

Arabic- English Translation in the Palestinian – Israeli ‘Conflict’: Ideology in the Wings¹

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Abstract

This study presents a critical analysis of a sample of Arabic-English media translations sponsored by MEMRI (Middle Eastern Media Research Institution) and related to the Palestinian-Israeli ‘conflict’ in special dispatch stories taken from Arabic Newspapers and magazines. The results of the study show that translation has been employed as a tool to propagate the views and ideologies of the translators in a good number of cases. Such translations contain terms and ideas that have changed the original intended meaning. The study further demonstrates that the translators’ association with the text could affect the translation and the ideology of the target text especially in contexts of political conflicts.

Keywords: *Arabic-English translation, ideology, media, Palestinian-Israeli conflict*

1. Introduction

This is a study on translation and ideology. In particular, it aims to demonstrate how ideologically motivated Arabic-English translation in the context of the Palestinian-Israeli ‘conflict’ can be used as a manipulation tool to reshape the recipient’s perceptions, beliefs, ideas and thoughts. To demonstrate this, the current study draws on House’s (2015) Translation Quality Assessment (TQA) model and applies it to the English translations of a collection of Arabic-English media translations sponsored by the Middle Eastern Media Research Institution (MEMRI) and related to the Palestinian-Israeli ‘conflict’ in special dispatch stories taken from Arabic Newspapers and other media sources.

Media and translation are important tools of communication which are used to connect peoples and cultures (Abdulla 1999). In this context, news media are used by different institutions to project their ideas and thoughts as well as their cultural, political and religious beliefs and perceptions. Thus, the employment of media and translation serves, though mostly indirectly, to present the interests of these institutions by attempting to influence the recipients’ ideas and beliefs. Put another way, an important aim of media and translation agencies is to persuade the recipient of certain views and perceptions.

The message presented by these agencies is never transmitted in a vacuum. It is more likely to be affected by the translator’s beliefs, thoughts, values, i.e. the translator’s ideology. In this sense, the translator is the leader of the translation process which stands as an ideological carrier from one language or cultural community to another. Translators are often free to choose the source text (ST), the recipient audience and the strategies they apply. These choices affect the translation process and the outcome through the application of strategies such as lexical choice, substitution, addition and deletion that may change the meaning of the original ST (Sharma 2015; Sinha 2015; Soori 2015).

Translation, especially in the context of conflict and instability, embodies a number of sensitive and controversial issues which represent certain political and ideological stances (Byewerk 1998; Asghar 2015). These stances are mainly affected by the translator or the translation agency’s beliefs and views toward certain matters. In this sense, translation turns into a manipulatory act that contributes to reshaping the recipients’ thoughts and perceptions towards

certain issues through hidden devices within the text (Shuping 2013). This act, once achieved, creates a context for the recipient to be involuntarily affected by the ideology of the translator or the agency. The recipients receive new ideas and cultural forms which either detach them from a certain perspective or link them with certain ideas and beliefs depending on the received material and the ideology of the translator.

Furthermore, the translator's ideological choices may emphasize or suppress the meaning and the message behind the ST and thus change its author's ideas and beliefs. Consequently, these changes may lead to manipulating the readers' mind through presenting a new version loaded with 'alien' concepts and ideas. Once this happens, this new version, i.e., the target text (TT) creates an ideological misrepresentation which deludes the recipient from the original meaning and creates a different understanding, especially in the context of political conflict and instability, to generate certain notions or weaken some established views.

2. Translation, media and ideology

Ideology plays a very important role in shaping and reshaping ideas and texts in translation (Said 2008; Karoubi 2009; Oyelele and Osisnawo 2013; Melhem 2017). De Beaugrande and Dressler (1981:109) are among the first to discuss the subject of ideology and translation, suggesting that ideology intervenes with the translated text when the ideology of the ST does not match the translator's own ideology. Ideology can drive the translator to empower or diminish a perspective to achieve certain goals through a manipulation process applied to the text. Therefore, the text is usually managed "according to the producer's outlook, beliefs, plans and goals" De Beaugrande and Dressler (1981: 109). Venuti (1998:7) describes translation as a rewriting process which allows those in power to project their ideologies and propaganda through the TT. When the meaning of the original text is "differential, exceeding and possibly conflicting with the intentions of ... the translator" Venuti (1998: 7), the translator tends to maneuver, persuade and twist the text to match his/her own narrative of the story.

Van Dijk (1998:2) presents a theory and a definition of ideology which explains how ideology is manipulated, expressed and reproduced by discourse. He defines it as "a system of wrong, false, distorted or otherwise misguided beliefs, typically associated with our social or political opponents". He posits that ideologies are basic systems that present common social orders which affect and reshape the ideas and beliefs of certain groups. In the same vein, Baker (1998:107) suggests that "individuals and institutions have applied their particular beliefs to the production of certain effects in translation" (see also Baker 1992, 2006). Shuping (2013: 56) claims that "translation has never been an isolated activity". It is governed by the translators' affiliations in the text and context which "has been shaped by a certain force, power or reason" Aksoy (2001: 3).

Further, Fandi (2005: 67) argues that ideology is concerned with reproduction, legitimization, false ideas, and dominant power, social and political interests. He claims that "translation gives only a partial version of reality because some translators may well be inclined to manipulate, distort and suppress so that the end product, i.e. translation, is recognizably biased and prejudiced". However, Chung-ling (2010) argues that the ideologies and strategies applied by the translators are controlled and constrained by authoritative bodies such as institutions, publishers and governments. The choice of strategies is "out of their free will and personal preferences... [and] ideology [is] one of the varieties that has governed the translator's choice of strategy and the overall translation performance".

In addition, an ideology is not always easily spotted by the reader or the recipient. The recipients tend to rely on the new media agencies or institution to receive their daily news and refine

their perceptions, especially with regard to religious and political contexts. Ashubbak and Hussein (2013: 105) confirm that the promotion of ideology can be best manifested in political contexts because they contain sensitive and controversial issues. They remark that “the matter of objectivity and subjectivity is subjective to the political and ideological dimensions of the translators”. Lopez and Caro (2014: 250) also believe that the translated text is managed by the translators’ political, cultural and religious views which control their decisions. These decisions “may also be ideologically biased, exerting a positive or negative influence on the image and impact of a translation and its target culture” Lopez and Caro (2014: 250).

In contrast, Aslani and Salmani (2015: 86) add that news agencies influence the delivery of information and affect the translation process through biased interpretations embedded in the translated text. They claim that “power relations and ideological stand points of the news providers highly affect the process of news production in translation”. Allawzi (2018: 3) believes that the language and content of the translated news report are controlled by the narrative and ideology of the news agency. She claims that:

Language can be a battlefield of discourses and counter discourses that promote and/or change certain ideologies. Thus, it can be used as a manipulation tool for the interest of certain power and agents in order to promote certain ideas and thoughts.

As is clear, the studies presented above show that ideology in translation has been investigated by many scholars in different contexts and different languages. However, political texts occupy a significant position due to their vital role in shaping the audiences’ perspectives, decisions and attitudes. In this context, the study reported here examines the extent to which the Arabic-English translation of political texts has the potential to be used as a proxy for promoting ideologies through employing House’s (2015) model. However, before proceeding and for the readers’ convenience, an over view of the model is presented in section 3.

3. House’s 2015 TQA model

House’s TQA model is based on Hallidayan Systemic-Functional Theory (SFT), drawing at the same time on Prague School ideas, Grice’s speech act theory, pragmatics and discourse analysis. According to this model, in order to assess the quality of translation, the original text needs to be compared and contrasted with its translation on three levels, viz., (1) language/text, (2) register (field, tenor, and mode), and (3) genre. House (2015: 64) posits that field “captures the topic, the content of the text and its subject matter with differentiations of degrees of generality, specificity or ‘granularity’ in lexical items.” Tenor deals with the participants, mainly the addresser and the addressee and the relationship between them taking into account social power and social distance. It further includes “the text producer’s temporal, geographical and social provenance as well as his intellectual, emotional or affective stance (his personal ‘viewpoint’) ... [and] ‘social attitude’, i.e., different styles (formal, consultative and informal)” (ibid: 64). Mode “refers to the channel – spoken or written, and the degree to which potential or real participation is allowed for between writer and reader” (ibid:64). If there is no participation of the addressee as is the case in a monologue, it is ‘simple’, but if the addressee is involved, it is labeled as ‘complex’. An adequate translation then based on this model is an undertaking that involves “replacement of a text in the source language by a semantically and pragmatically equivalent text in the target language” (ibid:63). In an attempt to translate a text adequately, translators may resort to overt or covert translation strategies. In House’ words, an overt translation is:

One in which the addressees of the translation text are quite 'overtly' not directly addressed: an overt translation is not a 'second original'. In overt translation the original is tied in a specific manner to the source language community and its culture, and is often specifically directed at source culture addressees but at the same time points beyond the source language community because it is, independent of its source language origin, also of potential general human interest (2015:54).

Covert translation, on the other hand, is “a translation which enjoys the status of an original source text in the target culture. The translation is covert because it is not marked pragmatically as a translation text of a source text but may conceivably have been created in its own right” (ibid: 66). Ideologically motivated mismatches are more likely to fall within covert translation in terms of tenor, particularly the political stance of the translator compared with the original stance of the creator.

A careful examination of the source text and the target text then based on House’s (2015) Model could lead to the identification of mismatches that can either be covert or overt. Covertly erroneous translations result from dimensional mismatches at the levels of field, tenor, and mode. Overt errors, on the other hand, result from “either a mismatch of the denotative meanings of source and translation text elements or from a breach of the target language system (ibid:33).

4. Research questions

The study seeks answers to the following questions:

1. What strategies do MEMRI translators use to promote certain ideologies in their translations of news media reports from Arabic into English in the context of the Palestinian – Israeli ‘conflict’?
2. How does the use of these strategies impact the understanding of the translated text when compared with the original one?

5. Source of data

The data of the study were collected from the website of MEMRI, which was founded in 1998 by Yigal Carmon, a former Israeli military intelligence officer and Meyrav Wurmser, an Israeli-born American political scientist (<https://www.memri.org/about>). MEMRI is a research institution based in Washington D.C. It offers a wide range of translations whose source texts are taken from Arabic newspapers. As stated on its website, MEMRI claims that its ultimate objective is to "bridge the language gap between the Middle East and the West". Further, it describes itself as “an independent, nonpartisan, nonprofit ... organization”. However, Political Research Associates (PRA), which studies the US political right, considers that MEMRI's claims about its goal and status do not “convey the institute's stridently pro-Israel and anti-Arab political bias”. In the same vein, Brian Whitaker, a former Middle East editor for the Guardian, reports that his problem with MEMRI is that it “poses as a research institute when it’s basically a propaganda operation”, adding that its role is to “further the agenda of Israel” (https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Middle_East_Media_Research_Institute#History)².

6. Corpus and selected sample

As far as this study is concerned, MEMRI provides a wide collection of timely translations on a daily basis from Arabic Middle East media into English. The reports on MEMRI's website are divided into six main categories, namely, special dispatches, inquiry and analysis series, MEMRI daily brief, special announcements, special alerts, and special reports. The selected sub-corpus for this research consists of 280 reports related to the Palestinian-Israeli 'conflict' and published by MEMRI under the category of special dispatches. They are divided into three types: verbatim translations, commentaries and reviews. In this research, verbatim translations are the ones initially selected for analysis. They constitute 178 reports. However, these reports are listed under different sub-types as well, including articles, videos and clips, speeches and addresses, statements, reactions of people, interviews and songs. Hence, for better and more focused analysis, this research is limited to articles, speeches and addresses. The data proper of this study (i.e. the sample) are MEMRI anonymous English translations of Arabic articles, speeches and addresses which are originally delivered in newspapers such as *Al-Quds*, *Dunya Al-Watan*, *Al-Ayyam* and other media sources on issues related to the Palestinian-Israeli 'conflict'. The number of these is 65 on an average of 12 per year, one item a month, generally the first translation. In the years which have less than 12 relevant reports, all were selected.

The selected translations have many things in common. First, in terms of length, they range from a minimum of 220 words to a maximum of 1000. Second, all are anonymized and referred to as MEMRI translations. Finally, they appear between 2012 and 2017, a period which witnessed political and/or regime changes in some Arab countries. However, the impact of these changes was not restricted to the countries in which they occurred such as Tunisia, Egypt, Yemen, Libya and Syria but they caused general instability in the region as a whole and affected the Palestinian-Israeli 'conflict'. Each translation was compared with its source text with a view to identifying those TT tokens which showed an ideologically motivated change in the meaning of the ST.

7. Results and discussion

The analysis of data demonstrated that MEMRI translators used covert translation strategies to create a second though unjustifiable ideologically-motivated version of the Arabic ST. In the words of House (2015:67) in a covert translation "the translator's task is to betray the original and to hide behind the transformation of the original; he is certainly less visible, if not totally absent." House (2015: 67) further maintains that "since true functional equivalence is aimed at, the original may be legitimately manipulated at the levels of language/text and register using a cultural filter. The result may be a very real distance from the original."

In light of this, the ideologically motivated translations are directed to a recipient who belongs to a culture different from that of the ST and who speaks the language of the target text (TT), in our case, English. Such a reader is exposed to what appears to be a straightforward text in terms of language and probably culture because as House posits the translator has created a second original. In such a case and under such conditions, the target audience of readers are unlikely to discover the covert mismatches which have been intentionally hidden in the text by the translator. However, the situation is quite different from the perspective of a translation assessor who is expected to base translation quality assessment on a careful comparison and contrast of both the ST and the TT. It goes without saying that such an assessor is assumed to be linguistically, culturally

and pragmatically competent in the languages of the two texts and thus can identify ideologically motivated covert mismatches if any.

Further, the analysis of data from an assessor perspective highlights that MEMRI’s translators have used covert translation, particularly in terms of tenor, often by twisting some of the facts on the ground, e.g., turning perpetrators into victims, and by introducing an anti-Palestinian and pro-Israeli stance manipulating the predominantly prevalent pro-Palestinian stance and narrative in the original texts. Careful examinations of the translations reveal that MEMRI’s translators have utilized three strategies to hide their ideologically motivated mismatches in the TT. These strategies are substitution, addition and omission. The employment of these strategies has yielded 56 mismatches as shown in the table.

Number and percentage of ideologically motivated mismatches in terms of strategy

Strategy	Number of Tokens	Percentage
Substitution	28	56
Addition	9	18
Omission	13	26

As shown in the table, substitution was the most frequently used strategy as it has yielded the greatest number and percentage of ideologically motivated mismatches, accounting for 56 percent of the identified cases while addition was the least used strategy accounting for 18 percent only. Omission ranked second accounting for 26 percent of the tokens. In what follows we provide a brief description of each strategy together with illustrative examples. We also show how the use of each strategy has impacted the understanding of the translated text when compared with the original one. The elements under investigation in the illustrative examples always appear in boldface.

7.1 Substitution

Substitution is defined as “the act, process, or result of substituting one thing for another” (Merriam-Webster Online Dictionary). For the purpose of this study, substitution refers to the process of replacing a word, a phrase or more with one item or more within the translated text to serve an ideologically driven purpose intended by the translator. In translation, this process usually implies a replacement of an item with another in the target language which may have a similar indication of the original or a different one that changes the original. This change is more likely to impact the recipients’ understanding and guide their perspective away from the original to a new one indicated by the translator’s choice of replacement. Further, it is one of the most frequent discursive structures used by translators to reflect an ideology through the text. Nida and Taber (1982: 140) claim that “in semantic analysis, however, our substitutions are right if the substitution in question serves to identify the same constituent without introducing contradictory or additional features not already implied in the original context”. Van Dijk (1998: 205) also posits that word choice and replacement of certain items promotes an ideology and a system of beliefs regarding certain issues in the world. Accordingly, such strategy “presupposes norms, values and ideologies that are claimed to be universal or widely accepted in a society” (ibid: 259). For example, when

the translator replaces the word ‘martyr’ with ‘late’, this replacement changes the interpretation implied in the original text by the word ‘martyr’ which holds a figurative national concept of struggle and sacrifice for a just cause. However, the word ‘late’ is usually used to refer to a deceased person showing respect to the person who died carrying a note of reverence, but not to someone who lost his/her life for the sake of a noble cause. It also affects the mind of the reader and his/her view of the situation and removes the empathy factor from the text.

The following are examples of the use of substitution as a strategy to serve an ideologically driven purpose. The first example presents the case of substitution of a word with another. However, the second and the third examples demonstrate the substitutions of a phrase or more with another in the translated text.

(1) a. Source text

ورغم أنّ أحداث الهولوكوست وقعت في الماضي، إلا أنّ محنة الفلسطينيين ما زالت مستمرة في الحاضر. ومن ثم، يصعب جداً أن نطلب من الضحايا الذين يعانون من احتلال لوطنهم ومصادرة مستمرة لأراضيهم وممتلكاتهم ومعاناة أحبائهم في المعتقلات وحرمانهم من حقوقهم الانسانية أن يتعرفوا على معاناة الآخر.

(Fikraforum.org, November 26, 2013)

wa raghma ḥanna ḥahdaath al-holokost waqaʿat fi al-maaḍi, ḥilla ḥanna miḥnat al-filistiiniyyiin maa zaalat mustamirra fi al-ḥaaḍir. wa min thamma yasʿub jiddan ḥan naṭluba min al-dahaaya al-lathiina yuʿaanuuna min iḥtilaal liwaṭanihim wa muṣaadara mustamirra liḥabibihim wa mumtalakaatihim wa muʿaanaat ḥahibbaaḥihim fi al-muʿtaqalaat wahirmaanihim min huquuqihim al-ḥinsaaniyya ḥan yataʿarrafu ʿalaa muʿaanaat al-ḥaakhar.

b. Target Text

While the events of the Holocaust happened in the past, the Palestinian suffering still continues, and therefore it is very difficult to ask these victims – who suffer the occupation of their homeland, the continuous usurpation of their land and property, the suffering of their loved ones in **prisons**, and a denial of their humanitarian rights – to study about the suffering of others.

<https://www.memri.org/reports/professor-al-quds-university-holocaust-must-be-taught-pa-schools>

While the Arabic text uses the word معتقلات ‘detention centers/camps’ to refer to the places where the Palestinian prisoners are kept by Israel, the translated text uses the word ‘prisons’. The word ‘prison’ is used to describe the place where someone is imprisoned and is put there as a result of committing a crime that breaks a federal or criminal law. However, ‘معتقلات’ refers to the place where the person is arrested, detained and his/her rights are trespassed without referring to any law or legislation. The word itself holds a further political meaning especially for Palestinians. The word ‘prison’ is used to refer to a criminal act or behavior. However, معتقلات has always been used by Palestinians and opposition political parties in some Middle East Arab countries to refer to the kind of imprisonment which includes administrative detention by the Israeli forces or the regimes of their countries without reference to any charges. A fair and faithful translation of the word ‘معتقلات’ is probably concentration camps or detention centers (Cronin 2017). A “concentration camp refers to a camp in which people are detained or confined, usually under harsh conditions and without regard to legal norms of arrest and imprisonment that are acceptable in a constitutional democracy” (United States Holocaust Memorial Museum). As is clear, the translator’s word choice in this example has reduced the intensity and brutality associated with the ST term.

Furthermore, according to Encyclopaedia Britannica, these camps are internment centers for confining members of national groups or minorities based on their political or ethnic affiliations. The prisoners are confined according to a military order or an executive decree and often denied a fair trial. The word has been used with many translations and names of other concentration camps such as معتقل غوانتانامو ‘Guantanamo Bay detention camp’ in the United States and معتقل الخيام ‘Khiam detention camp’ run by Israel in southern Lebanon from 1985 to 2000. In actuality, Palestinian media sources tend to use the binomial السجون والمعتقلات الإسرائيلية ‘Israeli prisons and detention camps’. This was spotted in many articles and news reports taken from the website of the news agency, an example of which is *Donia Al-Watan*.

Hence, the choice of the word used in the translation process has suppressed the meaning of the original text serving the translator’s aim to mitigate the intensity of the original word. Lopez and Caro (2013: 250) described similar interventions as “ideologically biased, exerting a positive or negative influence on the image and impact of a translation and its target culture”. In this example, the translation has impacted the target text by providing a less negative image compared with the original item and thus has toned down the meaning the word معتقلات which actually describes the detention status of the Palestinian prisoners. This ideologically motivated translation is not in line with the Palestinian narrative and media jargon, to say the least. Put under the microscope of a translation quality assessor, this substitution is a clear case of a covert mismatch in tenor, particularly in terms of the attitude of the translator in comparison with that of the author of the original text. This substitution is not the result of cross-cultural misunderstandings, nor is it the outcome of language deficiencies in the translator. Instead, it is the product of an intentional ideologically motivated manipulation that is unlikely to be spotted by a reader who does not have a linguistic and/or cultural and pragmatic competence in the languages of both the source and the target text or even a competent translation assessor in the absence of the ST.

(2) a. Source Text

ما أشبه اليوم بالأمس ففي العام 1967 كانت نكسة حزيران، وسقطت الضفة وسيناء والجولان بيد إسرائيل.
(*Al-Quds* (Jerusalem), March 21, 2017)

maa ʔashbah al-yawm bilʔams farii al-ʕaam 1967 kaanat naksat ḥaziiraan, wasaqat al-diffa al-gharbiyya wa siinaa wa al-juulaan biyad ʔisraaʔiil.

b. Target Text

How similar our current time is to yesteryear. **In the June 1967 [war] we suffered defeat,** and the [West] Bank, Sinai, and the Golan fell into Israeli hands.

(<https://www.memri.org/fatah%20member%20%27abbas%20zaki%20calls%20for%20popular%20resistance%20against%20israel>)

While the Arabic text refers to the Arab failure in the 1967 as نكسة حزيران ‘June Naksa or Setback’, the English text renders it as ‘defeat’. The translator’s substitution of the mitigated meaning embedded in the phrase نكسة حزيران in the source text with ‘defeat’ changes the intention and the emotional outlook of the original (cf. Assaiqeli 2021) and thus violates one standard of textuality, namely, intentionality. The translator presented another term (not a synonym) to the target audience which is culturally and politically different from the shared concept by the Arabic-speaking audience. The phrase نكسة حزيران in the ST is used to refer to the 1967 war between Israel and the neighboring Arab countries. The war resulted with Israel’s occupation of the Gaza strip, Arab East Jerusalem and the West Bank in addition to Sinai and the Golan Heights. However, the

Arab leaders and Palestinians refused to call the war result هزيمة ‘defeat’; they looked at the painful result as something temporary which they would shortly overcome. Therefore, they called the second catastrophe نكسة [the first was in 1948] because the term has a lighter weight on the hearer and thus less harsh than a defeat. Furthermore, the term ‘Naksa’ presents a temporary hurdle. In other words, the term implies that it is only a matter of time in which there will be a recovery and a comeback. Hence, the translator’s substitution conceals the Arab and Palestinian refusal to accept defeat by subscribing to the word ‘Naksa’.

Fahmi and Emad (2011) refer to this kind of substitution as a form of framing in which the translator re-organizes or redefines a culture-specific concept. The translator’s intervention introduces a new voice (the translator’s voice) and interpretation to the translated text. The new voice aims to promote the translator’s ideology which probably supports a different and harsher narrative towards the outcome of the 1967 war.

(3) a. Source Text

مما تسبب حتى الان في تحميل الشعب الفلسطيني أثمان باهظة في الأرواح والممتلكات كان في غنى عن دفعها... بينما لا بواكي للفتى أبو خضير لأنه من ذوي الدماء غير المقدسة بحسب تصنيف المجتمع الدولي للعرقيات السياسية والبشرية التي تضع (الإسرائيلي) في مرتبة متقدمة، والفلسطيني في مرتبة متدنية.

(Amad.ps, August 7, 2014)

... mimma tasabab hatta al-ʔan fii tahmiil al-shaʔb al-falastiini ʔathmaan baahitha fi al-ʔarwaah wa al-mumtalakaat kaan fi ghina ʕan dafʕiha ... baynama la bawaaki lil-fata abu khdeer liʔannahu min thawi al-dimaaʔ ghayr al-muqaddasa bihasb tasniif al-mujtamaʕ al-duwali lil-ʕirqiyyaat al-siyasiyya wal-bashariyya allatii tadaʕ al-ʔisraaʔiili fi martaba mutaqaddima wal-falastiini fi martaba mutadaniyya

b. Target Text

... which caused the **Palestinians** considerable and avoidable casualties and material damage ...but it does not lament the death of the Palestinian boy Abu Khdeir, since he belongs to the group whose blood is not [considered] sacred, according to the international community's classification of human, ethnic and political groups, which places **Israel** high on the ladder and the **Palestinians** low.

(<https://www.memri.org/reports/palestinian-columnist-hamas-did-not-win-war-only-brought-suffering-upon-gazans>)

In this example, the translator replaces the phrase الشعب الفلسطيني with ‘Palestinians’ in the translation process. In this substitution, the translator draws his/her own political practice on the translated text reducing the quality of the original text. Using House’s (2015) model, through comparing and contrasting the original text and its translation one can see an intentional change in the tenor, particularly in the stance or viewpoint of the author of the ST. In the Arabic text, the word شعب which can be rendered as nation or people refers to a large number of people who share the same origin, ancestry, history, language, culture and traditions who inhabit a particular land or state. However, the translator’s choice, i.e. referring to الشعب الفلسطيني as Palestinians, changing the adjective to a noun produced a different meaning which removes the feature of a nation living on their specified land. For example, when referring to ‘Kurds’ the term refers to an ethnic group which share the same ancestry, language or religion, but not necessarily sharing a specified land or borders that unite them. They live in different countries including Iran, Syria, Iraq and Jordan. Hence, this choice of word strips the Palestinian people from this feature of a nation on a specified land.

Again, the reader can also notice the translator's rendition of 'الاسرائيلي' as 'Israel' not 'Israeli' giving the Israelis the feature of a country and a geographical location. When compared to the translation of الفلسطينيين as 'Palestinians' without highlighting a place nor a country, the reader can clearly identify the translator's choice which strips the feature of a nation or a state from one side of the 'conflict' and giving it to another. The translator's choice of substitution reflects an ideological bias to the narrative of a certain side, i.e. the Israeli side. Therefore, "translation gives only a partial version of reality because some translators may well be inclined to manipulate, distort and suppress so that the end product, i.e. translation, is recognizably biased and prejudiced" towards a certain side or group especially when presented through a political text which represents a status of conflict (Fandi and Wardat, 2015:67).

7.2 Omission

In omission, the translator drops a word, a phrase, or a sentence which was there in the source text from the translated text. Omission does not always affect the meaning because the translator sometimes opts to drop words that are unfamiliar to the culture of the target text reader and replaces them with what he/she thinks convey the original message. However, the omitted text, if done intentionally to serve an ideological purpose, it can change the meaning and intentions of the source text. It can reduce the quality of the translated text, promote a different understanding which deludes the reader from the original meaning and thus creates false ideas and concepts. Khanmohammad and Aminzad (2015: 9) claim that omission as a translation strategy is similar to addition in which it may cause damages to the original text and change the meaning of the original. This issue becomes more critical when "done by a news agency on the translation of social, cultural and political news... [because] news agencies are, supposedly, the most trustable organizations to deliver the news unruffled".

(4) a. Source Text

استخدم المستوطنون جسد الفتى المقدسي محمد حسين أبو خضير (١٧ عاماً)، من قرية شعفاط شمال القدس المحتلة، لانتقامهم المقدس من خلال تعذيبه وحرقه حتى الموت ...

(*Al-Risalah* (Gaza), July 3, 2014)

istakhdama al-mustawtinuun jasad al-fataa al-maqdisi muhammad hussein abu khdeir (17 years), min qaryat shu'faat shamaal al-quds al-muhtalla, lintaqaamihim al-muqaddas min khilaal ta'hiibih wa harqih hatta al-mawt.

b. Target Text

The settlers used the body of 17-year-old Muhammad Hussein Abu Khdeir, from Shuafat in **northern Jerusalem**, to carry out their sacred [act of] vengeance by torturing him and burning him to death

(<https://www.memri.org/reports/editor-hamas-paper-murder-palestinian-teen-jerusalem-reminiscent-jews-custom-baking-matzos>)

The Arabic text gives details regarding Abu Khdeir's village. It is called Shuafat and is located in the north of occupied Jerusalem شمال القدس المحتلة. The text refers to Jerusalem as an occupied entity. However, the translator in the English text refers to it as 'Jerusalem' only and omits the word occupied المحتلة. This omission removes the meaning indicated by the word 'occupied' and its implications including, but not limited to, the existence of a dominant illegitimate power,

violations, stolen land and borders, etc. The translator has manipulated the translated text through omission which resulted in highlighting and probably promoting the Israeli narrative regarding the status of Jerusalem as the united capital of Israel. In the words of Nida (1964:154), the translator here through this covert mismatch “distorts the message to fit [his/her] own intellectual and emotional outlook.”

Suleiman (2004: 138) posits that “one of the most important aspects of the Arab-Israeli conflict is the manipulation of terminology to create a *linguistic map* that conditions people’s perceptions of the facts on the ground”. Consequently, the translator’s intervention here is just an example of manipulating the terminology of the original in favor of the Israeli narrative. According to van Dijk (1998: 2), ideologies presuppose the socially or politically self-serving nature of the definition of truth and falsity”. Hence, the translator’s manipulation in this example is another act of framing imposed on the translation process to present a different perception of the truth.

(5) a. Source Text

لم أتوقع أي سيناريو، ولكنني استبعدت بعد حكمي 16 مؤبدا وقضائي فترة في السجن قلت إن الأمر اختلف، وحينما جاءت المطالبات الأمريكية باعتقالي، تفاجأت ولم يكن لدي أي علم أن من بين القتلى 2 أمريكيان، أنا أعلم أن الصهاينة جاؤوا من أصقاع الأرض ولم يكن لهم مكان، ولم يكن لدي أي دراية عن جنسيات القتلى.

(*Al-Ghad* (Jordan), March 20, 2017)

lam ?atawaqqa ° ?ayya sinaaryu, walaakinni istab ° adtu ba ° da hukmi 16 mu?abbaddan wa qadaa?i fatra fi al-sijn qult inna al-?amra ikhtalaf, wa hiinamaa jaa?at al-mu?aalabaat al-?amriikiyya bi ° tiqaali, taffaja?atu wa lam yakun ladayya ?ayyu ° ilm ?anna bayna al-qatlaa 2 ?amiirkaan, ?anaa ?a ° lam ?anaa al-sahaayina jaa?uu min ?sqa ° al-?ard wa lam yakun lahum makaan, wa lam yakun ladayya diraya ° an jinsiyyaat al-qatlaa.

b) Target Text

When the Americans demanded to arrest me, I was surprised, because I didn't know that the victims [of the Sbarro bombing] included two Americans. I know that the Zionists came [to Palestine] from all over the world and they had no place, but I did not know the victims' nationalities.

(<https://www.memri.org/reports/palestinian-jordanian-terrorist-ahlam-al-tamimi-jordanian-muslim-brotherhood-mouthpiece-long>)

The Arabic text highlights the brutal and arbitrary sentence issued by the Israeli authorities against Ahlam Al-Tamimi, i.e. 16 life imprisonments in addition to her being jailed for an unspecified period of time. Conversely, the English target text has dropped this part completely. According to the international criminal law item No. 147, any sentence of life imprisonment is a minimum of 10 years and a maximum of 30 years and may not exceed that period. However, the Israeli penal law states that life imprisonment is a minimum of 10 years and varies according to the number of life imprisonments the person receives which may reach 100 years or even more depending on the directed accusations and the committed crime. Hence, the translator’s manipulation of the translated text by the abandonment of realities and facts serves the translator’s ideological purpose which aims to diminish and conceal the bitter facts stated in the original text. According to van Dijk (1998), the translators’ manipulation affirms the employment of ideology in the translation process to conceal certain facts from the original text. In this excerpt, the translator’s act has concealed the brutal and arbitrary sentences issued in accordance with the Israeli Penal law.

(6) a. Source Text

فلو أدركت حركة حماس بجناحها وقيادتها السياسية والعسكرية الظروف الغزية التي عاشها ويعيش المواطن طيلة السبع سنوات الماضية لما وصلنا إلى هذا الحد من الخسائر المأساوية ، ولما فقدنا ما يقارب أحد عشر ألف مواطن بين شهداء وجرحي جملهم من الأطفال والنسوة وكبار السن.

(Amad.ps, August 7, 2014)

falaw ?adrakat harakat hamaas bijnaahiha wa qiyaadatiha al-siyasiyya wal-^caskaryya al-Thuruf al-ghaziyya allatii ^caashahaa wa ya^cyiish al-muwaatin tiilat al-sab^c sanwaat al-maadiya lama wasalna ?ilaa haatha al-had min al-khsaa?ir al-ma?saawiyya, walamaa faqadnaa maa yuqaarib ?ahada ^cashra ?alf muwaatin bayn shuhada? wa jarhaa julluhum min al-?atfaal wal-niswa wa kibaar al-sin.

b. Target Text

Had Hamas' various branches and political and military leaders understood the Palestinians' living conditions in the last seven years, **we would not have reached this situation [and suffered] these tragic casualties...** mostly among children and elderly people.

(<https://www.memri.org/reports/palestinian-columnist-hamas-did-not-win-war-only-brought-suffering-upon-gazans>)

The Arabic text gives an estimated number of the wounded and martyred citizens. It clarifies that these citizens are mostly children, women and the elderly among the Palestinian people over the past seven years. Conversely, the translated text completely omits this huge number and changes the words شهداء وجرحي, i.e. martyrs and wounded, to 'casualties'. According to Oxford Online dictionary, the word causality refers to any person or group of people who were harmed or killed as a result of an accident, event or an act of war. However, 'wounded' i.e. 'جريح' indicates "a suffering of an injury or a bodily harm caused by a bullet or a laceration". Furthermore, the word 'martyr' i.e. شهيد means a person who suffered persecution and was killed due to advocating and refusing to relinquish a certain belief or cause of a great value; the cause in the text is defending a country. The translator here suppresses the intended meaning of the original Arabic text. The translator's management in the text is visible in the omission of the number of losses which aims to reduce the volume of the brutality of the Israeli crimes. Moreover, the replacement of شهداء وجرحي with 'casualties' aims to reduce the empathy factor to the reader. This management in the text is a manipulation which aims to influence the reader's understanding of the text that is affected by the translator's political views. These views reflect the translator's ideological perception which is in favor of a certain power and side of the 'conflict'. Shuping (2013:56) posits that "translation is not a pure, simple and transparent linguistic matter but involves factors such as power, ideology, poetics and patronage". Furthermore, Van Dijk (1998: 168) claims that most scholars, especially in political contexts and conflicts, are subjective to self-serving opinions and truths which are consistent with their interests and demand. Accordingly, the ideology employed in this example serves to diminish the intensity of the Palestinian people's suffering and to conceal the brutal crimes of the Israel.

7.3 Addition

Addition in translation is the process of adding a word, a phrase, a sentence or more to the TT which do not exist in the ST. This addition to the text brings certain non-existing concepts which produce a different meaning. According to Khanmohammad and Aminzad (2015), additions might cause irreparable damages to the translated text. Yet, the issue becomes more complicated and disputable when addition is undertaken by a news agency or a translator with a view to promoting an ideological perspective while interacting with a social, cultural and political text. The new elements added to the translation can either introduce a certain concept or meaning which is not

originally there in the source text or reduce the quality and the purpose intended by the original text.

(7) a. Source Text

قامت البلديات العربية والإسرائيلية المتعاقبة بإضافتها (المنطقة غير الدينية) للمدينة وتقسيمها إلى قدس إسرائيلية وقدس عربية تفصلهما حواجز نفسية وسياسية.

(Maannews.net, January 28, 2014)

qaamat al-baladiyyaat al-^carabiyya wa al-ʔisraaʔiiliyya al-muta^caaqiba biʔidaafatihaa [ʔalmaantiq ghayriddiiniyya] lilmadiina wa taqsiimihaa ʔilaa quds ʔisraaʔiiliyya wa quds ^carabiyya tafsiluhumaa hawaajiz nafsiyya wa siyaasiyya.

b. Target Text

Consecutive Arab and Israeli municipalities annexed [the nonreligious area] to the [holy] city, and it was divided into Israeli Jerusalem and Arab Jerusalem, which are separated by **psychological and political barriers but not by any [physical] wall or barrier.**

(<https://www.memri.org/reports/palestinian-lecturer-palestinians-should-moderate-their-negotiating-positions-and-stop-being>)

The Arabic text حواجز نفسية وسياسية ‘psychological and political barriers’ describes the barriers that divide Jerusalem into Arab East Jerusalem and Israeli West Jerusalem as being both psychological and political. However, the translated text contains an addition introducing a new meaning that was not included in the original text. The addition of ‘but not by any [physical] wall or barrier’ to the translated text indicates the non-existence of any real or noticeable barrier that divides the two parts of the city. The translator manipulated the original text through twisting facts and changing realities. In fact, on crossing the East part of the city to the West or vice versa, one can notice differences between both areas. For instance, Suleiman (2004: 12) explains that at a certain point through his trip to Jerusalem his child asks him whether he can speak Arabic now (after leaving West Jerusalem and nearing the East part) every time they reach the uphill which creates a physical socio-political and linguistic boundary between the two sides. When Suleiman and his family or any other Palestinians cross the West part of the city, they tend to switch to English because most of the people on the streets there are either Israelis who speak Hebrew or foreigners who speak English, thus creating both a linguistic and physical boundary between the two sides of the city. Furthermore, after crossing the uphill (a physical barrier) one can also notice the difference in buildings (old vs. new) and shop signs (which are written in Hebrew). The people themselves and the way they are dressed are also different, especially the Ashkenazi Jews. These noticeable features and changes between the two parts of the city are physical barriers that separate the two parts of the city into two different cities: Arab East Jerusalem and Israeli West Jerusalem.

The source text does not indicate the non-existence of any physical barriers. However, the addition or explanation imposed on the translated target text introduces a meaning that was not intended nor implied by the original text. This manipulation in the text diminishes the original meaning and neglects any negative indication of any actual obstructions or barriers between Eastern Jerusalem and Western Jerusalem. Allawzi (2018), De Beaugrande and Dressler (1981) consider this type of manipulation in the text as a twist in the source text. In the case at hand, the addition seems to favor the Israeli narrative of a united one peaceful city. It also neglects the official Palestinian point of view of two separate cities: Arab East Jerusalem and Israeli West Jerusalem.

(8) a. Source Text

ويقدم الزواوي قراءة سياسية للمرحلة التي تمر بها القضية الفلسطينية حالياً. بالقول: «للسنا أمام عدو عادي أو مشروع صغير؛ نحن نقاتل أخطر مشروع دولي، وخصوصاً بعد تبني الولايات المتحدة إقامة دولة يهودية.
(Al-Akhbar.com, March1, 2017)

Wa yuqaddim al-zawawi qiraʿa siyasiyya lil-marhala allati tammur bihaa al-qaḍiyya al-falastiiniyya haaliyyan. bil-qawl: lasnaa ʿamaam ʿaduw ʿaadi ʿaw mashruuʿ ṣaghiir; nahnu nuqaatil ʿakhtar mashruuʿ duwali, wa khuṣuṣan baʿd tabanni al-wilayaat al-muttahida ʿiqaamat dawla yahuudiyya.

b. Target Text

Providing a political analysis of what is happening with the Palestinian cause today, Al-Zawawi said: 'We are not facing an ordinary enemy, or a small-scale plan. Rather, we are fighting the most dangerous international plan, especially after the U.S. adopted the **[idea the Palestinians must recognize Israel as]** a Jewish state.

<https://www.memri.org/reports/plo-ambassador-iran-we-will-liberate-palestine-river-sea-%E2%80%93-everything-stabbing-and-vehicular>

In this example, the translator does not only apply a change to the original text, but adds a new sentence completely out from the text which contains the modal verb 'must'. The translator here is adding his/her voice to the text to produce a new meaning and indication providing a new message added to the original one. The addition of 'idea the Palestinians must recognize Israel as' to the translated text tampers the original text writer's perception and introduces a new message to the reader. The Arabic text *تبنى الولايات المتحدة إقامة دولة يهودية* confirms that the U.S supports the establishment of a Jewish state. However, the translated text implies the U.S's inducement that Palestinians must approve the establishment of a Jewish state on their lands. The translator adds a sense of obligation implemented by the modal verb 'must'. 'Must' gives an obligatory meaning expressing an opinion that is logically essential and highly recommended which in this text refers to the Palestinians recognition of Israel as a Jewish state. Hence, the reader can sense the voice of the translator interfering with the translation process and tampering the original source text to introduce an ideological perception which affects the reader's opinion. The translator manipulated the source text through the process of translation by adding new elements to the text. Venuti (1998) posits that manipulation is part of translation as a rewriting process which paves the road for those who are in power to make their ideologies and propagandas more accepted in support of the party in power, i.e. the Israeli side in this 'conflict'.

8. Conclusion and recommendations

The findings of the study showed that media was used as a powerful tool to influence the recipient's perception of certain political and social matters, which resulted in promoting an ideological perspective. The researchers highlighted the translators' use of a number of strategies while interacting with the source texts and producing the ideologically motivated translations. Such strategies included substitution, omission and addition.

Further, the instances of ideologically driven mismatches in tenor attested in this study were not the result of cross-cultural misunderstandings, nor were they the outcome of language deficiencies in the translators. Put differently, they were not translation errors in the real sense of the term 'error'. Instead, they were the product of intentional manipulations achieved through resorting to covert translation strategies. This argument gains support from the fact that the

MEMRI's Arabic- English translations are not the product of a bunch of stumbling amateurs but a group of professional translators. This is evident in their well-structured sentences. In actuality, their manipulations are not easy to uncover without close reference to the original Arabic texts. Manipulated translations, simply put, are not the result of mishaps produced by careless or incompetent practitioners.

Moreover, the paper revealed that the use of manipulative strategies in the translation of news items produced target texts that differed from the original and promoted a different ideology. Target language texts tended to be influenced by the ideas, beliefs, values and thoughts of the translator. Apparently, once these ideologies penetrate the translation process, they often function as a proxy for legitimizing and justifying the interests and views of the media agency, i.e. MEMRI that sponsored the translation task.

But are the biased translations highlighted in the study enough to charge MEMRI with mendacity and thus accuse its translators of promoting some claims and narratives of one party to the Palestinian-Israeli 'conflict' at the expense of the other by systematically using the Israeli media political diction and jargon? The answer is more likely to be put in the affirmative. However, one may argue that more illustrative examples of unambiguous ideologically motivated translations are still needed. In this context, it is probably difficult to overlook views that echo those voiced by Brian Whitaker, the Middle East editor for The Guardian newspaper in 2003, in the email debate with Carmon, a cofounder of MEMRI (<https://www.theguardian.com/world/2003/jan/28/israel2>). Whitaker wrote that his problem with MEMRI is that it introduces itself as a research body "when it's basically a propaganda operation" whose role is to "further the political agenda of Israel" (also see Carmon and Whitaker, 2003).

In light of the aforementioned, the study sets forth the following recommendations for future research on the impact of ideology on translating news items in the context of political conflicts:

- (1) A comparable study may be conducted on the role of translation in promoting ideology in the context of other political conflicts in the MENA region, e.g. the Yemeni-Saudi conflict.
- (2) Since the data of this study were derived from the articles, speeches and addresses translated by MEMRI in the context of the Palestinian-Israeli 'conflict', future studies may focus on other genres also translated by MEMRI such as statements, interviews, songs, clips and news reports.

Endnotes

1. We put the term conflict in single quotes in the title and the body of the paper in response to a note from an anonymous reviewer who advises that in the Israeli-Palestinian issue we have to do with more than a conflict as the term suggests an equality of the parties concerned, which is not really the case.
2. This webpage is edited on 21 March, 2021.

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