in other languages. Zaid ibn Thabit, in particular, recounted, "The Messenger of Allah - peace be upon him - instructed me to familiarize myself with the writings of the Jews. He was cautious, asserting that he couldn't entirely trust their writings. I dedicated two weeks to mastering their script. Consequently, when he needed to correspond with the Jews, I transcribed his messages, and when they wrote to him, I interpreted their texts for him." (السجستاني, 1952)

A narration in Tirmidhi's Sahih also reveals Zayd's account: "The Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings be upon him) directed me to learn Syriac." (الترمذي, 1934) Possibly, these two Hadiths mention that Zayd, alongside other companions,

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undertook language acquisition to bolster the propagation of Islam and facilitate the translation of the books the Prophet - peace be upon him - received from various kings.

2. A brief historical overview:

during the first century AH under Umayyad rule, translation, or what was sometimes referred to as "Arabization," proliferated. This trend gained recognition among certain Umayyad caliphs who valued knowledge. Khalid Bin Yazeed, distinguished for his scholarship and writing, stands out as a proponent of Greek science. He initiated the translation of texts in astronomy, medicine, and chemistry. (بارتولد)

Ibn-Nadim's "Al-Fihrist" records Khalid as the pioneer in translating works related to medicine, astronomy, and chemistry. (ابن النديم, 1964) Al-Jahiz also lauds him, stating, "Khalid Ibn Yazid Ibn Muawiyah excelled as an eloquent speaker, poet, and renowned scholar of literature. Notably, he spearheaded the translation of celestial, medical, and chemical literature." (الجاحظ, 1987)

During the Umayyad era, the translation movement remained confined to individual endeavors driven by specialized efforts. The scope of translation was limited and narrow, failing to make substantial contributions to Arab culture. Moreover, the Umayyad rulers exhibited caution towards translation, viewing it with suspicion due to concerns about the potential introduction of ideas and doctrines that could challenge people's beliefs, sow doubts, and promote heretical notions. This atmosphere led to apprehension among translators, who hesitated to translate certain works from Greek, Persian, Syriac, and Hindi. Works related to logic and philosophy, in particular, faced reluctance. Al-Jahiz hinted at this climate when he remarked, "One of the things that is carefully concealed from people's eyes is the detested drink and the condemned book." (الجاحظ, 1982)

Amid the Umayyad rulers' apprehension about uncontrolled translation and the translators' reluctance towards certain Greek disciplines, a significant aspect emerged: the pivotal role of the reader or receiver in the translation process. Both the Umayyad rulers and the translators themselves exhibited reservations due to concerns that certain Greek sciences and philosophies might adversely affect the faith of Arab Muslim recipients. These foreign ideas contained intricacies and distortions that clashed with the established framework of Arab concepts and their worldview.

However, despite the decline in translation activity during this period, the foundations were being laid for the future expansion of translation efforts. These early developments would later evolve into a crucial component of the Arab scientific renaissance and a catalyst for cultural flourishing. The trajectory of translation began to ascend with the advent of the Abbasid Caliphs. They displayed a profound commitment to the translation of sciences into Arabic right from the outset of their rule. This commitment was evident in their substantial allocation of resources, both in terms of effort and funds, to facilitate translation initiatives.

Historian AL-Masoudi recorded that Caliph Abu Jaafar al-Mansur, in particular, emerged as a trailblazer by becoming the "first Caliph to translate books from foreign languages into Arabic." (المسعودي, 1973) This marked the beginning of a transformative period where the star of translation began to shine brightly, eventually reaching its pinnacle of prosperity under the Abbasid Caliphs.

Following him was Harun al-Rashid, who displayed a profound interest in both science and translation. During his rule, significant strides were taken in translating renowned scientific works. For instance, Euclid's "Elements of Geometry" was among the notable texts translated. Additionally, Harun al-Rashid established Baghdad's inaugural paper factory, a move that had a transformative impact on the advancement of sciences.

Subsequently, his successor Al-Ma'mun continued along the same trajectory, demonstrating even greater passion for science and a stronger dedication to translation efforts. His ardor for scientific pursuits led him to negotiate peace with the Byzantine Empire by stipulating the exchange of books. One such condition in his reconciliation with Michael III involved obtaining a famed library in Constantinople, which contained Ptolemy's astronomical masterpiece. Al-Ma'mun saw to its translation into Arabic and named it the "Almagest." (ابن النديم, 1964)

A pivotal indication of the era's scientific progress was the establishment of "The House of Wisdom" (Bait Al Hikma). While its origins are debated, the consensus leans towards Caliph Al-Ma'mun being credited with its creation. Scholars such as the British Orientalist O'Leary de Lacey affirm that Al-Ma'mun "founded a school and designated it The House of Wisdom, utilizing it as an institute to translate Greek scholars' works for dissemination among Arabs." (أوليري, 1981) This perspective finds support among numerous Western and Arab historians.

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Under Al-Ma'mun's guidance, the scope of translation expanded significantly within the House of Wisdom. (الرفاعي, 1927) It attracted a host of accomplished translators who emerged as leading figures in the field. Noteworthy among them were Hanin bin Ishaq, his son Ishaq bin Hanin bin Ishaq, Thabit bin Qurra, John bin Batriq, Abu Bishr Matta bin Yunus, and Yahya bin Adi, among others. These translators excelled in both Syriac and the scientific disciplines they were translating. The House of Wisdom became the foremost translation institution of its time, primarily focusing on the translation of Greek philosophy, Indian science, and Persian literature. Its significance was such that it can be accurately described as "the first university in history." (غنيمة, 1953) It operated as an organized translation hub, adhering to a scientific methodology in its pursuits.

The House of Wisdom was not the sole institution responsible for the dissemination of knowledge across Islamic lands. Numerous other schools and centers emerged within Islamic territories, each playing a crucial role in advancing translation efforts. Among these, the Toledo School, established in twelfth-century Andalusia, stood out as one of the most renowned and influential institutions, significantly contributing to the progress of translation.

These scholarly circles were instrumental in translating a diverse array of works encompassing various fields such as astronomy, philosophy, logic, medicine, chemistry, politics, literature, and more. These works originated from languages as varied as Persian, Indian, and Greek. Translation occurred either directly from these languages or via the intermediary use of Syriac. As a result of their efforts, translators and scholars garnered favor within the caliphs' courts and the residences of princes and dignitaries, earning generous recognition and support. (الرحمن عبد, 2005)

Importantly, the drive for translation and the dissemination of knowledge extended beyond the caliphs themselves. Ministers and notable figures also engaged in these pursuits, as evidenced by Rashid Al-Baramkeh's ministers. Moreover, certain individuals and families renowned for their scholarly achievements, like the offspring of Musa bin Shakir, invested significantly in seeking out ancient sciences, dedicating considerable resources to translation and book collection. (الواعي, 1988) Examples include the families of Jabril ibn Bukhtishu and Al-Fadl ibn Nobakht, among others. (هونكه, 1964)

Amidst this surge of translation, an unparalleled renaissance emerged among the Arabs. This phenomenon, shaped by the accumulation of translated works,

transformed translation from a mere transfer of knowledge into a catalyst for creation and production of knowledge. The Arab scientific renaissance, in particular, owes much of its success to the fervent commitment to knowledge transfer. It's plausible to assert, based on the history of translation, that a flourishing translation activity and heightened interest therein serve as indicators of a nation's scientific and civilizational advancement. Jaber Asfour underscores this connection, highlighting that "the history of any culture is complete only with the history of translation, and the value of any culture is only as high as the level of translation... We have learned from the developed nations that translation is one of the origins of progress." (2009, عصفور) Yet, it is essential to acknowledge that Arab Muslims, as substantiated throughout the annals of human knowledge, imparted to all of humanity the foundational importance of translation as a catalyst for progress, pre-dating what Asfour labels as "advanced nations."

The historical overview provided earlier is not intended to stand alone; it is concise by design. The comprehensive discussion of the translation movement in the Arab world, encompassing its origins, evolution, momentum, achievements, the multitude of translators, and the extensive corpus of works translated to and from Arabic, particularly during the Abbasid era, is a topic of immense proportions. Such an examination would require extensive writings, and it's accurate to state that this era marked an unparalleled revolution in the realm of translation, unmatched in history.

However, the primary goal of this historical presentation is not mere historiography or lamentation over past grandeur. Instead, it strives to establish that the translation activity within the Islamic-Arabic civilization wasn't a coincidental, fleeting phenomenon. It was a fundamental component embedded in the core of the Arab intellectual journey, playing an integral role within the ideological and political fabric of society. As such, it became a strong pillar driving scientific transformation and fostering a leap in civilization. Its influence extended not only across the Arab world but also had a foundational impact on the construction of Western civilization. It is a legitimate claim to assert that a substantial part of human heritage rests upon the foundation of translations carried out by Arabs during times of prosperity.

Yet, a paradox emerges persistently when discussing translation in the Arab world. The paradox revolves around the question of how the Arabs managed to achieve such a high level of proficiency in translation, pioneering the field and garnering global recognition for their capabilities. However, despite this rich

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practice, profound interest, and extensive experience in translation, a corresponding emphasis on theorizing about translation seems to be lacking. Although sporadic reflections exist, they have not culminated in a comprehensive and cohesive Arabic theory of translation.

This absence of systematic theorization, despite the Arabs possessing a wide array of practical experience, is indeed a perplexing phenomenon. This becomes even more pronounced when one considers that some other civilizations, with significantly less experience in translation and without formal institutions akin to the Bayt Al-Hikma, have managed to develop substantial theoretical frameworks for translation.

3. Al-Jahiz's theoretical reflections on translation:

In the realm of translation theory, there exists a tendency to predominantly focus on modern Western theories while overlooking the significant contributions made by scholars in other parts of the world. Al-Jahiz, a notable figure in Arabic intellectual history, emerges as a prime example.

Al-Jahiz (776-868) holds a distinguished place in the history of Arabic translation. Regarded as one of the foremost theorists in translation, his insights remain relevant in today's Arabic translation landscape. Al-Jahiz emphasized the importance of a translator possessing a profound understanding of the structure of language, the customs of the people, and how communication is comprehended among them. (Lazreg, 2015)

Al-Jahiz's discussions on translation, particularly within his work "Al-Hayaouane," (1965, الجاحظ) are a treasure trove of theoretical insights. A few passages, spanning four to five pages, could be considered among the most significant pieces of translation theorizing in Arabic heritage. They might even be some of the earliest theoretical thoughts on translation. The themes Al-Jahiz addressed regarding translation endure in contemporary Arabic translation circles. Intriguingly, upon thorough investigation of ancient Arabic writings, it becomes apparent that Al-Jahiz stands as a singular voice who delved into the realm of translation theory. He is the lone Arab scholar to articulate theories of translation, making him a unique and pioneering figure in this domain.

Al-Jahiz, a polymath and extraordinary Arab intellect, directed his attention to translation due to its prominence within Arab Islamic intellectual pursuits. He embarked on a discussion within which he explored various dimensions of translation. He touched upon characteristics, boundaries, types, qualities expected

of a translator, and other pertinent aspects of the translation process. In these brief paragraphs, Al-Jahiz exhibited his trademark intellectual acumen, conducting an insightful analysis of translation. He formulated reflections that essentially laid down a foundation of rules akin to an Arabic translation theory.

While Al-Jahiz did not provide a direct definition of translation within this text, his hints and expressions enable us to construct an understanding of his conceptualization of translation. He also shed light on the role of reception in translation—how a translated text is received and assimilated within the target language context. This underlines the remarkable depth and forward-looking perspective that Al-Jahiz brought to the realm of translation theory within the Arabic intellectual tradition.

Al-Jahiz is widely known not to have been a translator and his biographical accounts emphasize his mastery of only the Arabic language. However, he was a dedicated and enthusiastic reader of translated works. It is plausible that his insights and reflections on translation emerged from his extensive exposure to both proficient and inadequate translation endeavors. His perspectives may have been shaped by his engagement with the successes and failures evident in the translations he encountered, rather than originating solely from personal experiences in translation practice or from grappling with the intricacies and obstacles of the translation process.

4. Poetry translation and its reception

In his renowned work on translation, Al-Jahiz initially delves into the challenges associated with translating poetry. (1965, الجاحظ) He establishes that Arabic poetry is relatively young, spanning no more than two hundred years if one traces its origins. He asserts that poetry is inherently tied to the Arabic language and the cultural milieu of the Arabs. As a result, he contends that translating poetry is a formidable task that inevitably leads to the loss of its inherent qualities. (1965, الجاحظ)

Al-Jahiz maintains that poetry is fundamentally untranslatable; its rhyme, meter, and essence cannot be adequately captured in another language. He argues that when poetry is rendered into a different tongue, its rhythmic flow is disrupted, its aesthetic allure diminishes, and the wonder and admiration it evokes are compromised. Unlike prose, which can be more successfully translated, Al-Jahiz highlights the intrinsic challenges of preserving the unique features of poetry during the translation process.

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By addressing the complexity of translating poetry, Al-Jahiz can be recognized as one of the early scholars to engage with this intricate aspect of translation. He acknowledges the difficulties involved in retaining the style, rhythm, and rhymes of poetry when translated. (Lazreg, 2015)

Moreover, Al-Jahiz's observations underscore his deep consideration for the reader's experience. He emphasizes that when poetry is translated into a non-Arabic language and read by a non-Arab audience, many of its defining characteristics are lost. This loss hinders the reader's ability to appreciate the soul of the poetry, experience its pleasure, and savor its beauty. He notes that the translated poetry's meter is disrupted, leading to the erosion of the elements that evoke admiration. As a result, original prose, when compared to fragmented words from translated poetry, is more readily absorbed by the reader and is better received due to the coherence and fluidity that the translation process tends to disrupt.

Al-Jahiz's insights underline his awareness of the profound impact translation has on the reader's experience and its potential to alter the essence and essence of the original text, particularly in the case of poetry.

The notion of translating poetry has long been recognized as an extraordinarily challenging task, with many experts even deeming it impossible. John Ciardi, in fact, referred to translation as "the art of failure." Despite this daunting assessment, translators persist in their efforts, often facing varying degrees of success. The leap of faith inherent in literary translation is perhaps most rigorously tested in the realm of poetic translation. (Clifford, 2001)

Al-Jahiz's criticism of translated poetry centers on the skewed nature of the reception process, the absence of aesthetic resonance, and the divergent reader responses between reading poetry in its original language and reading it in translation. His stance against translating poetry, especially Arabic poetry, led him to overlook the poetry of other cultures. (1985, *وديعة*) He sought a substitute in the idioms and proverbs of the Arabs, firmly believing that the poetry of other nations lacked correspondence to the deeper meanings found in Arabic poetry. (*الجاحظ*, 1965)

Schleiermacher delved into the intricate relationship between the musical elements of language, such as rhythm and rhyme, and lexical meaning. He posited that the musical element of language, which manifests in rhythm and tonal variations, holds its own expressive value and carries significant meaning,

particularly in the realms of poetry and artistic prose. (Schleimacher, 2012)

Al-Jahiz's objections to translating poetry were rooted in the belief that poetry is inherently untranslatable. This was not only due to the inherent complexity of translating the artistry of poetry from one language into another but also because he contended that translating poetry resulted in distorting its essence, thereby negating the purpose of translation. This resonates with Robert Frost's assertion that "poetry is what becomes lost in translation." (Robinson, 2010), Consequently, the recipient or reader of translated poetry fails to reap the intended benefits. The desired aesthetic impact, nuanced rhetoric, and intricacies of rhythmic arrangement remain elusive in translation. Al-Jahiz posits that "the very essence of poetry resists straightforward translation, necessitating a creative and transformative approach." (Jakobson, 2012) In his view, even if the sagacious utterances and idiomatic expressions of Arab culture were translated, the rhythm alone would suffer alteration, leading to a distortion of the intrinsic charm. Furthermore, he posits that "the conveyed meanings in translated poetic verses would not introduce any novel insights not already articulated within the literary compositions of non-Arab societies." (1965, الجاحظ)

This assertion underscores his belief that the unique cultural and linguistic underpinnings of poetry are intrinsically bound to the original language, resisting seamless transference. Al-Jahiz accentuates the significance of rhythm and structural nuances as integral components in preserving the authentic essence of poetry during translation, rather than relying solely on semantic equivalence.

He contended that all poetic texts are inherently untranslatable due to the absence of complete equivalence. This means that accurate and entirely faithful reception in the target language is fundamentally unattainable.

that In summary, Al-Jahiz's perspective on translating poetry stems from his conviction the poetic essence expressed through rhythm, aesthetics, and deeper meanings is nearly impossible to capture accurately in another language. This complexity and the loss of crucial elements in translation lead him to view poetry as an art form that defies easy transfer from one linguistic context into another.

Al-Jahiz's perspective on poetry aligns with the idea that imagination and rhythm are the foundational elements of this art form. He emphasizes that while meanings may be universally understood, the true essence of poetry lies in crafting rhythm, selecting appropriate words, and refining phrasing. He likens poetry to a craft that intricately weaves words and to a form of painting through language. (131, 1965, الجاحظ)

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This notion resonates with the thoughts of Eugene Nida, who stated that while the content of a message can often be translated, the form is the specific artistic and linguistic feature that can be challenging to replicate accurately. (Nida, 2003)

According to Al-Jahiz, precise translation of meanings from the original text into another language requires a translator's knowledge to match that of the original author. He asserts that if this equivalence in knowledge isn't present, the translator will inevitably fall short in conveying the nuanced meanings and maintaining faithfulness to the original text. Al-Jahiz contends that a translator can't fully reexpress the sage's (the physician) ideas while preserving the distinct characteristics of the author's meanings and style unless the translator possesses a depth of knowledge akin to that of the author. He states « the translator can never reexpress what the sage said, keeping the same characteristics of his meanings, and the features of his style. He cannot accomplish these meanings and achieve the faithfulness. And how could he deliver the meanings, and inform them as properly, unless he is as knowledgeable and aware of the usages and interpretations of the meanings as the author of the book himself. " (,1965, الجاحظ, 76) - my translation -

Al-Jahiz's perspective could be seen as advocating for specialization in translation, implying that certain subjects should only be translated by experts in those fields. For instance, a text on medicine should be translated by a physician, and a legal text should be translated by a lawyer. Al-Jahiz suggests that the translator must not only be proficient in the languages involved but also possess expertise in the subject matter. This is particularly important when translating texts in fields like medicine or astrology, where deep understanding of the subject is essential.. (Lazreg, 2015, 13)

Towards the end of his arguments, Al-Jahiz implicitly expresses doubt about achieving exact replication through translation due to the inherent disparity between the translator and the original author. He highlights that even eminent translators like Ibnulbatrik, Ibn Naima, Ibn Kurra, and Ibnoul Muquafaa couldn't be equated to Aristotle, nor could Khalid be placed on a par with Plato. This serves as a rhetorical way to underline the inevitable differences that arise when translating a text, suggesting that absolute equivalence between the translated work and the original is highly challenging to achieve. (76,1965, الجاحظ)

Al-Jahiz's stance on translation highlights the essential importance of the translator's deep understanding of the author's thought, ideology, style, and nuances. This aligns with contemporary translation theory, which emphasizes the need for translators to thoroughly familiarize themselves with the writer's works, philosophy, and intentions before embarking on a translation project. Al-Jahiz's insistence on such thorough preparation stems from his commitment to ensuring that the translated message remains faithful to the original, undistorted, and complete, effectively conveying the author's intentions to the recipient.

5. Fidelity and betrayal in Al-Jahiz's theorizing:

Al-Jahiz's preoccupation with maintaining the message's integrity is also evidenced in his use of the concepts of "fidelity and betrayal in translation," concepts that predate the famous Italian phrase "translator is traitor." This further underscores his concern for accurately representing the author's ideas in translation.

In his pursuit of effective translation, Al-Jahiz sets forth strict guidelines for translators. He asserts that a translator must be equally proficient in both the source and target languages, to the point of mastering them both. This mastery extends to the field of knowledge in which the translation is taking place. Al-Jahiz seems to advocate for a high degree of specialization, indicating that the translator should not only be knowledgeable in the languages but also deeply immersed in the subject matter. This ensures that the translator's expressions, language use, and word choices resonate with the depth of their expertise and convey the intricate aspects of the topic being translated. (76 1965, الجاحظ)

By emphasizing the translator's expertise in both languages and the subject matter, Al-Jahiz sets a standard that aims to elevate the translator's role from being a mere conduit to becoming a skilled master of the translation process. This echoes the ongoing discussion in modern translation studies about the "translator's invisibility." A proficient translator, according to Al-Jahiz, should have such mastery over the languages and the topic that their translation is rendered with such proficiency that the recipient might even mistake it for the original author's work. (Lazreg, 2015 13)

Al-Jahiz's insights on translation, while rooted in his historical context, offer striking parallels to contemporary translation theories and practices. His emphasis on the translator's role as both a linguistic and subject matter expert underscores

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the nuanced and complex nature of the translation process.

Al-Jahiz's approach, to translation, unlike Lawrence Venuti (VENUTI, 1998) and Antoine Berman (Berman, 1999) appears to lean more towards the concept of "domestication" rather than "foreignization," which aligns with the idea of the translator's disappearance or invisibility in modern translation theory. He seems to advocate for making the translated text feel as natural as possible in the target language, allowing the reader to engage with it as if it were originally written in that language. This approach aims to ensure a seamless reception experience for the recipient, without any jarring or unfamiliar elements.

Al-Jahiz's concerns about bad translation leading to corruption of meaning and misinterpretation highlight his emphasis on the importance of accurately conveying the author's intentions. He questions the authenticity of translated books and the trustworthiness of translators who are not faithful to the original meaning. He states "How would I trust what is in a man's book who if ever he found the translator he would expose him in the spotlight, and repudiate his translation and discharge himself from his lies on him, and from spoiling his meanings with a poor translation." (19, 1965, الجاحظ) -my translation

This resonates with modern translation theory's focus on fidelity to the source text and the ethical responsibility of the translator. (Venuti, 1995) The issue of linguistic interference or language transfer that Al-Jahiz addresses is still relevant in contemporary translation studies. The phenomenon occurs when the features of one language influence another language in the mind of a bilingual or multilingual speaker, leading to unintended impacts on lexicon, syntax, and style.

6. Linguistic interference and reception:

Al-Jahiz's observation that languages inevitably influence each other when spoken by the same person reflects an understanding of the complexities and challenges that translators face, he states: "Whenever he speaks two languages, they inevitably influence each other; Because each attracts the other, takes from it, and opposes it, and how can he master both of them combined, like he can master only one of them.» (77, 1965, الجاحظ) - my translation -

l-Tawhidi's reference to the violation of characteristics of meanings during translation from one language to another underscores the potential difficulties in maintaining the nuances and intricacies of meaning across languages. This highlights the importance of a translator's sensitivity to the linguistic and cultural nuances of both the source and target languages: "the translation from the Greek

language into the Hebrew, from the Hebrew into the Syriac, and from the Syriac into Arabic has violated the characteristics of the meanings." (88, 1929, التوحيدى) - my translation –

Al-Jahiz's view on linguistic interference can be interpreted in two ways: as an inevitable consequence for those who are proficient in multiple languages, or as a potential obstacle that skilled translators must overcome to ensure accurate and effective translation. "And the two languages, if they meet in the same tongue (person), they will affect each other." (368, 1987, الجاحظ) -my translation –

His statement about the two languages affecting each other when they meet in the same person reinforces the idea that linguistic interference is a dynamic process that needs to be carefully managed to avoid compromising the quality of the translation. Overall, Al-Jahiz's thoughts on translation, language interference, and the translator's role offer insights that continue to resonate in modern translation theory. His emphasis on mastery of both languages, deep subject knowledge, and the need for accurate conveying of meaning all contribute to a nuanced understanding of translation's challenges and goals.

7. Translation and reception of religious texts:

Al-Jahiz's thoughts and observations on translation, particularly in relation to religious texts, highlight his deep understanding of the complexities and challenges inherent in the translation process. His emphasis on the importance of accuracy, fidelity, and understanding the nuances of both languages and cultures aligns with many key concerns addressed in modern translation theory.

His rigorous stance on the translation of religious texts reflects his recognition of the significant impact that errors or misinterpretations can have on the understanding and practice of religion. Al-Jahiz's assertion that error in religion is more detrimental than error in other fields underscores his recognition of the high stakes involved in translating religious content. (Lazreg, 2015, 14)

When it comes to translating the books of religion Al-Jahiz is stricter and less tolerant, he says: «This is our saying on the books of geometry, astrology, and arithmetic; how then if these books were books of religion and telling of ALLAH - glorified and exalted be He - about what is permissible and what is not permissible.» (78 1965, الجاحظ) my translation

Al-Jahiz's caution about the translator's potential lack of familiarity with religious tenets and the specific sciences related to religion mirrors contemporary concerns about the translator's competence and expertise in specialized domains. This also resonates with modern discussions about the importance of translators

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having not only language proficiency but also subject matter knowledge in specialized areas.

His focus on understanding the structure of language, as well as the habits and ways people communicate with each other, reflects his awareness of the socio-cultural aspects of translation. This aligns with modern translation theories that emphasize the cultural and contextual dimensions of translation, as well as the importance of maintaining the intended impact and reception of the original text.

In essence, Al-Jahiz's insights provide a historical foundation for many of the ongoing debates and considerations in translation theory. His exploration of issues related to accuracy, cultural adaptation, subject expertise, and the intricacies of religious content make his thoughts on translation a valuable contribution that continues to be relevant to the field of translation studies today.

8. The role of the recipient/reader:

Al-Jahiz's perspective on translation and its evaluation through the lens of the recipient is well-founded. His approach underscores the significance of the recipient's perspective and sheds light on the pivotal role he plays in the translation process. His engagement with translated works as a reader and his insights into how translations are received and understood highlight the fact that translation is fundamentally an act of communication.

By emphasizing the role of the recipient and the act of reception, Al-Jahiz implicitly recognizes that translation is not a one-way transfer of information but a complex interplay between the original text, the translator's choices, and the target audience's comprehension. His focus on receptivity as a key factor in evaluating the feasibility, and accuracy of translations resonates with contemporary views that place audience-centered communication at the core of successful translation.

Al-Jahiz's ability to elaborate on the theory of translation from a recipient's perspective without being a translator himself underscores the interconnectedness of the various participants in the translation process. It also reinforces the idea that translation is a collaborative endeavor involving the author, the translator, and the recipient, each contributing to the final interpretation and understanding of the text.

In this sense, translations are evaluated through the field of receptivity, this

concept that the study argues is well-supported by Al-Jahiz's insights. His contributions offer valuable insights into the intricate relationship between translation, communication, and the act of reception, emphasizing the dynamic and interactive nature of this process.

9. CONCLUSION

In conclusion, the intricate tapestry of translation in the Arab world reveals a profound interplay between the transmission of knowledge and the nuances of linguistic and cultural receptivity. Through a meticulous examination of historical developments, it becomes evident that translation acted as a conduit for communication and understanding among diverse civilizations. The early emergence of translation, even during the pre-Islamic era, underscores its essential role in facilitating socio-political relations and trade exchanges.

As the Umayyad and Abbasid dynasties came to the fore, translation began to evolve from sporadic individual efforts to a systematic movement, significantly fueled by the Abbasid rulers' ardour for knowledge. The veneration of scholarly pursuits culminated in remarkable institutions such as the renowned "House of Wisdom," which stands as a testament to the deep commitment to disseminating knowledge through translation. The prodigious efforts invested in translation, often referred to as "Arabization," concomitantly propelled the Arabic language to a paramount status, serving as the lingua franca for intellectual discourse during that epoch.

In this scholarly exploration, the writings of Al-Jahiz, a luminary of the Arab intellectual landscape, resonate profoundly. Despite not engaging directly in translation or mastering languages beyond Arabic, Al-Jahiz's astute observations and reflections on the translated works in various disciplines imbue him with a distinct vantage point. It becomes clear that the very foundations of translation; its value, feasibility, and precision are inextricably bound to the realm of reader reception. Al-Jahiz's incisive insights illuminate the dynamic relationship between translator and recipient, spotlighting the pivotal role that the act of reception plays in shaping the translation process.

Among the key tenets articulated by Al-Jahiz is the significance of the translator's dual mastery of source and target languages, coupled with a deep understanding of the subject matter being translated. This criterion resonates with

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contemporary translation theory that emphasizes the need for a translator to be proficient not only in language but also in the domain of the text's content. Al-Jahiz's juxtaposition of the challenges in translating poetry against prose underscores the intricate interplay between linguistic elements, rhythm, and meaning, matters that continue to vex modern translators.

A distinctive aspect of Al-Jahiz's outlook lies in his advocacy for "domestication" over "foreignization." He posits that translation should render the text in a manner that feels native to the target language, thereby ensuring seamless comprehension and engagement. His stance resonates with the modern concept of "translator's disappearance," wherein the translator strives to blend seamlessly with the original author's voice.

However, Al-Jahiz's cautionary tones are particularly pronounced when the realm of translation intersects with religious texts. His fervent belief in the primacy of accuracy and fidelity in conveying religious messages manifests in his stringent criteria for translators of sacred texts. His apprehensions highlight the enduring ethical and moral dimensions inherent in translation, where the translator shoulders a profound responsibility to transmit religious tenets without distortion or misinterpretation.

In a broader methodological context, Al-Jahiz's exposition of translation-related issues reverberates throughout history and into modern translation studies. His theoretical reflections, despite arising from a reader's perspective, provide a seminal framework for assessing translation's intricacies. Al-Jahiz's discourses, deeply rooted in the past, continue to resound in contemporary translation discourses, underscoring the enduring relevance of his insights in navigating the complex interplay between linguistic, cultural, and intellectual dimensions in the translation endeavor.

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