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Footnotes In Translating English Narrative Fiction into Arabic: A Criteria-Based Framework

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Abstract: This study proposes a criteria-based framework for the inclusion of footnotes in translating English narrative fiction into Arabic. While footnotes clarify cultural and stylistic subtleties, their use has often been subjective and inconsistent. The framework integrates three steps: (1) identification of foregrounded elements in fiction, (2) contextual interpretation of their textual function and narrative effect, and (3) pragmatic evaluation using Grice's Cooperative Principle to ensure footnotes are informative, truthful, relevant, and clear. The framework was applied through qualitative analysis of four excerpts from Wells's *The history of Mr. Polly* (1910) and Faulkner's *The sound and the fury* (1929). Findings demonstrate that footnotes fall into two categories: mandatory, required when meaning, textual function, or narrative effect cannot be recovered without external explanation, and optional, useful when meaning, function, or effect can be inferred but clarification enhances comprehension. By distinguishing between these categories, the study reduces subjectivity in translator decision-making and offers a reproducible method for handling stylistic and cultural challenges in literary translation. This contribution provides translators and translation students with a structured tool for balancing fidelity, clarity, and reader accessibility in Arabic literary translation.

Keywords: Footnotes in Translation, Paratext, English Narrative Fiction, Arabic Literary Translation, Translator Decision-Making Framework

1. Introduction

Translating meaning from one sociocultural setting into another is a demanding task that constantly challenges translators. One strategy often adopted to meet this challenge is the use of footnotes, which provide supplementary information to help readers grasp the source text more fully (Laver & Mason, 2018; Pellatt, 2013).

Previous research on footnotes in translation has tended to be descriptive, focusing on definitions, functions, and general guidelines for their use (Nida, 1969; Newmark, 1988; Miao & Salim, 2008; Buendía, 2013; Haroon, 2019; Frolova & Uglievata, 2020; Maniaco, 2021). While these contributions are valuable, they do not establish a clear analytical framework that can guide translators in deciding when a footnote is necessary and what it should contain.

This *gap* creates a professional *problem* for translators: without clear guidance, translators face uncertainty and inconsistency in applying footnotes. The present study *seeks to* address this

problem by proposing a structured, criteria-based framework for the inclusion of footnotes in literary translation. To guide this framework, the study poses two central *questions*: (1) Under what conditions should a translator use a footnote? (2) If a footnote is required, is it mandatory or optional and what content should be included in it?

The framework draws on (1) foregrounding in fiction (Leech & Short, 2007) to identify elements that carry significant textual function or narrative effect, (2) contextual interpretation to assess whether meaning can be inferred by the target reader, and (3) pragmatic evaluation using Grice's (1975) Cooperative Principle to ensure footnotes are informative, truthful, relevant, and clear. The innovation of the study lies in combining literary stylistics and pragmatics to provide a reproducible method for determining *when* footnotes are needed and *what* they should contain.

2. Literature review

Research on footnotes in translation has produced valuable insights into their definitions, functions, and role as paratexts; however, much of this work remains descriptive, offering general guidelines rather than structured criteria for translator decision-making. This section reviews the main contributions and highlights the gap that the present study seeks to address.

2.1 Definition of the translator's footnote

In the *Dictionary of Translation and Interpreting*, Laver and Mason (2018) define a footnote as additional information provided by the translator at the bottom of a page or at the end of a text to clarify aspects of the source text (ST) or to justify translation choices.

Footnotes are also discussed under the broader concept of *Paratext* introduced by Gérard Genette, the French literary theorist in his work *Introduction à l'architexte* (1979, as cited in Ukušová, 2021, p. 52). Paratext refers to the "verbal and non-verbal material surrounding and supporting a text and serving to present it in some way to its public" (Laver & Mason, 2018). Paratexts are subdivided into 'peritexts' and 'epitexts' to refer to two types of elements, those that appear in the text and around it, such as prefaces or the mentioning of the translators names (peritexts), and those that appear outside the translated work, for example, reviews of a certain translation or interviews with the author and/or the translator of the literary work.

Henry (2000, p. 230) describes the translator's footnote as an 'allographic paratext' in the sense that it is written by a third party. This third party is the translator, neither the author nor the character.

Pellatt (2013) subcategorizes paratexts in translation into: 1. External paratext (book cover design), 2. Verbal external paratext (book title and blurb), 3. Non-verbal internal paratext (layout, decorations, and illustrations), and 4. Verbal internal paratext (preface, foreword, introduction, chapter headings, chapter synopses, footnotes, endnotes, and postscript). Footnotes, according to this subcategorization, fall under verbal internal paratext.

These definitions and categorizations establish the translator's footnote as a verbal internal paratext authored by a third party, but they remain descriptive, leaving open the question of when and how such footnotes should be applied in practice.

2.2 Functions of the translator's footnotes

Scholars have identified multiple functions for footnotes in translation. Nida (1969, p. 159) emphasized their necessity in '*gloss translation*' which is as literal and meaningful

reproduction as possible of the original text's form and content. He contended that numerous footnotes are needed in this type of translation to make the text understandable.

Newmark (1988), in his book *A textbook of translation*, mentioned some cases where footnotes are needed. These cases are, but not limited to, the provision of additional explanation, interpretation of metaphor, and pointing out a mistake or a prejudice in the ST.

Miao and Salim (2008, p. 27) analyzed the footnotes in Fu Lei's French-into-Chinese translation of *Jean-Christophe* by Romain Rolland and concluded that Fu Lei included footnotes to share his personal expertise and thoughts with his readers. He did not just copy the original author's words, but rather aimed to convey the spirit and content of the work via the lens of literary criticism. Although his translation appears free-form, it closely resembles the original text. The function of footnotes here seems to be expanded in that the translator's voice and hence visibility is appreciated through his personal opinion and knowledge. A point raised by Sztorc (2020) who analyzed examples from Polish-into-English translations of literary works published within the last 30 years and noted that translators present their opinions, demonstrate emotional engagement, and relate personal tales. The footnote becomes a unique route for direct communication between the translator and the reader, sometimes even competing with the author (See also McCracken, 2016). Rasul and Mohammed (2023) also maintained that footnotes manifest the translator's voice. They explored the Kurdish translation of the novel *The bluest eye* by Toni Morrison and found that the translator added footnotes to explain the linguistic items and cultural terms to the target text (TT) reader.

Buendía (2013, p. 159) explained the function of what she calls "discursive notes". Discursive notes are characterized primarily by the translator's ability to "do something", or remark on and convey an opinion about a subject, in addition to simply "say something". The distinction between saying and acting is brought about by their illocutionary power; these paratextual signals also convey a certain judgement and/or attitude, thus their communication goal extends beyond just presenting factual information. By employing these annotations, the translator intentionally directs the reader's perception and bestows onto it a meaning that is acceptable in society.

Haroon (2019) explored the function of footnotes in the translation of the English novel *A thousand splendid suns* into Malay and concluded that the footnotes were definitions or literal translations of the foreign expression in the ST. The function is, therefore, informative or explanatory in nature.

Frolova and Uglievata (2020) viewed the function of footnotes in terms of their semantic-cognitive characteristics. The first type contains footnotes that increase the reader's encyclopedic knowledge, i.e., those that explain material that the reader may be unfamiliar with and relate to culturally universal knowledge (historical facts, scientific notions, political events). The second category includes footnotes necessary due to differences in cultural knowledge between the original author and the translation's reader, i.e., those that provide information understandable to the English-speaking reader but unfamiliar to a reader of another linguistic culture (geographical notions, historical figures, idioms). In addition to these two primary groups, a third group comprises footnotes, which do not explain the text's parts but do give supplementary information about certain intertextual features.

Maniaco (2021) stated that he used footnoting as a strategy to translate the multiple allusions in multiple languages in *Mestri di mont*, the memoir of Tito Maniaco, the Italian/Friulian

author. Footnotes were used to provide information and insights, thereby improving the reading experience.

In sum, scholars have identified functions of footnotes ranging from explanatory and informative to discursive and communicative. They can clarify meaning, convey cultural context, and even project the translator's personal voice. However, the diversity of functions also underscores the lack of consensus on when to apply footnotes, a point that reinforces the need for a systematic framework.

2.3 Implied guidelines for footnote use in previous studies

Considering footnotes from the perspective of the translator's agency may serve to give us a hint on what can be envisaged as guidelines for the use of footnotes. Consider these quotes:

They do not reveal what the audience knew or did not know; rather, they tell us what the *translators* believed their audience did not know but *they* are considered important for them to know. Footnotes thus provide a window into translators' perceptions of their audience and their views of their own task and role. (Paloposki, 2010, p. 90)

It is worth noting that Paloposki (2010) reached this conclusion after analyzing the footnotes in a corpus of 98 books of translated fiction published in Finland at the turn of the twentieth century.

Taking examples from the 18th and 19th Spanish translations of English novels, Buendía (2013, p. 156) is of the opinion that

[W]ithin general guidelines set by the reception context, the translator is free to choose when and where to intervene; he or she tends to complete the text, fill in gaps or supply details and includes responses to what are considered appropriate points. The translator must know what the rational thing to do is in a specific context, with a specific goal, and within the particular circumstances surrounding the text's production and reception. These circumstances will depend on several factors, such as the cultural distance between the source text and the target text, the requirements of the target text's potential reader, the type of text, the expected degree of translator's visibility, ideology, the context, etc.

The guideline is, therefore, a matter of the translators' decision or discretion. It seems that the decision is left to the translator because the translator is in an advantageous position, being bilingual and bicultural, who has access to both languages and cultures, not to mention the ST, and so can decide where footnotes are needed. Buendía (2013, p. 156), however, mentions some guidelines, namely, the cultural distance between the two languages in question, the potential reader's requirements, text type, and so on.

In short, while Paloposki and Buendía highlight factors such as translators' perceptions of their audience, cultural distance, and text type, these remain implicit guidelines rather than explicit criteria. The absence of a reproducible framework leaves footnote use largely to individual judgment, underscoring the need for the present study's systematic approach.

2.4 Assessment of footnotes' effectiveness

Ukušová (2021) represents one of the few attempts to evaluate footnotes systematically. She proposed three dimensions for assessing their effectiveness: the quantity and size of footnotes,

their function (informative or performative), and their ability to explain challenging expressions in the ST. In her comparative study of two Slovak translations of *Anne of green gables*, she demonstrated that translators adopted different strategies, reflecting diverse opinions about the usefulness of footnotes. She also noted that external factors such as text type, target audience, literary tradition, and editorial policy influence footnote use.

Her contribution is significant because it moves beyond description toward evaluation. However, her criteria remain retrospective, assessing footnotes after they have been used rather than guiding translators on when and how to include them. This limitation sets the stage for the present study, which proposes a framework designed not only to evaluate but also to systematically direct translator decision-making.

2.5 The Proposed Framework

This study introduces a framework for the use of footnotes in narrative fiction in terms of *when* and *how*, in order to guide the translator's decision-making process and make it less subjective. The following discussion presents the framework step by step.

Step 1: Identification of foregrounded elements

Leech and Short (2007, pp. 126–148) envisioned fiction as a “mock reality” and identified five notions that help create the “realistic illusion”: credibility, verisimilitude, authenticity, objectivity, and vividness. *Verisimilitude* refers to the illusion of realism in writing, when readers feel as if they are in the presence of genuine objects, events, people, and locations, thanks to the details provided by the author to complete the “model of reality.” *Credibility* is the other aspect of realism, which is connected with verisimilitude. It is the plausibility of fiction as a ‘potential reality’ that is determined by applying real-world expectations and inferences to fictitious events. Verisimilitude and credibility work together to make fiction credible, as they confirm its potential to be true, i.e., *Authenticity*. The portrayal of speech in fiction may also play a specific function in producing a distinct kind of authenticity. Some of the disfluencies of real spontaneous speech, such as hesitations, pauses, and fillers, are introduced into the characters' speech, together with dialectal features to suggest something of the characters' state of mind and social background, to name but a few. Literary fiction authors do not strive to faithfully represent everyday conversational features, “...the principles of selection and concentration are generally at work to give fictional dialogue a quality quite different from that of real speech” (Page, 1973, p. 16). The last two notions are *Objectivity* and *Vividness*. They are related to whether the author gives prominence to objective physical details (i.e., objectivity) or to subjective sensory details (vividness).

These notions highlight textual details that make fiction appear real. A work of fiction may be viewed as a portrait, with certain elements forming the background while others are featured in the foreground. Translators should focus on foregrounded elements, stylistic deviations, dialectal speech, or culturally loaded references because they carry a significant narrative effect.

Step 2: Contextual and interpretive analysis

Foregrounded elements must then be interpreted within their socio-cultural and literary context. The translator considers whether the element's function can be inferred by the target reader or whether its omission would distort interpretation. This step reframes “author's intention” as *textual function* or *narrative effect*, emphasizing the translator's role in reconstructing meaning rather than claiming definitive authorial intent.

Step 3: Pragmatic evaluation (Grice's Cooperative Principle)

Finally, Grice's (1975) maxims (Quantity, Quality, Relation, Manner) guide the formulation of footnotes. Footnotes must be informative but not excessive (Quantity), truthful and evidence-based (Quality), relevant to the text's function (Relevance), and expressed clearly and concisely (Manner).

The framework anticipates two possible outcomes when evaluating foregrounded elements:

- Mandatory footnotes – indispensable when meaning, function, or effect are otherwise unrecoverable, while optional footnotes are supplementary, added when meaning, function, or effect are accessible but further detail enriches the reader's understanding.
- Optional footnotes – supplementary, added when meaning, function, or effect are accessible but further detail enriches the reader's understanding.

The criteria are operationalized through the following structured decision table, which integrates guiding questions, principles, and outcomes:

Table 1. Integrated criteria-based framework for footnote use

Step	Guiding question	Principle	Outcome
1. Foregrounding	Is the element stylistically or culturally prominent?	Literary stylistics (Leech & Short, 2007).	If yes → Step 2
2. Contextual Analysis	Would omission risk loss of meaning or narrative effect?	Textual function and narrative effect (not speculative authorial intent).	If yes → Step 3
3. Pragmatic Evaluation	Can meaning be inferred without a footnote?	Grice's Cooperative Principle (Quantity, Quality, Relation, Manner).	No → Mandatory footnote; Yes → Optional footnote

It is worth noting that some researchers applied the Gricean maxims to judge the quality of the TT (Abualadas, 2020), or reformulated them to justify the translator's decision to violate faithfulness to the ST in favour of the target reader (Sanatifar & Kenevisi, 2017) or to judge the quality of the TT (Al-Zubaydy, 2024). But they did not use these maxims as criteria within a broader analytical framework to guide the translator's inclusion of footnotes.

3. Methodology

3.1 Research design

The present study adopts a qualitative, criteria-based analytical approach. Its purpose is to propose and preliminarily apply a framework for the use of footnotes in the translation of English narrative fiction into Arabic. The findings are therefore framed as an *exploratory application* rather than a definitive validation of the framework. The study emphasizes interpretive analysis and procedural clarity, aiming to demonstrate the framework's potential rather than to claim universal generalizability.

3.2 Data selection

The data consist of four excerpts drawn from H. G. Wells's *The History of Mr. Polly* (1910) and William Faulkner's *The Sound and the Fury* (1929). These passages were selected purposively because they represent diverse challenges in literary translation, including:

- stylistic deviation and linguistic play,
- dialectal or distorted speech,

- stream of consciousness narration,
- culturally loaded or ambiguous references.

This variety makes them suitable for testing the framework's applicability across different types of foregrounded elements. The aim was not to exhaustively cover the texts but to demonstrate the framework's adaptability through representative cases, allowing for detailed and reproducible analysis.

3.3 Analytical framework

The analysis is guided by the three-step framework developed in this study:

1. Identification of foregrounded elements (stylistic deviation, linguistic creativity, narrative emphasis).
2. Contextual and interpretive analysis (examining socio-cultural and literary context to assess accessibility for the target reader).
3. Pragmatic evaluation using Grice's Cooperative Principle (ensuring footnotes are informative, truthful, relevant, and clear).

3.4 Data analysis procedure

The analysis of each excerpt follows a consistent interpretive sequence:

1. Identify the foregrounded element in the source text.
2. Interpret its textual function and narrative effect in context.
3. Assess potential loss or ambiguity in translation into Arabic.
4. Decide whether a footnote is mandatory or optional.
5. Formulate footnote content in line with Grice's maxims (Quantity, Quality, Relation, Manner).

This standardized procedure ensures consistency across all examples and reduces reliance on individual interpretation.

3.5 Relation to previous work and limitations

The excerpts were originally identified in the researcher's doctoral study, *Translation criticism: A model for assessing the translation of narrative fictional texts* (Al-Rubai'i, 1996; Al-Rubai'i, 2005). In that earlier work, they served to illustrate a model for translation criticism. In the present study, however, they are re-employed for a different purpose: to test the proposed criteria-based framework for footnote use. This distinction clarifies the novelty of the current research, which shifts from general translation criticism to the specific issue of footnote decision-making.

Given its qualitative and interpretive nature, the study acknowledges certain limitations. The analysis is based on a small number of excerpts, selected purposively to illustrate diverse translation challenges. While this variety demonstrates the framework's applicability, the findings remain preliminary and cannot be generalized statistically. Future research should expand the dataset, apply the framework to additional genres, and incorporate inter-rater validation to strengthen reliability.

4. Data analysis

Building on the framework outlined in Section 2.5 and applied systematically in the methodology, this section presents the detailed analysis of the selected excerpts. The aim is to move from procedural demonstration to interpretive outcomes, showing how foregrounded elements function within their narrative contexts and how they challenge translation into Arabic. Each excerpt is examined through the same evaluative sequence—identification, contextual interpretation, assessment of reproducibility, classification of footnote type, and

provision of revised translation with explanatory footnote. By applying this procedure consistently, the analysis highlights recurring stylistic strategies such as phonological play, distorted speech, fragmented narration, and typographical deviation, and demonstrates how footnotes serve as a mediating device to preserve narrative function and reader comprehension across languages.

Excerpt 1: The history of Mr. Polly (Mr. Polly opening passage)

“Hole!” said Mr. Polly, and then, for a change, and with greatly increased emphasis: “‘Ole!” He paused, and then broke out with one of his private and peculiar idioms. “Oh! *Beastly Silly Wheeze* of a hole!” (Wells, 1910, p.18)

1. Highlighted element

- Phonological play on Hole and ‘*Olé*, reinforced by italics and capitalization, reveals a series of homophones: Hole (Whole) and ‘*Ole* (*All*).
- Mr. Polly’s linguistic creativity foregrounds his distorted perception of reality.

2. Contextual function

- Mr. Polly curses the world at the start of the narrative, linking his dyspepsia to his worldview.
- His rage against the outside world reflects his lack of self-examination.
- Wells employs dyspepsia as a metaphor for England’s social disease (Parrinder, 1997).
- The phrase “*Beastly Silly Wheeze* of a hole!” shows his vernacular style, emphasizing humor and social critique.

3. Reproducibility in Arabic

- Direct translation into Arabic loses the evaluative thread created by the homophones (Hole → Whole → ‘*Ole* → *All*).
- Without explanation, the reader cannot recover the intended metaphor that “life as a whole is a hole.”

4. Footnote type

- Mandatory footnote: the phonological chain and its metaphorical meaning cannot be inferred from the Arabic text alone.

5. Translation and footnote content

This translation is an improved version of Ali’s (Wells, 1990, p. 6) rendering of the novel.

Arabic translation (revised):

قال السيد بوللي: "جر!" ثم نطق الكلمة بالكنتة المحلية رغبة في التعبير، وهو يشدد عليها تشديداً متعاضماً: "جووحر!" توقف، ثم انفجر مردداً عبارة من عباراته الخاصة والغريبة: "أه! جر! مهزلة سخيفة كريهة!"

Proposed footnote:

استخدم الكاتب كلمة hole (جر) التي تشبه في لفظها كلمة whole (كل). ثم أعاد استخدامها بعد حذف الحرف الأول (ole) فأصبحت تشبه في لفظها all (كل). لقد خلق الكاتب سلسلة من التضمينات الصوتية:
hole → whole → 'ole → all
وكانه يريد أن يقول إن الحياة برمتها جر. (المترجمة)

Excerpt 2: The history of Mr. Polly (Wedding scene)

The officiating clergy sighed deeply, began, and married them wearily and without any hitch. “D’blovéd we gath’d gether sighto’ Gard ’n face this con’ gation join gather Man Woom Ho Mat-mony whichis on’bl state stooted by Gard in times mans in’cency....”

Mr. Polly’s thoughts wandered wide and far and once again something like a cold hand touched his heart, and he saw a sweet face in sunshine under the shadow of trees. Someone was nudging him. It was Johnson’s finger diverting his eyes to the crucial place in the Prayer Book to which they had come.

“Wilthou lover, comfer, oner keeper sickness and health...”

“Say, ‘I will.’”

Mr. Polly moistened his lips. “I will,” he said hoarsely.

Miriam, nearly inaudibly, answered some similar demand.

Then the clergyman said: “who gi’s Mom mad’t this man?”

“Well, *I’m* doing that,” said Mr. Voules in a refreshingly full voice, and looking round the church.

“Pete arf me,” said the clergyman to Mr. Polly. “Take thee Mirum wed wife —”

“Take thee Mi’m wed wife,” said Mr. Polly.

“Have hold this day ford.”

“Have hold this day ford.”

“Betworse, richypoo’.”

“Bet worse, richypoo’....”

Then came Miriam’s turn.

“Lego hands,” said the clergyman, “gothering? No! On book. So! Here! Pete aft me ‘Wis ring Ivy wed.’

“Wis ring Ivy wed —”

So it went on, blurred and hurried, like the momentary vision of a very beautiful thing seen through the smoke of a passing train....

“Now my boy,” said Mr. Voules at last, gripping Mr. Polly’s elbow tightly, “you’ve got to sign the registry and there you are! Done!” (Wells, 1910, pp. 128-129)

1. Highlighted element

- Distorted, dialectal speech of the officiating clergyman.
- Foregrounds linguistic deviation: elision (*gath’d* for *gathered*), assimilation (*lover* for *love her*), subtraction of letters, change of sound, and intrusion (*Ho* for *Holy*, *gi’s* for *giveth*, and *arf* for *after*), and omission of grammatical elements (*are* and *here*: “*we (are) gathe’d gether (here)*” and (*to, this, and, and in*: “*(to) join gather (this) Man (and this) Woom (in) Ho Mat-many.*”
- The speech is hurried, blurred, and fragmented.

2. Contextual function

- The clergyman’s distorted delivery reflects his weariness and lack of solemnity.
- Narrative effect: the ceremony becomes mechanical, rushed, and dream-like, undermining its sacredness.
- Mr. Polly’s helplessness is emphasized by his imitation of the clergyman’s delivery style.
- The clergyman, Mr. Voules, and Johnson symbolize societal forces that overwhelm Mr. Polly.

3. Reproducibility in Arabic

- Literal translation cannot reproduce the phonological distortions or omissions.
- Without explanation, the reader may miss the comic effect and social critique conveyed by the distorted speech.

4. Footnote type

- Mandatory footnote: the stylistic distortions are central to the narrative effect and cannot be inferred from the Arabic text alone.

5. Translation and footnote content

This translation is an improved version of Ali’s (Wells, 1990, pp. 101–102) rendering of the novel.

Arabic translation (revised):

تنهد القس المقدس تنهداً عميقاً، وبدأ، وعقد زواجهما بسأم وبلا توقف.

"أيها الأحباء، اجتمعنا هنا امام الله، وامام هذا الجمع لنربط بين هذا الرجل وهذه المرأة برباط الزواج المقدس الذي يعد منزلة جلية شرعها الله حينما خلق الإنسان..."

سرحت أفكار السيد بوللي في كل مكان، ومرة أخرى مس قلبه شي كاليد الباردة، ورأى وجهاً جميلاً في ضياء الشمس تحت ظلال الأشجار. شخص ما كان يمسح رقيقاً. إنه إصبع جونسن يحول عينيه الى المقطع الحاسم في كتاب الصلاة الذي جاؤوا من أجله.

"هل ستحبها، تعينها، تحترمها، تعولها في المرض وفي الصحة..."

"قل 'سأفعل' "

بلل السيد بوللي شفتيه، وقال بصوت فيه بحة: "سأفعل".

أجابت مريم بصوت لا يكاد يسمع على طلب مماثل بعض الشيء.

ثم قال القس: "من ولي هذه المرأة الذي سيزوجها هذا الرجل؟"

قال السيد فولس بصوت خفيض رخم يشعره بالراحة والتجدد، وكان ينظر حوله في الكنيسة: "انا وليها".

قال القس للسيد بوللي: "ردد بعدي 'اتخذك يامريم زوجة' "

قال السيد بوللي: "اتخذك يامريم زوجة".

"اعيش معك في زواج طاهر منذ الآن والى الأبد".

"اعيش معك في زواج طاهر منذ الآن والى الأبد".

وهكذا استمر الأمر، مشوشاً سريعاً، كطيف خاطف لشيء جميل جداً يرى من خلال دخان قطار عابر...

قال السيد فولس أخيراً، قابضاً على مرفق السيد بوللي بحكام: "والآن يابني، عليك أن توقع في سجل الزواج وهكذا! ينتهي كل شيء! " ¹

Proposed footnote:|

¹صاغ ويلز كلام القس والسيد بوللي صياغة مميزة تتعذر ترجمتها إلى العربية، مثل حذف المقطع الأول أو الأوسط أو الأخير للكلمة، أو تغيير صوت الكلمة، أو إدخال صوت آخر فيها، أو حذف الأدوات النحوية. لجأ ويلز إلى هذه الصياغة الخاصة ليُوحي للقارئ أن مراسم الزواج كانت سريعة ومشوشة حقاً. علاوة على ذلك، جعل ويلز السيد بوللي يحاكي طريقة القس في الإلقاء، مما يبرز أن القس يمثل رمزاً من رموز القوة الاجتماعية التي لم يستطع السيد بوللي مقاومتها.

Excerpt 3: The sound and the fury (Fragmented narration)

THROUGH THE FENCE, BETWEEN the curling flower spaces, I could see them hitting. They were coming toward where the flag was and I went along the fence. Luster was hunting in the grass by the flower tree. They took the flag out, and they were hitting. Then they put the flag back and they went to the table, and he hit and the other hit. Then they went on, and I went along the fence. Luster came away from the flower tree and we went along the fence and the they stopped and we stopped and I looked through the fence while Luster was hunting in the grass.

"Here, caddie." He hit. They went away across the pasture. I held to the fence and watched them going away. (Faulkner, 1929, p.1)

This excerpt has two highlighted elements:

The First element:

1. Highlighted element

- Use of transitive verbs intransitively (*hit, throw* without objects).
- Short declarative sentences linked by "and."
- Heavy repetition of lexical items (e.g., *hit, fence, flag*).
- Anonymous actors (*they, them, he, the other*).
- Limited vocabulary and cohesion.

2. Contextual function

- Reflects Benjy's limited perception of causation: actions occur without goals.
- Creates a sense of timelessness and monotony.
- Denies coherence by withholding referents, immersing the reader in Benjy's disoriented consciousness.
- Stylistic choices mirror Benjy's cognitive disability and restricted worldview.

3. Reproducibility in Arabic

- Repetition, short sentences, and anonymous pronouns can be reproduced in Arabic.
- The stylistic effect (limited causation, incoherence) is perceptible, but may not be immediately clear to readers without explanation.
- The translator's note (المتريجة) already highlights these features: transitive verbs without objects, short fragmented sentences, repeated words, few conjunctions.

4. Footnote type

- Optional footnote: Fragmented narration can be conveyed directly in Arabic.
- However, a footnote may help clarify that Faulkner deliberately crafted Benjy's language to reflect his restricted worldview, ensuring readers understand the stylistic function.

5. Translation and footnote content

This translation is an improved version of Jabra's (Faulkner, 1979, pp. 47–48) rendering of the novel.

Arabic translation (revised):

من خلال السياج، بين فسحات الزهور الملتفة، تمكنت من رؤيتهم يضربون. كانوا يتجهون الى حيث كان العلم ومشيت بمحاذاة السياج. كان لستر يبحث في العشب قرب شجرة الورد. رفعوا العلم من مكانه، وراحوا يضربون. ثم اعدوا العلم الى مكانه وذهبوا الى المرتفع، وضرب احدهم وضرب الآخر. ثم استمروا، ومشيت بمحاذاة السياج. جاء لستر من شجرة الورد ومشينا بمحاذاة السياج، وتوقفوا وتوقفنا ونظرت من خلال السياج بينما كان لستر يبحث في العشب.

"هنا ياكادي". ضرب. ابتعدوا عبر المرعى. تمسكت بالسياج وجعلت ارقبيهم وهم يبتعدون¹.

Proposed footnote:

اصاغ فوكنر لغة هذا الفصل الذي يقصه بنجي المعتوه صياغة تتناسب مع نظريته المحدودة للعالم. استخدم أفعالاً متعدية دون مفاعيلها، وجمالاً قصيرة متقطعة، وكلمات مكررة، وعدداً قليلاً من أدوات الربط، كما لجأ إلى ضمائر غامضة مثل "هم" و"هو" و"الآخر" من غير أن يوضح من المقصود بها، ليعكس بذلك افتقاره إلى الإحساس بالسببية وتشتت إدراكه.

The Second element:

1. Highlighted element

- The golfer's cry "caddie" overlaps with Benjy's rigid association of the word with his sister *Caddy*.
- Foregrounds Benjy's cognitive disability: a single sign corresponds to a single referent.
- The narration is fragmented, repetitive, and temporally disoriented.

2. Contextual function

- The textual function is to immerse the reader in Benjy's consciousness, where time is collapsed into the present moment.
- Narrative effect: disorientation, innocence, and tragic rigidity.
- As critics note (Vickery, 1968; Cowan, 1968; Lowrey, 1968), Benjy cannot distinguish between 1910 (when *Caddy* left) and 1928 (when he hears "caddie" on the golf course).

3. Reproducibility in Arabic

- Literal translation preserves the surface meaning but obscures the pun between *caddie* (golf assistant) and *Caddy* (sister).
- Without explanation, the reader cannot recover the symbolic overlap or the temporal disorientation.

4. Footnote type

- Mandatory footnote: the pun and its narrative significance cannot be inferred from the Arabic text alone.

5. Translation and footnote content

This translation is an improved version of Jabra's (Faulkner, 1979, pp. 47–48) rendering of the novel.

Arabic translation (revised):

من خلال السياج، بين فسحات الزهور الملتفة، تمكنت من رؤيتهم يضربون. كانوا يتجهون الى حيث كان العلم ومشيت بمحاذاة السياج. كان لستر يبحث في العشب قرب شجرة الورد. رفعوا العلم من مكانه، وراحوا يضربون. ثم اعدوا العلم الى مكانه وذهبوا الى المرتفع، وضرب احدهم وضرب الآخر. ثم استمروا، ومشيت بمحاذاة السياج. جاء لستر من شجرة الورد ومشينا بمحاذاة السياج، وتوقفوا وتوقفنا ونظرت من خلال السياج بينما كان لستر يبحث في العشب.
"هنا ياكادي"¹. ضرب. ابتعدوا عبر المرعى. تمسكت بالسياج وجعلت ارقبهم وهم يبتعدون.

Proposed footnote:

¹(كادي) هو الشخص الذي يُستأجر لحمل مضارب الغولف للاعبين. لكن بنجي، الذي يعني الوقت له هذه اللحظة دائماً، حينما سمع الكلمة في عام 1928 اعتقد أن لاعب الغولف يبحث أيضاً عن أخته "كادي" التي فقدتها في عام 1910. (المترجمة)

Excerpt 4: The sound and the fury (Quentin's stream of consciousness)

... and he did you try to make her do it and i i was afraid to i was afraid she might then it would have done any good but if i could tell you we did it would have been so and then the others wouldnt be so and then the world would roar away and he and now this other you are not lying now either but you are still blind to what is in in yourself ...

(Faulkner, 1929, p.138)

1. Highlighted element

- Stream-of-consciousness narration with fragmented syntax, lack of punctuation, and omission of capitalization for the first-person singular *I*.
- Foregrounds Quentin's deteriorating mental state.

2. Contextual function

- Quentin's narrative reflects his psychological collapse due to family troubles.
- The omission of capital *I* is purposeful: it signals his detachment from life and loss of identity.
- As Faulkner (Cowan, 1968, p. 20) notes, Quentin is "already out of life, and those things that were important in life don't mean anything to him anymore."
- Narrative effect: conveys despair, disorientation, and alienation.

3. Reproducibility in Arabic

- Literal translation into Arabic preserves the fragmented style but cannot reproduce the visual effect of lowercase *i*.
- Without explanation, the reader may miss the symbolic meaning of the typographical choice.

4. Footnote type

- Mandatory footnote: the lowercase *i* is a deliberate stylistic device that requires explanation.

5. Translation and footnote content

This translation is Jabra's (Faulkner, 1979, p. 232) rendering of the novel.

Arabic translation:

... وهو هل حاولت أن تجعلها وأنا! لقد خشيت ذلك لقد خشيت أن ترضخ وعندها ما كان يرجى منها أي خير ولكن لو استطعت أن أقول لك إننا فعلناها لكان الأمر كذلك ولما كان الآخرون عندئذ كذلك الجزء فيروح العالم بهديره عنا وهو وهذا الآخر إنك لست تكذب الآن أيضاً غير أنك ما زلت أعمى لا تبصر ما في نفسك...

Proposed footnote:

اجعل فوكنر كونتن يكتب الضمير *I* (الذي يعني "أنا" في العربية، ويكتب عادة بحرف كبير بالإنجليزية) بحرف صغير *i*، لأن الأشياء التي كانت مهمة في الحياة لم تعد تعني له شيئاً بعد الآن. هذا الأسلوب يعكس انهياره النفسي وفقدانه للهوية.

The following section interprets these results comparatively and highlights their implications for translation decision-making.

5. Discussion and findings

The analysis of the four excerpts demonstrates that applying the proposed framework enables the systematic identification of foregrounded elements and their relevance to translation decision-making. It also shows that the decision to include footnotes depends not only on the presence of foregrounding, but also on whether the textual function can be recovered during the reading process of the TT.

In *The History of Mr. Polly*, the opening passage foregrounds phonological play through homophones (*hole* (whole) and *'ole* (all)). This evaluative chain cannot be recovered in Arabic without external explanation; therefore, the framework classifies the footnote as mandatory. The wedding scene foregrounds distorted clerical speech, where phonological and syntactic deviations are central to the narrative effect. Although the TT conveys the propositional content coherently, it loses the stylistic fragmentation that reflects the hurried and chaotic nature of the ceremony. Here again, the framework identifies the need for a mandatory footnote to restore the ST's pragmatic and stylistic functions.

In *The Sound and the Fury*, Benjy's fragmented narration foregrounds transitive verbs used intransitively, anonymous pronouns, and heavy repetition. These features can be reproduced in Arabic, and their stylistic function may be inferred by readers as the narrative unfolds. The framework, therefore, classifies this case as an optional footnote, useful for clarification but not essential. However, the pun on "caddie/Caddy" functions as the sole lexical trigger for Benjy's perception of the situation. Without explanation, the TT reader cannot access the association between "caddie" and "Caddy," which is central to the character's cognitive world. This case is accordingly classified as a mandatory footnote.

Finally, Quentin's stream of consciousness foregrounds typographical deviation in the lowercase *i*. This deliberate stylistic choice signals his psychological collapse and detachment from identity. While the fragmented syntax can be reproduced in Arabic, the typographical effect cannot be conveyed without explanation. The framework, therefore, classifies this case as a mandatory footnote.

Taken together, these cases confirm that foregrounded elements do not automatically require footnotes. The framework distinguishes between mandatory footnotes and optional footnotes. The former are required when the meaning, textual function, or narrative effect cannot be reconstructed without external explanation, whereas the latter are useful when meaning, function, or effect can generally be inferred through continued reading of the TT, but additional clarification enhances comprehension. The application of Grice's Cooperative Principle further ensures that footnote content remains informative, truthful, relevant, and clear. Unlike previous descriptive studies, this framework operationalizes literary stylistics and pragmatics into a reproducible tool for translator decision-making, reducing subjectivity and enhancing transparency.

6. Conclusion

This study has introduced a criteria-based framework for translator decision-making on footnote use in narrative fiction. By integrating literary stylistics, contextual interpretation, and Grice's pragmatic maxims, the framework provides a reproducible method for determining when footnotes are necessary and how to formulate them. The application of the framework to excerpts from Wells's *The History of Mr. Polly* and Faulkner's *The Sound and the Fury* demonstrated its practical value. It enabled a clear distinction between footnotes that are mandatory, required when meaning, textual function, or narrative effect cannot be recovered

without external explanation, and optional, useful when meaning, function, or effect can be inferred, but clarification enhances comprehension. Although the study examined only four excerpts, these passages were purposively selected to represent diverse foregrounding phenomena, including stylistic deviation, dialectal speech, stream-of-consciousness narration, and culturally loaded references. This focused approach ensured depth of analysis and demonstrated the framework's adaptability across different types of translation challenges. Beyond these case studies, the framework offers broader implications for translation practice. It reduces subjectivity in translator choices, promotes consistency across texts, and strengthens the transparency of translation decisions. Future research may expand the dataset to test the framework across larger corpora and additional genres, further refining its criteria and extending its applicability. In sum, the study provides a structured tool for translators and scholars, shifting footnote use from a discretionary practice to a systematic methodology.

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