

## The Translatability of Prosody: A case study of English/Arabic Poetry

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### Abstract:

This paper investigates the translatability of prosody by showing the difficulty of translating the prosodic features from English into Arabic, illustrated with English/ Arabic examples. The current study is intended to show that prosody presents a challenge for translators in translating the poetic text from English into Arabic due to the great differences between the two linguistic systems. The dictionary definition of rhythm is the regular occurrence of sounds, that is the *sonic pattern* created by successive variously intonated units of speech, mainly by using syllables usually stressed and unstressed in a certain order, in European languages, such as English, French and German. In Arabic we have units of consonants and vowels, rather than syllables, with less consideration for intonation. So, while we have in English a line consisting of a number of successive syllables creating units of one unstressed followed a stressed syllable, in Arabic we have units consisting of one, two, or more consonants followed by a vowel. This paper concludes that failure to preserve prosodic features such as rhythm, meter, and rhyme

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is due to the employed strategy that the translator used either to translate the poetic text into verse or prose style.

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