

# BEYOND THE COVERS: UNDERSTANDING ARAB TRANSLATOR (IN)VISIBILITY IN JORDANIAN PUBLISHING HOUSES

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**Abstract:** This article examines the concept of translator (in)visibility within the context of Jordanian publishing houses, with a keen focus on the interrelationship between paratextual material and translator (in)visibility. Adopting a data-driven methodology, the study analyzes book covers of translated works originating from 29 Jordanian publishing houses. By examining the paratextual elements on the front covers of over 600 translated works, including the appearance of translator names and related details, the research aims to address a notable lacuna in the existing literature concerning the (in)visibility of Arab translators. To address this gap, the study establishes a point-based system and builds a visibility index to comprehend the scope of translator visibility and its ramifications within Jordanian publishing practices. Findings indicate variations in publishing practices among Jordanian publishers. Equally important, there appears to be a noticeable difference between Jordanian and other countries' publishing practices, as documented in the literature of the study. This research extends beyond mere statistical observation, aiming to have broader implications for empirical translation studies, especially in relation to Venuti's theory of invisibility. These findings will contribute to a better understanding of the complexities of visibility and invisibility, making a substantive contribution to the ongoing discussions in this field.

**Keywords:** corpus analysis, Jordanian publishing houses, paratext, peritext, (in)visibility index

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## Introduction<sup>1</sup>

In translation studies, the concept of invisibility, and its counterpart, visibility, plays a pivotal role in understanding the different aspects of the translator's role. Translators are often described, not by these scholars themselves but by their evaluation of how others see translators, as invisible and rarely acknowledged (Venuti, 1995, pp. 1-17), "lower-category employees" (Hermans & Lambert, 1998, p. 123), anonymous (Koskinen, 2000, p. 60), and isolated and passive (Risku, 2004, p. 190). The translator's visibility and/or invisibility has been extensively studied by scholars like Venuti (1986, 1995, 2008), Koskinen (2000), Dam and Zethsen (2008, 2009), Coldiron (2012), and Emmerich (2013), among others.

Venuti (1986, 1995, 2008) contributes to the translation discourse by emphasizing the connection between (in)visibility and the development of a translator's distinct voice and artistic style. Venuti connects invisibility to translation strategies that he refers to as 'domesticating', seeing it as a practice often found in dominant cultures. These strategies, he argues, obscure both the act of translation itself and the foreignness of the original text. In Venuti's body of work, invisibility refers to: (i) *the translator's role*, in which translators are often regarded as invisible co-creators of the text; (ii) *translation style*, in which translators are expected to write in a 'fluent' style, making the translation feel as natural as the original, thus minimizing their own presence, and (iii) *translation imbalance*, where translation remains largely invisible due to the limited availability of English translations of foreign literature, leading to their invisibility in the literary works.

Venuti's notion of invisibility extends beyond the individual translator, encompassing both the translator's role in the creation of a text and the broader cultural practice of translation. He further examines the ways in which translators, the act of translation, and translated works have been marginalized in Anglo-American and other cultural settings. Thus, he suggests that providing well-thought-out explanations or justifications for a translator's choices within the paratextual or auxiliary elements of a text (such as introductions, footnotes, or prefaces) can serve as a strategy to counteract the invisibility of translators (2008, p. 311). This, in turn, is suggested as a practical way to remedy the usual lack of recognition for translators and make their role more visible and appreciated.

Liu (2011), whose work studies the relationship between the visibility of translators and their job-related happiness within the context of China, sees visibility as a relationship referring to the translator's active engagement and communication with both clients and end-users. Visible translators, in Liu's context, are those who have the opportunity to establish direct communication channels,

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fostering a more interactive and collaborative translator-client relationship in the translation process. On the other hand, invisible translators, as defined by Liu (2011, p. 57), are those who often lack direct interaction with clients or end-users. They typically receive assignments from various clients without direct communication, limiting opportunities for feedback or clarification.

In examining the dimensions of visibility in translation, Koskinen (2000) identifies three distinct categories or kinds, characterizing them as textual, paratextual, and extratextual visibility. Textual visibility signifies “the ways in which the translator makes his or her presence visible on the textual level, in the translation itself” (ibid., p. 99). That is, the translator’s decisions regarding language and style that shape the translated text are a form of visibility inseparable from these choices. On the other hand, paratextual visibility “refers to the translator’s statements about their work outside or in the margins of the actual text” (ibid.). This includes supplementary elements such as introductions, footnotes, or other commentaries provided by the translator that exist alongside the primary text. These paratextual cues offer insights into the translator’s thought process, motivations, and interpretative decisions, thereby contributing to a broader understanding of the translation. The third kind is extratextual visibility, which, as Koskinen explains, is related to the social status of translation and involves elements external to the translated work, such as the publisher’s publicity materials. This dimension extends beyond the textual and paratextual categories, addressing the societal recognition and validation of the translator’s role, thereby influencing the visibility of translation within the broader cultural context.

Nevertheless, the key takeaways from both Venuti and Koskinen, as echoed by Lapiedra and MacDonald (2017, p. 444), include the three central themes of the translator’s ideological mark or influence, their presence in paratexts, and the necessity of recognizing their contribution and giving them due credit in the marketing and promotion of the translated text.

The study’s focus on paratextual elements in relation to (in)visibility is based on deep understanding of the importance of understanding the inextricable link between paratexts, such as titles, and the main texts they accompany. For example, paratexts may exist without the text itself, as Genette (1997) notes:

Paradoxically, paratexts without texts do exist, if only by accident: there are certainly works – lost or aborted – about which we know nothing except their titles. (Some examples: numerous post-Homeric epics or classical Greek tragedies, or *La Morsure de l’épaule* [published in English as *The*

*Shoulder Bite*], which Chrétien de Troyes takes credit for at the beginning of *Cligès*, or *La Bataille des Thermopyles*, which was one of Flaubert's abandoned projects and which we know nothing else about except that the word *cnémide* [greave] was not to have appeared in it.) These titles, standing alone, certainly provide food for thought, by which I mean they provide a little more than many a work that is everywhere available and can be read from start to finish (ibid., pp. 3-4)

Building upon Genette's insights into the significance of paratexts, particularly the importance of book titles, lays the groundwork for exploring how publishing practices might vary across different countries. As McRae (2006, p. 41), Booth (2007, p. 201), Venuti (2008, p. 7), and Bilodeau (2015, p. 9) note, in countries like the UK and USA, publishing industries – though not all of them – refrain from highlighting the translator or indicating that the book is translated; hence, the absence of translators' names on book covers is a notable aspect of their approach to paratextual elements. In contrast, publishers in Japan generally do not remove the name of the translator since it is a standard practice for translators' names to be clearly visible on book covers as per Japanese publishing conventions (Akashi, 2018, p. 4; Bilodeau, 2015, p. 10).

These practices reflect broader cultural and publishing trends and provide valuable context for understanding the role of paratexts in the publishing process. Subsequently, taking into account Akashi's point about whether translators' names are visible on book covers and how they are displayed (2018, p. 137), we direct our attention to Jordan's publishing houses to examine how they address similar issues within the distinct context of Arabic culture and publishing. To that end, the objectives are to: (i) construct an index that measures the translator's visibility on the translated works, (ii) see if there are notable variations in publishing practices concerning translator's visibility among Jordanian publishing houses, and (iii) highlight the bigger picture of peritextual elements vis-à-vis the theoretical background built by scholars like Venuti (1986, 1995, 2008), Koskinen (2000), Liu (2011), and others.

## Literature review

The theories of visibility and invisibility, as proposed by Venuti (1986, 1995, 2008), and independently elaborated on by Genette (1997 [1987])<sup>2</sup> – with no direct relation to Venuti's concept – alongside Koskinen's (2000) contributions, form the theoretical framework for this study. While the literature, particularly insights from Venuti, Genette, and Koskinen, has laid a foundation for understanding the theoretical aspects of translator (in)visibility, recent empirical

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2. Genette's work was originally published in French in 1987 as *Seuils*. It was later translated by Jane E. Lewin as *Paratexts: Thresholds of Interpretation* in 1997. Interestingly enough, the front cover of the translated book shows the author's name only.

analyses conducted by, for example, Liu (2011), Lapiedra and MacDonald (2017), and Akashi (2018) have offered valuable practical insights into this complex phenomenon. Hence, this section is divided into two parts; the first tackles the theory part of (in)visibility, while the second discusses the empirical studies on the topic.

### *Theoretical studies*

Undoubtedly, a study on invisibility cannot be conducted without thoroughly investigating Lawrence Venuti's influential works that brought attention to this thorny concept. Venuti first shed light on invisibility in his 1986 paper "The Translator's Invisibility", where he highlighted the usually ignored role of the translator. Venuti's effort to elaborate on this topic was manifested by his 1995 book *The Translator's Invisibility: A History of Translation*, which was republished in a second edition in 2008. The notion of the translator's invisibility, as discussed by Venuti, created an overwhelming debate in translation studies, since it highlighted the marginalized status of translators, despite their crucial role in shaping literary and cultural exchanges. Indeed, Venuti scrutinized several facets of invisibility, such as: cultural imperialism, foreignization vs. domestication, and the level of translator's recognition, that were the cornerstones of many studies on this topic.

Another interesting work that clarifies the theoretical concept of invisibility is Koskinen's (2000) study, which focuses on recent developments in translation ethics within translation studies and other related postmodern concepts. In her study, Koskinen devoted whole sections to discuss Venuti (*ibid.*, pp. 47-58) and his notion of visibility (*ibid.*, pp. 98-100). Venuti's works were subjected to deconstructive analysis and his translator's visibility was thoroughly discussed. As a result, his firm struggle to elevate the status of translation was appreciated as he worked hard to change the way of thinking about translation and its relation with cultural and social change, authorship, cultural differences, teaching methods and publishing policies. In general, Venuti's position can be summarized by the fact that he openly criticized fluent translation approaches that try to make the text seem like it was originally written in the target language, thereby hiding that it is a translation. Instead, he preferred fewer smooth strategies, known as 'foreignizing' or 'minoritizing', to highlight the foreignness of the translation (*ibid.*, p. 47).

Venuti's works, while foundational, do not look into the concept of paratextuality as directly as one might expect, given its pivotal role in understanding invisibility. This leads us to appreciate Koskinen's significant theoretical contribution, particularly in her delineation of three distinct kinds of visibility: textual, paratextual, and extratextual. While the first and third kinds are of great importance to understand the bigger picture of invisibility, it is the second

type – paratextual visibility –which is the main focus of the current study. Paratextual visibility means what translators say about their translation, which is often displayed outside or alongside the author’s text (ibid., p. 99). This can be as simple as the translator’s signature or indicating it is a translation, or it can be more detailed, in the form of lengthy discussions about their role and translation projects (ibid.). But the concept of paratextuality, more specifically that of *peritext*, must be first considered within the pioneering work of Genette (1997).

The concept of paratextuality was thoroughly taken up in the influential work of Genette (1997), to whom the term paratext is attributed. Genette divides paratexts based on different functions, among which are the spatial and temporal paratexts. spatial paratext is defined as the “paratextual element consists of determining its location (the question where?)” (ibid., p. 4), which in turn is further divided into peritext and epitext. To quote Genette, “peritext and epitext completely and entirely share the spatial field of the paratext. In other words, for those who are keen on formulae, *paratext = peritext + epitext*” (ibid., p. 5; italics in the original). Peritext, which is the typical one, includes the cover and its appendages, among other elements that are outside the scope of this investigation (but cf. Genette, 1997), whereas, epitext refers to those elements that are “located outside the book, generally with the help of the media (interviews, conversations) or under cover of private communications (letters, diaries, and others).” (ibid.).

Furthermore, many empirical studies contributed also to the theoretical part of invisibility in significant ways. For example, Lapiedra and MacDonald (2017) highlighted the translator’s name, which is an important aspect of the paratextual elements investigated in the current study. Lapiedra and MacDonald stated that “visibility and the explicit naming of the author are two aspects that are unquestionably related, since specifying the translator’s name, is directly concerned with the satisfaction obtained from the finished work and the professional experience gained” (ibid., p. 444), opening the door wide to questioning notions such as recognition and presence vs. invisibility in translation studies.

Considering this study’s focus, the work of Akashi (2018) offers good understanding of the visibility/presence of the translator’s name on the cover of the translated works, highlighting the translator’s name as an important paratextual element. Akashi highlighted the importance of translators’ names to readers, especially if they are not familiar with the original authors. Therefore, publishers prefer publishing works translated by well-known translators because such practice increases sales (Akashi, 2018, p. 77). Also, Akashi stressed that the presence of the translators’ names on the front of the cover is an important factor for visibility, particularly in contexts where including translators’ names is common practice (ibid., p. 137). She also held an interesting comparison

between the appearance of the translator's name in Japan and the UK and USA, where she noted that, in Japan, translators' names are displayed prominently on book covers, often in a similar size to the original author's that makes them stand out more, while in countries like the UK and USA, translators' names are usually not shown unless they are already famous or the translation is an academic one (ibid., pp. 143-144). To sum up, Akashi (2018) concluded that "whether or how translators' names are listed on the book covers are another important subject of study in the discussion of translator visibility, especially in contexts where the inclusion of translators' names is a regular practice" (ibid., p. 137).

### *Empirical studies*

Kovala (1996) investigated paratexts in publishing translations of Anglo-American literature in Finland from 1890 to 1939, namely the Finnish translations of Jonathan Swift's *Gulliver's Travels* (1926), Jack London's *Call of the Wild* (1926), and Robert Louis Stevenson's *Treasure Island* (1930). He mentioned that the cultural institutions in Finland during that period were relatively undifferentiated and non-autonomous, influenced by an ideological unification process, suggesting how paratexts reflected and contributed to the ideological landscape of Finnish publishing during that period. Specific to the current study, Kovala found that the name of the translator was often dropped, especially in the works of popular fiction (1996, p. 126). He also found that the absence of the translator's name was due to the impression that the translation of the original text during that period was felt inferior – in terms of being undervalued and underpaid, which resulted in making the translator and his/her work invisible (ibid.).

Liu's (2011) study employed quantitative methods to measure the frequency and nature of translator-client interactions, providing a data-driven perspective on the visibility of translators within translation agencies. Although Liu's investigation of visibility does not relate to paratextuality or peritext per se, part of his study was dedicated to investigating the appearance of the translator's name on their translations (ibid., p. 178). This was analyzed by using a Spearman's rho correlation test, where a total of 192 translators responded to a questionnaire regarding the appearance of their names on the translations. It was found that when translators are more visible, their names tend to appear more frequently on their translations (ibid., p. 179).

Lapedra and MacDonald (2017) investigated the translator's visibility in specialized translation, particularly in explicitly stating the translator's name, by utilizing a corpus of environmental texts in Catalan from a previous period (2004) and contrasting it with a contemporary corpus (2016). It was found that the explicit mention of the translator's name shows a consistently low percentage

in both corpora (ibid., p. 457). Lapedra and MacDonald observed that this low percentage has the potential to diminish the translator's accountability. Moreover, it emphasizes that a notable proportion of explicit mentions come from translators with expertise in environmental knowledge. Thus, the limited professional specialization of the translator is likely to be a contributing factor to the observed scarcity in the explicit mention of their names.

Akashi (2018) conducted an analysis of celebrity translators in Japan, revealing that the translator's visibility is complex, and the factors that determine it are far more sophisticated than Venuti's theoretical conceptualization. The analysis examined translators' agencies, how publishers promote their work, and the reactions from readers and critics to identify the factors behind translator fame and understand how status impacts translation practices. In one aspect of her investigation, Akashi investigates the relationship between the translator's visibility and paratexts. She examined twenty-eight afterwords and dust jackets, with the twenty-eight afterwords written by the translator Murakami Haruki (ibid., p. 152). Additionally, she singled out the afterword of *The Great Gatsby* for comparison with those by his contemporaries, Ogawa Takayoshi and Nozaki Takashi. Furthermore, Akashi conducted a comparative analysis of the dust jackets of Murakami's translation of *The Great Gatsby* alongside those of Ogawa and Nozaki. She observed that while Nozaki tends to be the least visible on dust jackets and Ogawa is somewhat visible, Murakami's name prominently stands out on the jacket (ibid., p. 186).

Akashi observed that, in all the jackets analyzed, certain patterns stand out, like how Japanese titles, author names, and translator names are prominently displayed (ibid., p. 167). Interestingly, Akashi discovered that the font size of the translator's name on the jacket often reflects their importance, with Murakami's name often matching the font size of the source author's (ibid., p. 187). Moreover, another key finding was the influence of the publisher-translator relationship on the creation of paratextual material, which greatly influences translator visibility (ibid., pp. 188-189).

Finally, Freeth (2022), who views translator's visibility as a continuum that moves away from the binary dichotomy of visibility/invisibility, conducted a study that analyses the visibility of literary translators in digital materials



that showcase translated works to readers, i.e. the digital paratextual spaces. Freeth (2022) focuses on the visibility of translator Jamie Bulloch in digital contexts related to his English translations of two novels by the German author Timur Vermes, namely *Look Who's Back* and *The Hungry and the Fat*. Two of Freeth's major findings showed that (1) when it comes to how digital media affects how visible translators are within the paratextual spaces, not much has changed compared to the traditional printed book world (ibid., p. 145), and (2) the publisher's (MacLehose Press) control over paratexts means that any study on how visible translators are in these spaces is influenced by the practices and beliefs of the publishing company to some degree (ibid., p. 277). Hence, rather than fixing Bulloch's low visibility, digital paratextual spaces made it even more noticeable.

Building upon these empirical studies, the present research seeks to extend this empirical approach to the unique context of Jordanian publishing houses. By incorporating statistical measurements into the analysis of paratextual elements, namely the front covers of published translated books, this study aims to contribute further evidence to the ongoing discourse on paratextuality vis-à-vis translator (in)visibility.

## Methodology

The current study employs a quantitative approach to analyze the front covers of translated works from 29 Jordanian publishing houses. This is in congruence with the observations made by Alblooshi (2021), who highlights the lack of a standardized framework and the predominance of small-scale qualitative case studies in the literature on paratextual elements in translation studies. In this respect, our study aims to provide a more comprehensive analysis of a much larger dataset. We begin by discussing the process of compiling the corpus (§3.1), where we build and organize the dataset of translated works. Following this, we explain the process of building an index (§3.2) and outline the steps taken to quantify and measure the visibility of translators in Jordanian publishing houses.

### *The corpus*<sup>3</sup>

The corpus of the study is primarily based on data obtained from authoritative sources, namely the National Library (the NLJ) and the Media Commission of Jordan (the MCJ), providing exhaustive lists of publishing houses in the

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3. **Data Availability Statement:** The dataset supporting the findings of this study is available on Figshare at <https://doi.org/10.6084/m9.figshare.27679089.v1>. This dataset includes a list of 29 Jordanian publishing houses and a numerical analysis of paratextual elements from translated book covers, including the appearance, font size, font color, and placement of author and translator names. The dataset is publicly accessible and can be used for further research on translator visibility in Jordanian publishing practices.

country.<sup>4</sup> The lists, comprising 123 and 162 entries, respectively, were then cross-referenced to identify overlapping entries. In addition, certain specific criteria, including the availability of translated works, were applied to ensure an accurate compilation of publishing houses in the dataset. The final dataset comprises 29 publishing houses that feature 648 translated works within their repertoires. It is worth highlighting that, in comparison to existing resources such as the UNESCO Index Translationum, which serves as a worldwide bibliography of translations and provides bibliographical information on books translated and published across approximately one hundred UNESCO Member States, our corpus surpasses that of the UNESCO for Jordan. Also, while the UNESCO Index was last updated in 2010 for Jordan, our database is current up to November 2023 and provides the latest and comprehensive information.

The data collection process starts with the creation of an extensive database, specifically tailored to accommodate the front covers of translated works emanating from the 29 identified publishing houses. The retrieval of book cover images is based on the following points in order of availability: (i) the publishing house's website, (ii) the publishing house's social media page (mainly Facebook pages since Jordanian publishing houses rely mainly on Facebook as the most accessible and popular advertising platform), and (iii) external well-established, specialized outlets and/or marketplaces *Neelwafurat* (lit. the Nile and Euphrates), *Raffy* (lit. my bookshelf), *Maktabatu l-kutub* (lit. the books library), and *eKtab* (lit. e-book).<sup>5</sup> Subsequently, an in-depth analysis of these book cover images is conducted, focusing on key indicators of translator visibility. This includes an examination of elements such as the presence of the translator's name and the original author's name, as well as considerations of the font size, the font color, and the position of the translator's name in comparison to the author's data on the front cover.

The processing of data involves the compilation of the gathered information into a Microsoft Excel dataset, which is used to create charts and Figures to visualize and further analyze the collected data. This dataset, reflective of the multifaceted aspects of translator visibility, forms the basis for the development of a refined (in)visibility scale. The scale, spanning from 'invisible' to 'visible', is further quantified through the assignment of numerical values, thereby enabling a precise and measurable representation of the degree of translator (in)visibility within the analyzed book covers. This methodological framework not only facilitates a complete examination of peritextual elements (translator's name) in

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4. The NLJ, founded in 1977, is Jordan's official library responsible for collecting, preserving, and distributing national and international intellectual works. The MCJ, formed in 2014 through a merger of the Department of Press and Publications and the Audiovisual Media Commission, oversees media policies, regulates outlets, and sets licensing standards.

5. In order, these outlets can be accessed at [www.neelwafurat.com](http://www.neelwafurat.com), [www.raffy.me](http://www.raffy.me), [www.books-library.net](http://www.books-library.net), and [www.ektab.com](http://www.ektab.com)

relation to the translator (in)visibility but also lays the groundwork for insightful analyses and interpretations within the context of Jordanian publishing houses.

### ***Building an (in)visibility index***

In order to precisely gauge the visibility of translators on front covers, we devised a point-based system that considers three key peritextual elements: font size, font color, and position of the translator's name. Each element was assigned numerical values corresponding to different levels of visibility or invisibility: font size (bigger than the author's: 3 points, similar or identical to the author's: 2 points, smaller than the author's: 1 point), font color (high contrasting with author's: 3 points, moderate contrasting with author's: 2 points, low contrasting with author's: 1 point) and position on the front cover (centered/prominent: 3 points, right-aligned: 2 points, left-aligned: 1 point). Subsequently, the scoring system was applied to 349 front covers from our dataset of published translated works.

The philosophy behind building a point-based system in relation to measuring (in)visibility is founded on sound investigation of previous literature. For example, Liu (2011) and Lapiedra and MacDonald (2017) found that there is a strong correlation between the presence of the translator's name on translated works and increased visibility; a finding that disputes Mailhac's point of view (*The Debate*, 1997, p. 35). Moreover, Akashi (2018, pp. 70, 145, 167, 170) found that there is a relationship between font size and the visibility of the translator, where the larger the font size of the translator's name than the author's – the case of Murakami in Akashi's work, the higher the recognition.<sup>6</sup>

To compute the visibility index for a publishing house, we assess the font size, font color, and position of the translator's name on each front cover, assigning scores according to our established scoring system. For example, if a front cover receives scores of 3 for font size, 2 for font color, and 1 for position, the total score for that cover would be 6 out of 9 points. This process is repeated for all front covers linked to the publishing house. Since the highest score for each aspect on a front cover is 3 points, the maximum possible score for font size, font color, and position on each front cover would be  $3 + 3 + 3 = 9$  points. Let us suppose that, say, ABC Publishing House has four published translated works, which means that we have analyzed four front covers. The maximum total score achievable across all front covers would be  $4 \times 9 = 36$  points. Subsequently, we aggregate the scores for font size, font color, and position across all analyzed front covers. Suppose the total scores for font size, font color, and position are 9, 6, 4, and 3, respectively. This means that across all the front covers analyzed,

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6. We do not make, nor does our analysis investigate, the claim that the notion of (in)visibility of the translator's name on book covers is linked to or promotes the translator's recognition. In fact, whether visibility/invisibility promotes recognition is contested by Chesterman and Wagner (2002, p. 27) and Liu (2011, p. 16).

the total score would be 22 out of 36 points, resulting in a visibility score of 0.6 for that particular publishing house. It is noteworthy that the maximum visibility score a publishing house can receive is 1, indicating the highest level of visibility, while a score of 0 denotes the utmost degree of invisibility.<sup>7</sup>

Considering the 29 publishing houses, two separate visibility indices were built: the first index measures the 24 publishing houses whose front covers can be analyzed by using the established scoring system; the second index measures the remaining five publishing houses that do not follow the scoring system since they have translated publications where the author's or the translator's name is absent on the front cover; thus, the point-based comparison is dropped. The rationale behind making separate indices instead of one is to ensure the utmost accuracy of the point-based analysis.

## Data analysis

In the data analysis phase, quantitative methods will be employed to gauge the translator (in)visibility within the context of Jordanian publishing houses, adding a numerical dimension to the analysis. This involves the application of basic statistical techniques to measure and categorize data on the developed (in)visibility scale. Additionally, through a detailed examination of the analysis, patterns and themes related to translator (in)visibility will be highlighted.

### Overview

**Table 1.** *Overview of translated publications per publishing house displaying the author's and translator's names in 29 Jordanian publishing houses*

No.	Publishing House	Total number of translated publications	Number of publications with the author's name on front cover	Number of publications with the translator's name on front cover
1	Al Dar Al Ahlia Bookstore	4	4	3
2	Dar Azminah for Publishing and Distribution	5	5	5
3	Dar Al Thaqafa for Publishing and Distribution	4	4	4

7. Regarding the index, a value of 0 means the total absence of the translator's name which means that the cover cannot be investigated. A value of 1, on the other hand, is interpreted in two ways: (i) the translator's name appears on the cover while the author's is absent, or (ii) the publishing house has at least one published translated work that scored a total of 9, which can be considered an exceptional case.

No.	Publishing House	Total number of translated publications	Number of publications with the author's name on front cover	Number of publications with the translator's name on front cover
4	Dar Ghidaa for Publishing and Distribution	3	0	3
5	Dar Ward for Publishing & Distribution	4	4	4
6	Dar Konooz-Almarefa Publishing & Distribution	17	16	17
7	Amwaj Publisher	1	1	1
8	Yazori Group for Publishing and Distribution	2	2	2
9	Dar Ibn Khaldoun for Publishing and Distribution	1	1	1
10	Dar Almanahaj for Publishing and Distribution	4	4	4
11	Majdalawi for Publishing and Distribution	5	5	5
12	ABC Nasheron	80	80	54
13	Shorok for Publishing and Distribution	13	10	11
14	Dar Wael for Publishing and Distribution	2	2	2
15	Dar Al Fiker Publishers & Distributors	23	23	23
16	Dar Al Faris Publishing & Distribution	1	0	0
17	Dar Amjad for Publishing and Distribution	2	2	2

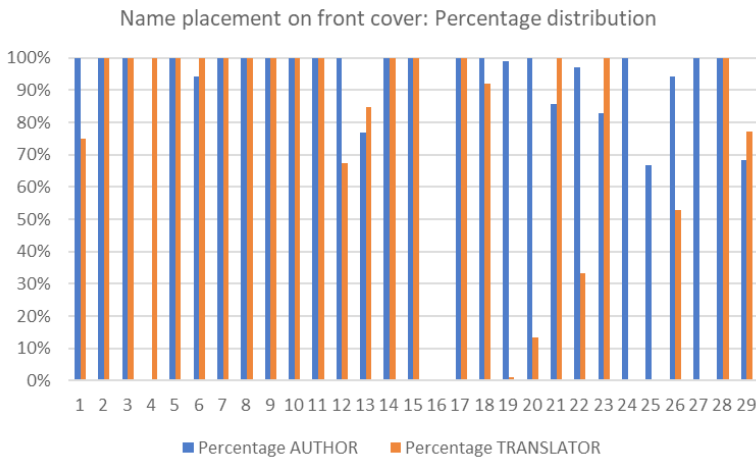
No.	Publishing House	Total number of translated publications	Number of publications with the author's name on front cover	Number of publications with the translator's name on front cover
18	Alaan Publishers & Distributors	38	38	35
19	Jabal Amman Publishers	95	94	1
20	Dar Khattab for Publishing and Distribution	15	15	2
21	Al-Aedoun Publishers	7	6	7
22	Dar Alrewaya Al Arabia for Publishing and Distribution	33	32	11
23	Dar Khotot for Publishing and Distribution	164	136	164
24	Dar Al Muna for Publishing and Distribution	59	59	0
25	Aalam al-Thaqafa Publishers	6	4	0
26	Majdalawi Masterpieces	17	16	9
27	Dar Al-Osra for Publishing	20	20	0
28	Dar Osama for Publishing & Distribution	1	1	1
29	Dar Al Jaleel For Publishing, Palestinian Research & Studies	22	15	17
	Total	648	599	388

A general reading of these numbers shows a clear tendency towards mentioning the translator's name on the front cover (60%) compared to the total published

works, which raises a question about whether the remaining 40% is attributed to the publisher's policy, the genre (e.g., classical, children literature), spatial or temporal considerations, or other factors that warrant further investigation, but ultimately fall outside the scope of the current investigation. A closer examination of the data, however, reveals a considerable variance in the number of translated works per publishing house. The highest number of published translated works reached 164 by the publishing house (No. 23), followed by 95 works by the publishing house (No. 19). In contrast, four publishing houses contribute only one work per publishing house. Such variance may be attributed to several factors beyond the scope of the current paper. However, the total number of translated works suggests the role of these publishing houses in enriching the cultural context and providing Jordanian/Arab readers with various sources of knowledge and experience.

Furthermore, Table 1 compares the total number of translated publications and the translated works with the author's name on the front cover for each publishing house. It also highlights a significant observation indicating a high ratio of the author's name appearance on the front cover to the total, which reaches 100% in 62% of the total number of publishing houses. The Table shows a striking similarity between the first two columns of each publishing house. This apparent effort to display the author's name suggests the importance of introducing the author to the readers. This high ratio might imply the role played by the author in marketing the published works. The comparative analysis of the numbers may trigger further investigations of the publisher's policies, the author's terms, the reader's expectations and other aspects, which might pave the way to understanding the high ratio of the author's name to total publications.

Similarly, Table 1 shows a notable proportion of the translator's name displayed on the front cover, reaching 100% in 55% of all the identified publishing houses, while a small number of the publishers (about 14% of the investigated publishing houses) eliminate the translator's name from the front cover. These readings can raise questions about the factors affecting the display of the translator's name and the elements of veiling the translator's name in some of the published translated works. Meanwhile, having an overall view of the table shows an interesting trend in Jordanian publishing houses to identify the names of authors and translators on the front covers of the translated works. However, the translator's name ratio to the total is lower than the author's when comparing both factors in the Jordanian publishing houses, as was shown earlier in Table 1. This point can be figured out by considering that out of the total 648 published translated works, 599 of them (92.4%) have the author's name on the front cover, while 388 works (60%) have the translator's name on the front cover. This comparison can be visually represented in Figure 1 below, which compares the percentages of author's and translator's names on the front cover of the published translated works.



**Figure 1.** *The percentage of author's name displayed on the front cover in comparison to the percentage of the translator's name*

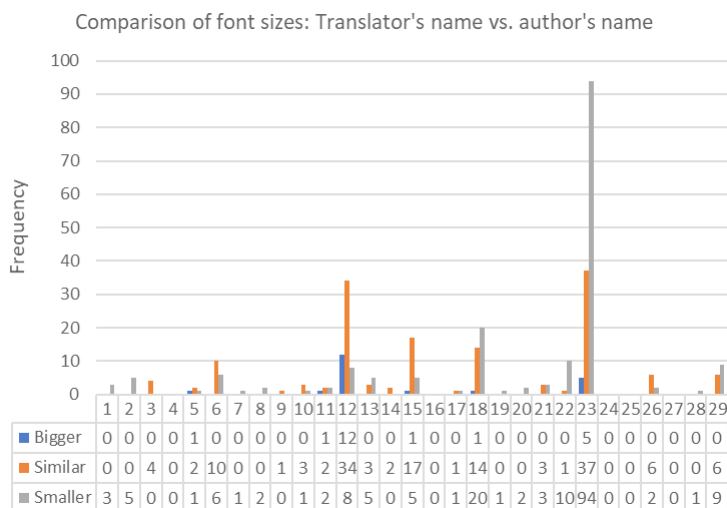
Figure 1 displays the percentage distribution of author and translator names on the front cover across the 29 different publishing houses. As noted earlier, in most cases, the author's name appears on a significantly higher percentage of covers than the translator's name, with the former reaching nearly 100% in the majority of the publishing houses. This pattern suggests a stronger emphasis on authorship over translation. On the other hand, translator name placement is much more variable, with some publishing houses, such as houses 24 and 25, showing very low percentages (near 0%). Conversely, a few publishing houses, such as 12 and 26, show a higher percentage of translator name placements, approaching or surpassing 50%. Furthermore, some publishing houses, such as 7, 14, and 28, exhibit 100% placement for both authors and translators' names. This indicates a more balanced approach in acknowledging both contributors.

Moving forward, it is important to consider not only the presence of the translator's name but also other paratextual elements employed on the front cover to either highlight or obscure the translator's role. The following section will therefore analyze three key paratextual elements: font size, font color, and the position of the translator's name in relation to the author's.

### *Peritextual elements*

Book covers, with their accompanying elements, are key in capturing the reader's attention prior to engaging with the textual content. The following Figures investigate how peritextual elements, namely the font size, font color, and position of the translator's name, impact the translator's (in)visibility. While each Figure (2, 3, and 4) outlines different aspects of this relationship, collectively, they offer a comprehensive perspective on the influence of these peritextual elements on the translator's visibility or lack thereof.

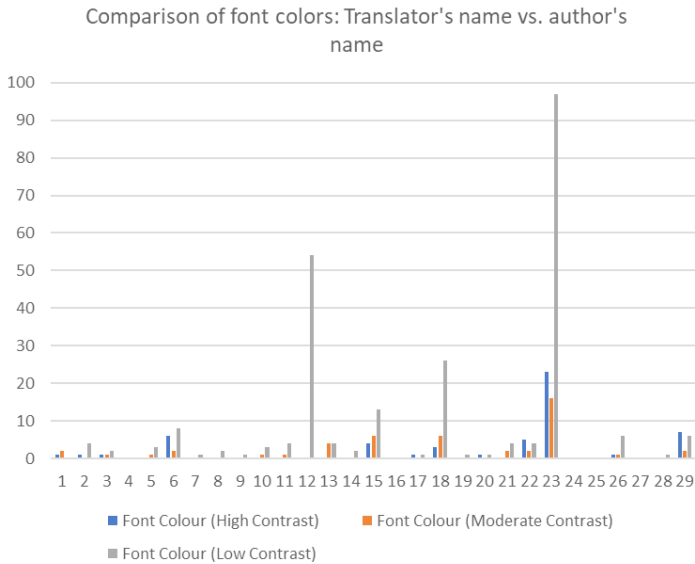




**Figure 2.** *The font size of the translator’s name compared to the font size of the author’s name*

The purpose of Figure 2 is to visualize the patterns in which the font size of the translator’s name is compared to the font size of the author’s name on the covers of the published translated works. The font size is categorized into three sets (bigger, similar, and smaller). To read this Figure, it is worth mentioning that, in some cases, where the author’s or the translator’s name is absent on the front cover, the comparison in terms of the font size is dropped. In other words, the comparison is only valid when both names are present. To further demonstrate this point, publishing house No. 21 in the list has seven translated publications with the translator’s name, while only six of these works display the author’s name; thus, the comparison is held between the six works with both names on the cover. Also, five publishing houses (4, 16, 24, 25, and 27) are excluded since all their published works lack one or both names. In general, this limitation excluded 46% of the total number of published translated works and results in the comparison between the font size of 349 publications; the majority of them, 182 (52%), display the translator’s name in a smaller font, while 146 (42%) works display the translator’s name in a similar font. In contrast, only 21 (6%) translated works presented the translator’s name in a bigger font. The varying font sizes used for translator and author names across different publishing houses play a significant role in highlighting the extent of the translator’s visibility on the front cover, which is almost similar to or smaller than the author’s name, with very few exceptions.

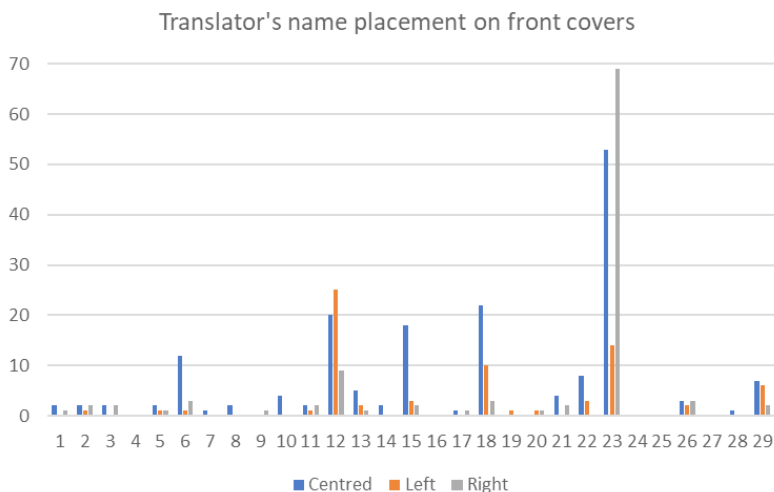
The second peritextual element that is analyzed is font color. In the following Figure, the font color of the translator and the author’s names are compared.



**Figure 3.** *Font color of the translator's name compared to the font color of the author's name*

In Figure 3, the numbers from 1 to 29 on the horizontal axis represent the publishing houses as presented in Table 1, while the vertical axis represents the frequencies of occurrence. As is shown in the Figure, the font color is categorized into three sets: high contrasting, moderate contrasting, and low contrasting with the author's. The same approach (used in the discussion of Figure 2) shows that the publications included in the comparison represent 54% of the total number of published translated works. This percentage means that the analysis is, again, applied for the font colors of 349 publications. A notable trend from the Figure is that the majority of publishing houses opt for font colors that have low contrast with the author's name, i.e. 248 (71%) of the investigated works. Meanwhile, in the other publications, 101 works feature either moderate contrasting colors in 47 instances (13.5%) or high contrasting colors in 54 instances (15.5%). Therefore, in terms of font color, the general trend is to maintain the same level of visibility between the author and translator.

The final peritextual element is the position of the translator's name compared to that of the author's. Figure 4 below recognizes three positions of the translator's name: the center, left, or right of the front cover. One prominent observation from the Figure is that the most common position for the translator's name is at the center of the front cover, seen in 173 instances (50%), followed by the translator's name being placed on the right side, observed 150 (30%). In contrast, the least common position is on the left, with only 71 instances (20%).

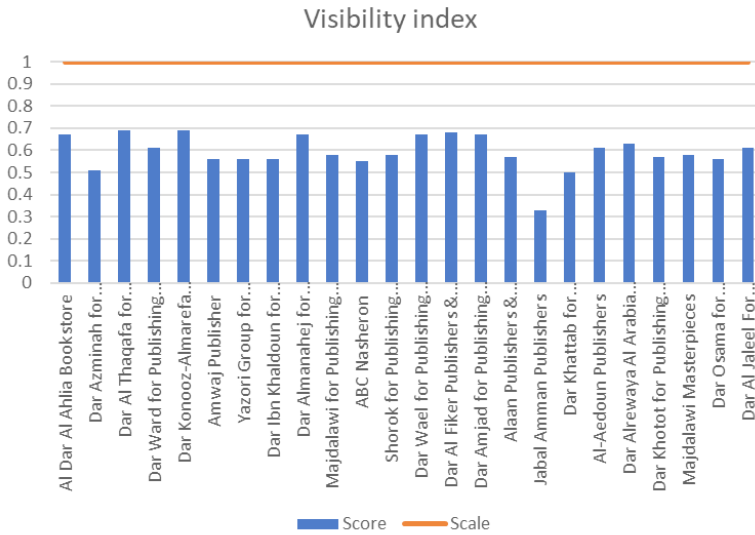


**Figure 4.** *The position of the translator’s name on the front cover*

In terms of position, the center is the focal point of any space, thus placing the name, as a peritextual element, increases the degree of visibility. With regard to the second most occurring position, i.e. the right position, this practice seems to be affected by the orientation of the Arabic writing style, which might also explain the low occurrence of the translator’s name at the left of the front cover.

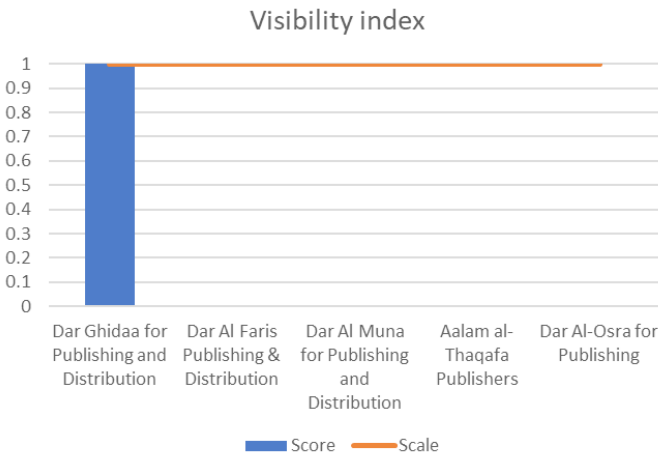
***The (in)visibility index***

In this section, we introduce two separate visibility indices aimed at evaluating how prominently translators are featured on front covers within the Jordanian publishing context. The first index measures the 24 publishing houses whose front covers can be analyzed by using the established scoring system. The average of scores is 0.41, with a minimum value of 0.33 and a maximum value of 0.69. Out of the 24 publishing houses, 22 achieved a value greater than 0.5, where 0.5 represents the borderline of the visibility scale. Only one publishing house (Dar Khattab for Publishing and Distribution) showed neither visibility nor invisibility. Also, one publishing house (Jabal Amman Publishers) showed the invisibility of the translator, with a score of 0.33.



**Figure 5.** *Visibility index for 24 publishing houses using point-based scoring system*

The second visibility index, which does not follow the established point-based system, measures the remaining five publishing houses, as Figure 6 demonstrates. The only publishing house to achieve the full score of one is *Dar Ghidaa for Publishing and Distribution*. This is because the absence of the author’s name and the presence of the translator’s is interpreted as showing maximum visibility; hence, it is given a value of 1.



**Figure 6.** *Visibility index for remaining five publishing houses*

## Discussion

Based on the findings in Section 4 above, general trends can be identified. First, the notion of (in)visibility is better viewed as a spectrum with values ranging from maximum invisibility to maximum visibility, rather than being a rigidly binary concept. This, indeed, goes against Venuti's conceptualization of the term, and at the same time corroborates Freeth's (2022) understanding of visibility as a continuum. Second, the fact that the overall high visibility ratio of the translator's name on the front covers across all the 29 Jordanian publishing houses suggests that translation is highly valued in the publishing process, which supports, albeit indirectly, proponents of the so-called 'manipulation school' (cf. Kovala, 1996, p. 126). Third, reviewing the front covers of the publishing house that shows the highest number of published works with the translator's name (i.e. publishing house No. 23) revealed that the vast majority of its published translated works are literary works by some of the renowned literary figures, such as Anton Chekhov, Aldous Huxley, Albert Camus, Émile Zola among others. Even though establishing the relationship between genre and (in)visibility, needs deeper investigation that considers several variables, the finding of the current study can be better appreciated in light of what Kovala stated in this regard; "translations of classics carried the translator's name, while those of popular fiction often did not" (1996, p. 126). This understanding can open the door for different readings of the current study's analysis in relation to genre and trigger further studies to address this topic.

Reflecting on the empirical findings, font size appears to have a key role in determining the visibility of translators on front covers, as it directly influences readers' ability to identify and recognize the translator's contribution to the work. While previous literature may not have explicitly addressed font size as a determinant of translator visibility, findings from studies such as Liu's (2011) suggest that increased visibility correlates with a higher frequency of the translator's name appearing on translations. This correlation underscores the importance of font size as a visual cue for readers, with larger fonts likely to draw more attention and convey a sense of prominence. Akashi's (2018) analysis of celebrity translators in Japan further supports this notion, as she observed that font size often reflects the importance of the translator, with prominent figures like Murakami Haruki receiving equal billing alongside the author (*ibid.*, pp. 187-188).

Furthermore, the analysis of font color shows that many Jordanian publishers opt for font colors that do not sharply contrast with those used for the author's name. While this choice may enhance the visual appeal of the cover, it could also reduce the visibility of the translator, potentially hindering their recognition and acknowledgment. Lastly, the way translators' names are positioned on front covers reveals some interesting trends that need a closer look. Unlike

what Akashi found in Japan, where placing the translator's name alongside the author's showed significance, our analysis shows that in Jordan, it is more common for the translator's name to be centered on the cover. This difference might highlight variations in cultural norms and publishing practices between Jordan and Japan.

## **Conclusion and Implications**

This study examined the interrelationship between peritextual elements and translator (in)visibility within the context of Jordanian publishing houses. Through corpus-based approach, front covers of translated works originating from 29 Jordanian publishing houses were analyzed according to the newly created point-based system. This was further developed through building a visibility index that measured the visibility of the translator's name on each cover. By analyzing three peritextual elements on the front covers of 349 translated works, namely font size, font color, and the position of the translator's name, the research addressed a notable gap in the existing literature concerning the concept of (in)visibility in general and the (in)visibility of Arab translators in particular.

The statistical results also have broader implications for the field of empirical translation studies. For example, whether the font size, color and position of the translator's name have any direct relation to placing more emphasis on the recognition of the translator or whether it is a matter of spatial or visual consideration only is a point that needs further investigation. Moreover, the relationship between the (in)visibility of the translator's name and the genre of the translated work (Kovala, 1996, p. 126) may prove a good topic for further analysis of the current data.

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